

PROPOSAL

HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST



Submitted by:

The Basset Hound Club of America
Hunting Performance Test Committee
June 10, 2016

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. HISTORY.....	4
III. AMENDING THE RULES IN 2011	5
IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND OVERCOME.....	7
a. Availability of grounds and game	7
b. Judging the PBGV and GBGV in the field	8
c. Insurance.....	8
d. Overcoming resistance to 3-pass rule change	8
e. Dachshund voicing	9
f. Building a good entry for a non-licensed event	9
V. HUNTING PERFORMANCE TESTS NATIONWIDE	9
VI. BENEFITS OF THE HPT	11
a. Cross over from other venues	11
b. Reasons the HPT should be an AKC licensed event.....	12
c. Reasons for the HPTs growing popularity	12
VII. THE FUTURE OF THE HPT	13
VIII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS.....	14

Sample premium list

Sample forms

Photograph of rosettes and ribbons

Sample award certificate

I. INTRODUCTION

The Basset Hound Club of America has been taking the lead at promoting and organizing the Hunting Performance Test for a number of years as a means of evaluating a hound's hunting skills on live game in a natural setting, especially in parts of the country where groomed field grounds do not exist. The Test was initially proposed to us by the American Kennel Club, and the BHCA has been working on refinement of the rules and implementation of the Test for a number of years, with increasing entries and more tests nationwide. The Test gives owners and handlers the option of entering their hounds in one of three stakes – solo, brace or 2-coupled pack, with the goal of earning the titles of Hunting Hound, Senior Hunting Hound and Master Hunting Hound in any stake order they choose. The BHCA also added MHE (Master Hunter Excellent) for Basset Hounds who are pointed in an AKC licensed confirmation show. Since it is felt that there are advantages to hunting early in the morning, the order of running is determined by random draw the morning of the test – typically solos, followed by braces, followed by packs. We are asking at this time that the AKC recognize this most worthwhile venue as an official AKC title-earning event.



Initially titles were earned with a one-time pass, but in 2011 working with AKC Representative Jim Odle the BHCA committee headed by JoAnn Hilliker amended the rules to require three passes for a title to bring the HPT more in line with other AKC hunting events and increase the difficulty. Our tests have grown nationwide and entries have come from all of the eligible breeds. Record keeping has been excellent, and the HPT committee is hereby requesting that the American Kennel Club consider making the test an AKC title earning event for Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, Beagles, Harriers, PBGVs and GBGVs. Within this report are graphs which illustrate the growth and expansion of the Hunting Performance Test since its acceptance by BHCA in 2004.

II. HISTORY

In October of 1998, the then corresponding secretary of the Basset Hound Club of America, Melody Fair, brought forth a proposal to the membership she had received from the American Kennel Club to begin a pilot program for a hunting test for scent hounds. The proposal included rules and forms and BHCA was encouraged to try this new field event to determine whether or not there would be support among the Basset Hound hunting community. The information exchange took place at the annual meeting that year; Jean Sheehy was president and Dale Fleming was 1st vice-president. This new proposed field event had already been tested once in Oregon in 1997.

Members of the Timberline Basset Hound Club who were present at that meeting opted to take on the task and in the spring of 1999, Timberline hosted an AKC Sanctioned B hunting test match on private property near Ft. Collins, Colorado. The event was a huge success and was attended not only by members of Timberline but also from High Country Basset Hound Rescue. The dogs were totally untrained, but there proved to be a considerable amount of interest, and another Sanctioned B match was held that fall. In spring of 2000, Timberline BHC working through BHCA applied for a Sanctioned A match, with the intention of moving forward to get the event licensed as an official AKC title earning event. It was then that the AKC informed us that more sanctioned tests needed to take place and that the tests needed to be open to other scent hound breeds (Dachshund, Beagle, PBGV, Harrier). We began including these breeds immediately and tests were held each year - initially in Colorado, Pennsylvania and at the annual BHCA National specialty.



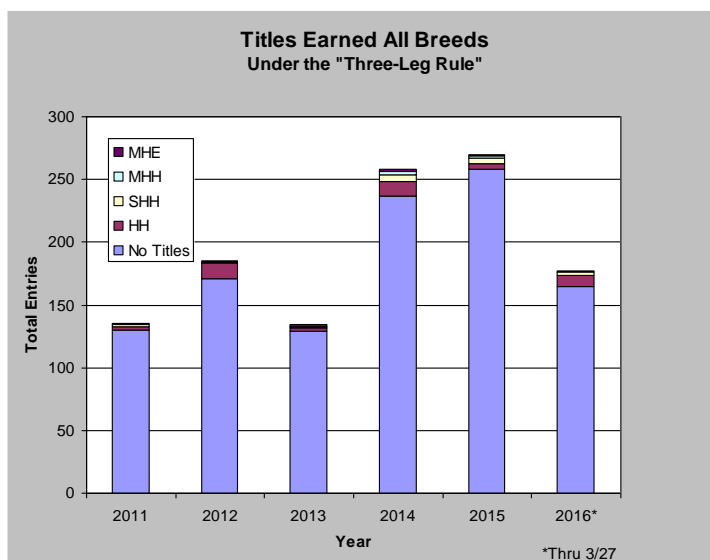
In 2004, BHCA voted to recognize the Hunting Test as a BHCA title-earning event and since then tests have been held in the New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Colorado, Texas, Oregon, Florida, South Carolina and California as well as at the BHCA Nationals wherever it is held. A comprehensive summary on the BHCA Hunting Performance Test and how it has been conducted can be found at the BHCA website under Basset Hound University, Scenting Events.

III. AMENDING THE RULES IN 2011

The Hunt Test committee contacted the AKC in 2011 to determine what needed to be done to move toward licensing. It was at that time that the rules were amended under the leadership of JoAnn Hilliker to require 3 passes instead of one pass in each stake to earn each title – Hunting Hound, Senior Hunting Hound, Master Hunting Hound and Master Hunting Hound Excellent – to bring the test requirements more in line with other AKC licensed field events and to raise the bar in earning these titles. The expected performance of hounds in brace and pack was better defined – all hounds participating in each stake need to be working in order for the stake mate(s) to qualify. We also started referring to the test as a Hunting “Performance” Test to emphasize that no game is harmed or killed during our tests. The current HPT rules can be accessed at our BHCA website:

<http://basset-bhca.org/images/2011%20hpt%20rules.pdf>

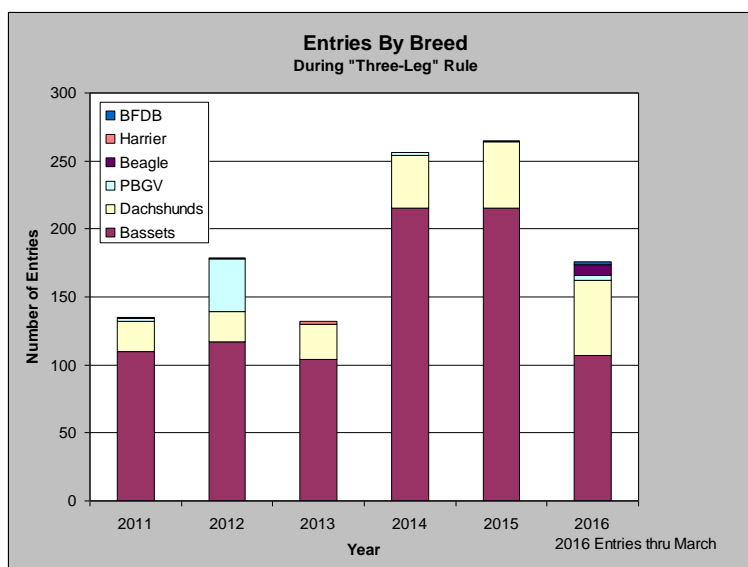
Please note that the statistics show the drop in titles being earned after the 3 rule pass change, validating that the change did what was intended in making titles more difficult to achieve. Since 2011 and to date, 43 hounds have earned the HH, 15 the SHH, 6 the MHH and 5 the MHE. Between 1997 and 2010, 242 hounds earned the HH, 121 the SHH, 45 the MHH and 23 the MHE, Record keeping has been excellent and BHCA has been maintaining a very detailed Microsoft ACCESS database tracking the tests, judges, dogs entered and their breeds, owners, breeders, addresses, etc. These are open for inspection by the AKC at any time. Melody Fair set up the database initially and Bill Forrest has been managing it since 2015.



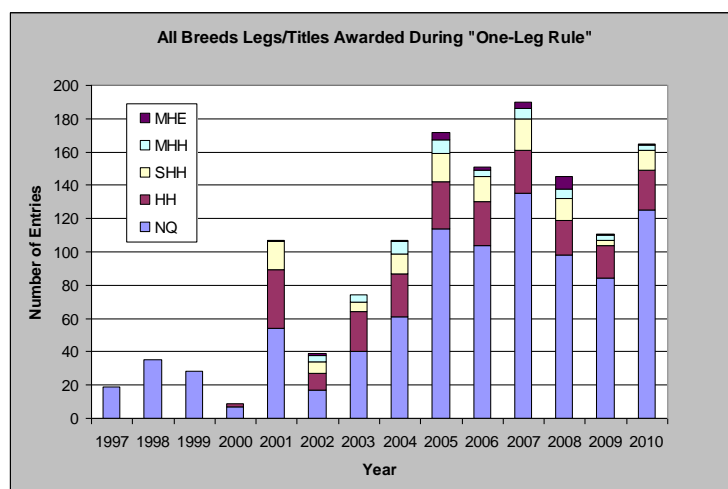
Titles Earned Under "Three-Leg" Rule						
Year	No Titles	HH	SHH	MHH	MHE	Total Entries
2011	130	3	1	1	0	135
2012	171	12	1	0	1	185
2013	129	3	1	0	1	134
2014	237	11	6	2	2	258
2015	258	5	4	2	1	270
2016*	165	9	2	1	0	177
Total	1090	43	15	6	5	1159

*thru 3/27

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST



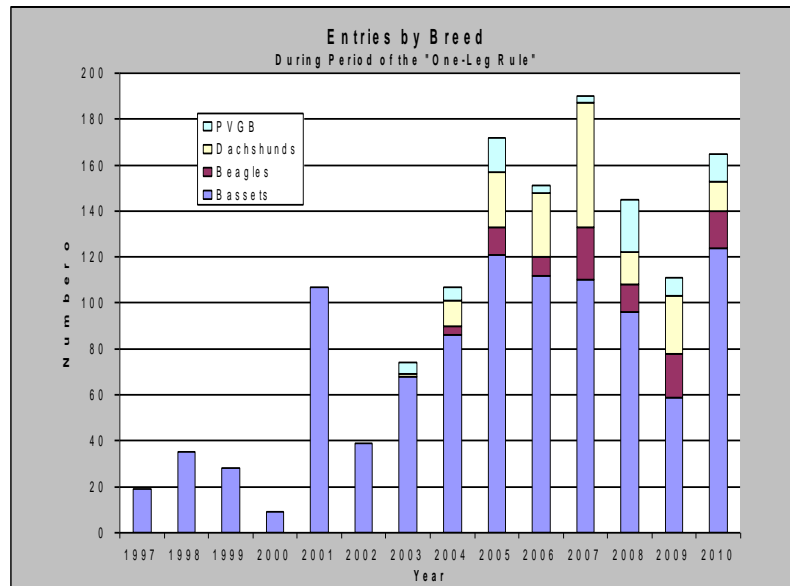
Year	Bassets	Dachshunds	PBGV	Beagle	Harrier	BFDB	Total
2011	110	22	2	1	0	0	135
2012	117	22	39	1	0	0	179
2013	104	26	0	0	2	0	132
2014	215	39	2	0	0	0	256
2015	215	49	1	0	0	0	265
2016	107	55	4	8	0	2	176
Total	868	213	48	10	2	2	1143



All Breeds Titles

Year	NQ	HH	SHH	MHH	MHE	Totals
1997	19	0	0	0	0	19
1998	35	0	0	0	0	35
1999	28	0	0	0	0	28
2000	7	2	0	0	0	9
2001	54	35	17	0	1	107
2002	17	10	7	4	1	39
2003	40	24	6	4	0	74
2004	61	26	12	7	1	107
2005	114	28	17	8	5	172
2006	104	26	15	4	2	151
2007	135	26	19	6	4	190
2008	98	21	13	6	7	145
2009	84	20	3	3	1	111
2010	125	24	12	3	1	165
Totals	921	242	121	45	23	1352

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST



Entries by Breed					
Year	Bassets	Beagles	Dachshund	P V G B	Totals
1997	19	0	0	0	19
1998	35	0	0	0	35
1999	28	0	0	0	28
2000	9	0	0	0	9
2001	107	0	0	0	107
2002	39	0	0	0	39
2003	68	0	1	5	74
2004	86	4	11	6	107
2005	121	12	24	15	172
2006	112	8	28	3	151
2007	110	23	54	3	190
2008	96	12	14	23	145
2009	59	19	25	8	111
2010	124	16	13	12	165
Totals	1013	94	170	75	1352

IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND OVERCOME

a. Availability of grounds and game

Many more tests would be taking place if better grounds were available with plentiful game. This has been a problem on and off over the years. Sometimes tests needed to be postponed because of a low rabbit population. The past couple of years have been relatively good game-wise. The interest is there and the HPT is a good means of drawing dog people together – rescue as well as show. Several rescue Bassets with hunting potential were guided toward getting PAL numbers so they can participate in the HPT. Some have earned legs and titles. There is a great need for establishing field grounds in places where they do not exist. Oregon and Texas dog fanciers have grouped together to purchase and develop land for field trials and hunting tests and have been quite successful. Although the test can be performed anywhere successfully, having a reliable rabbit population in a fenced in habitat area is always preferred.

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST



Qualifiers at Basset Hound Club of Greater Fort Worth,
January 2016



Judges and spectators
Battlefield HPT 2016

Judging the PBGV and GBGV in the field

Another challenge is learning how to judge PBGVs and GBGVs. Their hunting behavior is quite different and judges need to become better prepared to evaluate them. The PBGV National club has been supportive of our hunt tests but they do have their own hunting instinct test. If the HPT were licensed by the AKC, we are certain to have more participation by the PBGV community. Strict adherence to the rules has been stressed, we've been very careful to audit ourselves to be sure the test is judged properly.

c. Insurance

Insurance has been a problem on and off since a starter pistol is used for gun shyness testing in the HPT. Some clubs in the Midwest and at least 2 in southern California are still not convinced that they could be covered and they've hesitated holding tests for that reason.. We do know that the two larger insurance carriers, Sportmans and Equisure, will insure the test as long as the pistol does not fire a projectile. The starter pistols owned by BHCA have barrels filled in so while they make quite a loud noise, they do not fire projectiles and this is acceptable. We've been making these pistols available to all clubs hosting tests and not having pistols of their own.

d. Overcoming resistance to 3-pass rule change

When we changed to the 3-pass rule there was resistance from exhibitors who thought titles would be too difficult to achieve. This is no longer an issue and in fact verifies a dog's hunting ability having to prove him or herself 3 times in one stake in order to get a title. Exhibitors have accepted the change and the titles actually carry more status within the hound community now than they did with the one pass rule.

e. Dachshund voicing

There has been quite a lot of discussion about the HPT rule requirement for Dachshund voicing since use of voice is not required in their field trials. Most Dachshund exhibitors agree that their dogs should voice when hunting – otherwise how could they be located? So, this rule has been enforced in the HPT for all breeds, Dachshunds included, and has been accepted by the Dachshund community.

f. Building a good entry for a non-licensed event

Of course there's always the challenge of building an entry for an event that is not licensed by the AKC. Exhibitors are entering because they enjoy it and their dogs love it. They love the social aspect and having a reason to get together in the country and outside the show ring. The HPT is effective in getting show Bassets to participate in field work, and demonstrate that the conformation standard really does relate to hunting performance. All the more reason to move the Test forward to the next level.



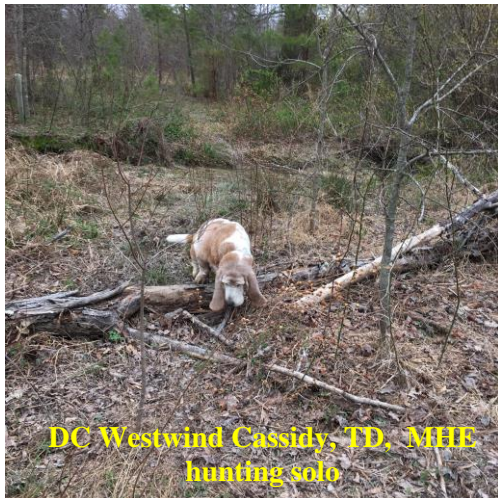
V. HUNTING PERFORMANCE TESTS NATIONWIDE

The goal nationwide set down by the AKC for licensing consideration has been to reach 20 tests per year with entries of 20 dogs or more. We've been working toward this goal and are now very close to achieving it. Here is a list of clubs holding HPTs to date. Detailed records on breeds entered, stakes, etc. are available.

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST

The Basset Hound Club of Greater Fort Worth
Potomac Basset hound Club, Virginia
Pilgrim Basset Hound Club, Rhode Island
Basset Hound Club of America Regional, Rhode Island
Timberline Basset Hound Club, Colorado
Emerald Empire Basset Hound Club, Oregon
Susquehanna Basset Hound Club, Pennsylvania
Valley Forge Basset Hound Club, Pennsylvania
Capital District Basset Hound Club, New York
Suncoast Basset Hound Club, Florida
Dachshund Club of Southern California
Basset Hound Club of America Regional, Southern Cal
Basset hound Club of America National, various locations
Mid Kentucky Kennel Cub, Kentucky
Ohio Valley Beagle Club, Union, Kentucky

These tests of course are open not only to Bassets, but to other small game hound breeds as well. We did make a one-time exception in southern California and allowed a Fauve de Bretagne to run in our tests. The dog proved to be a good hunter and qualified both days. Perhaps the Fauve can be added to the rules at some point in time.



Also being tracked are information about the judges and the number and locations of tests they have judged. We've been accommodating in allowing new judges to enter the HPTs provided someone else who is experienced judges the stake they are entered in. Considerable effort has been put into making certain that judges maintain quality judging and ensure that titles are legitimately earned for dogs truly deserving in all breeds. There is a need for more judges and more opportunities for interested individuals to become licensed to judge hunt tests and field trials.

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST

Data recorded at each hunt test are:

- Complete registration data
 - AKC#
 - Sire
 - Dam
 - DOB
 - Owners
 - Breeders
 - Names
 - Addresses
 - Phone numbers
 - Email
 - Scores
 - Judges presiding at each test – names, addresses
 - Test locations, dates, time
 - Test chairs and secretaries
 - Test committees
 - Sponsoring clubs

Premium lists are prepared by the secretary for each test; qualifying ribbons and rosettes for new titles are presented during an awards ceremony following each test. Entry forms, score sheets and summary sheets have been retained since day one for all tests and are available for review. Entry fees have typically been \$15 per dog. The following reports can be generated from the database:

1. Basset Title Progression (a report providing the legs passed and the titles earned since the three-pass rule came into effect in 2011)
2. Hunt Test Judges Record (a listing of judges and the dates and locations)
3. Stake Qualifiers Other (legs passed by hounds other than Bassets)
4. Test Held Since 2011 (information on each test held since 2011)

VI. BENEFITS OF THE HPT

a. Cross over from other venues

There has been considerable cross over to the HPT from the conformation community – far more than in field trialing. At the same time, inexperienced dogs are given a welcoming opportunity to test their natural hunting ability without pressure. The atmosphere at our HPTs has been friendly to newcomers and appeals to the younger set. Young Beaglers in Virginia brought their young children to the HPT and had a great time. Dogs with ILP and PAL numbers can compete as equals with conformation and field champions. Often the results are surprisingly good. One of our Colorado rescue dogs proved to be a natural hunter and handily earned his HH. The tests are done in a natural setting and dogs are allowed to cast and locate their own game without a gallery. Tests can be conducted on any vacant land which has a natural rabbit population, thus the appeal to western states where formal field grounds do not exist. Note, however, that stocked, fenced in field grounds are always preferred to ensure a successful test. Beagle and Dachshund Clubs have sponsored the BHCA Hunting Performance Test.

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST

The HPT has grown over the years – see statistics since the 3 pass rule change - while other field events seem to be struggling.

b. Reasons the HPT should be an AKC licensed event

- Events would increase in number with AKC sanction.
- HPTs would be held in more areas of the country, particularly the Midwest.
- Entry numbers would surely increase.
- Several BHCA members have passed the field trial judges seminar test so they are familiar with how AKC manages field events.
- The HPT would gain more credibility throughout the dog community.
- Young dog enthusiasts would be drawn into this type of event.
- Rescue dogs would obtain AKC registration numbers in order to participate.
- The HPT is an excellent and natural means of evaluating a dog's hunting skills.
- The HPT highlights the original purpose for the hound breeds participating.
- Seventeen tests are planned nationwide for 2016

c. Reasons for the HPTs growing popularity

1. While AKC licensed field trials seem to be diminishing in popularity and failing to attract younger owners, the Hunting Performance Test continues to grow. In 2016, we are planning 17 tests – dates and grounds have been reserved. The Battlefield Beagle Club plans to host a weekend of tests in 2017.
2. The test represents more of a natural hunting scenario and is not contrived as are field trials. Dogs are encouraged to do the work, cast and find their own game.
3. Less game is required for the HPT than for field trials.
4. Participants and judges need not follow the dogs so closely that they impede a dog's natural hunting ability.
5. Participants in the HPT need not be seasoned field dogs. Newcomers are welcomed and often the results are surprisingly good.
6. The HPT appeals to exhibitors who participate in other performance and companion events and many of our HPT title holders are also AKC champions and have other titles as well.
7. The HPT allows the hound a full thirty-minutes of running, where actual running time and judging is usually around five-minutes per brace during field trials – making the HPT experience much more worthwhile and enjoyable for both handler and hound.
8. Since the HPT is a non-competitive event, hounds and handlers of all experience levels are welcome, all participants can, and do, get genuinely enthusiastic about a hound's achievement.
9. The event is a one-day test, not requiring the amount of time (two days), and level of effort (brush beating) typical of field trials. An encouragement to the younger, working handlers, and to the handlers who are retired and finding field trailing an increasing challenge.
10. Exhibitors can select the dogs to be running together in braces and packs choosing dogs they know will run well together. Again, this is closer to actual hunting conditions.

VII. THE FUTURE OF THE HPT

We sincerely hope that the American Kennel Club will see fit to embrace the Hunting Performance Test as a title earning event for small game scent hounds – Basset Hounds, Harriers, Dachshunds, Beagles, PBGVs and GBGVs – possibly Fauve de Bretagne. The BHCA HPT committee will assist in any way possible. The procedures are in place, scoring and record keeping have been honed to accuracy, the interest is there and the dogs are ready to perform. At one time an attempt was made to form a committee made up of representatives from all the breeds involved and this was met with mixed success. The Battlefield Beagle Club in Virginia will be hosting a weekend of HPTs in March of 2017. With the AKC at the helm, we're certain such a committee would yield more positive results.

Included in this proposal as attachments are sample copies of the forms currently being used, a photograph of the rosettes and ribbons being awarded, a sample title certificate, and a sample premium list.

We are requesting direction from the AKC on how to proceed to begin the process of having this event recognized as an AKC title earning event. What is the next step and what is required?

Thank you for every consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.



Respectfully submitted,

The Basset Hound Club of America Hunting Performance Test Committee:

PROPOSAL – HUNTING PERFORMANCE TEST

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John Meahl, New York

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Terri Ralenkotter, Kentucky

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Elsie Tagg, Pennsylvania

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Sample premium list
- b. Forms currently being used
- c. Rosettes and ribbons
- d. Sample award certificate