



WEB JOURNAL

of the Worldwide Association of
Bracco italiano Amateur Clubs
November 2018

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LET'S INVENT THE N.A.T. (NATURAL ATTITUDE TEST)

by Cesare Bonasegale

A new type of test for the Bracco Italiano which is not employed in hunting activity

The Italian version of this article was published
on the November issue of the *Giornale del Bracco Italiano*

Hunters who use pointing dogs are rapidly diminishing and in the future pointing dogs will very often be in the hands of non-hunters.

This will represent a serious danger for the pointing breeds, because these dogs run the risk of losing the behavioural characteristics for which

they have been created.

In an attempt to overcome this problem, the pointing breed Associations should invent a special type of trial (the name of which should not include any reference to hunting activity) which will guarantee that the natural behavioural characteristics of these

breeds will not disappear.

These tests (which could be called N.A.T. – Natural Attitude Test) should become an alternative to the field trial test to obtain the Beauty Championship of pointing breeds. Here below I propose the Regulation for the Natural Attitude Test

Introduction

Bracco Italiano is more and more frequently adopted by non-hunters as a pet dog.

In spite of this, the breed must keep not only the well known morphological characteristics, but also its typical behaviour.

Target

To certify that the dogs who have been positively verified by the N.A.T. still have the hunting characteristics for which the breed has been created.

Namely the test must ascertain the drive in searching birds and the capacity of indicating their presence by pointing them.

Moreover their gate must be that which is typical of the breed, i.e. the thrusting trot.

The dog must not be afraid of the shot of a blank cartridge. Finally the dog must retrieve.

Length of the trial

15 minutes, eventually extended to 30 minutes if during the first 15 minutes the dogs has not pointed the game which has been placed in the ground.

Additional time will be devoted to the retrieving test.

The field

A flat area of at least 8 hectares, with grass high enough to hide the game freed just before the test, but excluding areas with bushes.

The organisation manager will frequently check the wind to make sure that the dogs are correctly directing the search.

The birds

Pheasants and or partridges.

The search and the point

The dogs will always run individually and will have to show good drive in their search, exploring all the field in front of them.

The gate will have to be the typical thrusting trot or at least alternating gallop with phases of thrusting trot.

Should the dog flush the game, it will be up to the judge to let the dog carry on the search, in the hope that it will point other birds present in the field. In other words, the flush doesn't necessarily imply the elimination.

The point – eventually preceded by the roading and followed by the drawing-on – must be perfectly still; the tail must be rigid or must become so when the conductor

gets on the side of the dog.

It will be up to the conductor to put the leash to the dog on point, to avoid catching the birds which eventually don't fly. Should that happen, the dog would be eliminated. So much the better if the leash will not be applied to the dog.

If the game does not flush spontaneously, an assistant to the judge will determine it.

Steadiness when the game flushes is not requested.

As already explained, it will be up to the judge to continue the test after the first 15 minutes.

In any case a qualification will be possible only if at least one point has taken place.

The shot

When the game flushes, the conductor will shoot a blank cartridge and this shall not cause any fear reaction of the

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dog. If there are doubts, the shot will be repeated when verifying the retrieving function.

The retrieving

After the positive verification of the point, the retrieving ability will be tested. Namely the conductor will throw about 15 metres away whatever he likes (a dummy, a tennis ball, a piece of wood etc.) which the dog must promptly retrieve and deliver in the conductor's hands. The dog which doesn't retrieve will be eliminated.

The Judges

Any judge qualified for working trial of pointing dogs will be entitled to judge the N.A.T.

The judge will assign a qualification from "Good" to "Very Good" to "Excellent". Moreover he will classify the 3 best dogs of the test.