

Retrieving proves it's on a comeback

SPORTING Shooters Association of Australia United Field and Retrieving branch (UFR) members held their last non-slip retrieving trial for the year at the SSAA's Ripley property, Stewartdale.

Non-slip trials are designed to simulate hunting conditions and are open to all gundog breeds from the ever popular Labrador Retriever to the lesser-known Chesapeake Bay and Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers as well as Spaniels, Pointers and Weimaraners.

Competitors and spectators alike braved the warm weather for the last trial of the year, to enjoy testing runs in all levels of competition across the two-day Winchester-sponsored event.

Stewartdale's dams, gullies, hillsides and undulating paddocks, provided our judges with the necessities to test the dogs retrieving abilities. This provided great competition and challenging runs, and importantly - good

sportsmanship and friendly rivalry.

A retrieving trial is a competition held at four levels - test for dogs and handlers just starting out in their training; intermediate, where the dogs are required to retrieve at a greater distance, often through swamps and heavier cover; advanced, where the single retrieves are often replaced by double retrieves, an occasional blind where the dog must be directed to the game that has been placed unseen; and open, where any combination of retrieves are set to test the dogs and handlers ability to handle anything that could possibly occur in a hunting situation.

Saturday's event saw 37 competing dogs across the four levels of competition, with 42 competing dogs on the Sunday.

Competitor numbers to retrieving trials in Queensland have been on a slow decline for many years; however the sport is experiencing a revival since its switch to the SSAA in June 2007. It was pleasing to

see record numbers of entries in the test (beginners) stake across the two days. Proof that the sport is on the rebound since its regeneration by a dedicated band of workers. To the club's credit, test competitors also commented on the helpfulness of its members to beginners in the sport.

Judges for the weekend were Kerri Underwood, Kai Jeffrey, Fran Jones, George Price, Ron Jackson and Margaret Wedgwood. Thank are also extended to all the volunteer stewards who donated their time to help the trial run smoothly and efficiently.

SSAA UFR holds retrieving trials for gundogs in the South East Queensland area from March to October each year, and camping and social events during the warmer months. The club also provides training days for beginners on a regular basis.

— GREG MITCHELL
 ● For more information on SSAA retrieving trials, visit the website www.unitedfieldandretrieving.org.au



Springer Spaniel Hattie in action.

RESULTS:

Saturday - Test: Kirchoff Rocket, Jessica Williams. Intermediate: Springhi Widdett Special, Helen Cattermole. Advanced: Feldhund Purdy Bronco, Sam Haigh. Open: RTCD DUAL CH Tenarda Firecracker, Trevor Lodder.

Sunday - Test: Lindenjude Callme Jinx, Andrew Campbell. Advanced: Lindenjude Where's Wally, Jim Jeffrey. Intermediate: Garjanhauf Bold Skip, Craig Haigh. Open: RTCD RTCH OC Coalsgarth Clipper, Laurelle Draper.



Above: Black Labrador Deli ready to go.



Right: Trial judge Margaret Wedgwood.



Competitors being briefed for the last non-slip retrieving trial for the year at the SSAA's Ripley property, Stewartdale.

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