

# UPLAND HUNTING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM



# Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program

## Introduction

### Introduction

The Poodle is a versatile, all-purpose hunting dog, adept at finding, flushing and retrieving upland game birds as well as retrieving waterfowl.

In upland hunting, the dog is an active member of the hunting team, responsible for locating the birds in cover or brush and flushing them for the hunters. After the birds are shot, the dog retrieves them, delivering “his prize” to the handler. One of the joys of upland hunting is getting to watch the dogs use their natural talents as hunters.

### Poodle Upland Hunting Program

The Poodle Upland Hunting Program was designed to test and certify Poodles as upland hunters. Hunting instincts and abilities are evaluated as the dogs find, flush and retrieve upland birds. Teamwork, tolerance of gunfire, eagerness to challenge cover in searching for birds, and willingness to return when called are all included in the tests. Other abilities tested are the dog’s ability to use his nose to find and trail game, his perseverance in doing so, and his soft mouth to deliver the birds “fit for the table”.

Four levels of certification are recognized:

- **The Upland Instinct Certificate** is to certify Poodles with upland hunting instinct and desire.
- **The Upland Working Certificate** is to certify Poodles demonstrating the abilities which make them good upland hunting companions. They are birdy, natural hunters, who are not afraid of gunfire. This includes poodles with limited field experience who have, with training, demonstrated these same abilities.
- **Upland Working Certificate Excellent** is to certify Poodles who are accomplished upland hunting companions, demonstrating extra trainability and teamwork to complement their hunting abilities.
- **Upland Working Certificate Master** is to certify Poodles who are highly accomplished upland hunting companies and have demonstrated superior ability and teamwork along with their handler.

### Hunting Poodle Certification Program

The Hunting Poodle Certification Program was established to acknowledge and encourage those Poodles who are both accomplished waterfowl retrievers and upland hunters. They have shown the instinct and ability to be all around bird hunting companions.

Three levels of certification are recognized:

- **The Hunting Poodle Certificate (HPC)** will be awarded to Poodles who have earned a WC in retrieving and a UWC in upland hunting from the Poodle Club of America. They have demonstrated a working capability in hunting, flushing, marking, swimming and retrieving.
- **The Hunting Poodle Certificate Excellent (HPCX)** will be awarded to Poodles who have earned both a WCX and a UWCX from the Poodle Club of America. They have demonstrated the abilities needed to be excellent hunting companions.
- **The Hunting Poodle Certificate Master (HPCM)** will be awarded to Poodles who have earned both a WCM and UWCM from the Poodle Club of America. They have demonstrated the exceptional qualities of both a retriever and upland hunter.

**Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program  
Rules and Regulations – Chapter 1. Regulations and Guidelines**

## **Chapter 1. Regulations and Guidelines**

### **Section 1. How to Earn a UIC / UWC / UWCX / UWCM Certificate.**

Poodle upland certificates can be earned by passing a PCA approved upland test or by passing an upland test approved by another organization, meeting the requirements for a PCA test.

1. **PCA Approved Test** – Poodle upland certificates can be earned by passing the test at a PCA approved event. The events may be organized by PCA, by affiliated Poodle clubs, by other clubs, or by an individual or group of individuals. After an approved test, the event organizers will report the results to the PCA Upland Chairperson, who will record and post the results and issue the certificates.
2. **Test Approved by Another Organization** – Poodle upland certificates can also be earned at recognized tests approved by other organizations as long as PCA requirements are met. As of November, 2013, the Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America is the only other organization to offer a test which meets the requirements for a PCA upland certificate. The CCRCA Upland WC is the equivalent of the PCA UWC.

**Reporting the results from a test approved by another organization** – It is the owner/handler's responsibility to report to PCA a pass earned in a test approved by an organization other than PCA. An application is available on the PCA website. It must be filled out, signed by the judges confirming that the requirements were met and the dog did pass, and submitted to the PCA Upland Certificate Chairperson within 30 days of the test. The results will be recorded and the certificate issued. Full information on the dog is required in order to issue the certificate.

### **Section 2. General Information.**

#### **Eligibility –**

- These tests are restricted to dogs six months and older who are registered as Poodles with the AKC or an affiliated foreign registry.
- Bitches in heat are not eligible to compete.
- UWCM – Poodles must have earned the UWCX to be eligible to compete in the UWCM.
- UWCX – Poodles must have earned the UWC to be eligible to compete in the UWCX.
- UWC – The UWC is for Poodles with some upland hunting experience or training. With flushing birds and nearby live gunfire, upland tests are very different from retriever hunt tests. Unless the dog has earned a UIC or has had upland experience, it is strongly recommended that it be started at the UIC level.
- UIC – The UIC is for Poodles with little or no upland hunting experience. Prior exposure to live birds and gunfire is still recommended.

**Collars** – The dog is allowed to wear a flat or rolled collar with a buckle or snap (non-slip) fastening. Name plates riveted to the collar are allowed, but tags dangling from the collar are not. Choke collars are prohibited while the dog is running because of potential danger to the dog. Prong collars, pinch collars, head collars or halters are not allowed to be used in the tests.

**Leads and Leashes** – In the UIC and UWC, a slip lead, a check cord or a collar and leash may be used to bring the dog to the line and to move him from test to test (i.e. from the walkup to the hunt dead). If a slip lead is used, it must be removed before the start of the test.

In the UIC and UWC Retrieve/Walkup tests, the dogs may be restrained at the line by a snap leash, a check cord (not a slip lead) or by holding the collar. The leash must be removed before sending the dog.

**Training Devices** – Electronic collars and other training devices are not allowed on the grounds. Collars and leads as specified above, and any type of whistle, are permitted.

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**Hair tie back policy** – A dogs may have its hair tied back with rubber bands. Wraps, bandages, and any type of dog “clothing” are prohibited. Plain collars and rubber bands are all that the dog is allowed to wear.

**Popper shells (field blank loads)** are to be used for all portions of the tests not requiring live loads. The objective is to test the dog’s response to live gunfire, so primer shells (blank hulls) may be used if popper shells are not available.

**Wingers and launchers** – For the UWC and UWCX Walkup tests, the use of wingers is allowed, but with the size of the birds, hand throwing is preferred. Birds for the UIC Retrieve test must be hand thrown. The use of box launchers of any type is prohibited.

**Blaze orange** – All handlers, judges, gunners and anyone else out in the field must wear blaze orange. It is recommended that extra vests are available to be borrowed from the host organization for those that do not have them.

**Gallery.** The judges will decide where the (spectators) gallery is to be located. If possible, the gallery should be allowed to follow the hunters into the field, always staying behind the marshal or designated official

**Severe weather** or dangerous conditions may be reason to cancel or delay a test. This will be decided by the judges and Committee in mutual consultation.

**Scoring** – All UIC / UWC / UWCX / UWCM tests are pass / fail. There is no formal scoring for these tests. The judges are relied on to use their knowledge and experience to decide if a dog has shown the instincts, natural ability and training defined for the level being tested. The dog must succeed in all sections of the test. A fault, even if minor, which is repeated multiple times, may prevent a dog from passing.

**Fit for the table** – In all cases, the dog must deliver the birds “fit for the table”. The judge must check each bird for damage after it is retrieved. It is understood that there may have been damage to the birds by the mechanics of the tests, including the shotguns. Damaged birds are to be removed from the test.

**Encouraging** the dog is appropriate. Intimidation is not allowed. Noise should be kept down, as is appropriate to the hunting field.

### **Section 3. Handler’s Information.**

**Gunners and Guns-** The gunners will be visible in the field or in the hunting line. They will shoot toward the birds, whether using live shells for the Quartering test or poppers for the other tests. The handler will carry an empty gun ( or facsimile) only at the UWCM level, with proper gun handling to also be judged, unsafe handling will be first warned, then can be cause for failure.

**Talking** – The handler is allowed to talk quietly to the dog throughout the test, in a manner which would be appropriate in the hunt field. Loud, harsh commands or attempted intimidation of the dog is not allowed. Continuous chatter is discouraged.

**Enthusiasm and noise** – An upland hunting dog should be enthusiastic, but basic obedience and manners are also needed. A dog that runs too far ahead, makes excessive noise, or must be loudly controlled, will scare away birds before they are within gun range. This will be penalized, based on the amount and on the level of the test.

**Releasing the dog** – The judge will **not** tell the handler when to release the dog for retrieves. The handler may release the dog while the bird is still in the air as long as the bird is near the ground.

**Speed** – All retrieves should be made within a reasonable time frame. It should not be faster for the handler to go get the bird himself.

**Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program**  
**Rules and Regulations – Chapter 2. Upland Instinct Certificate (UIC)**

## **Chapter 2. Upland Instinct Certificate (UIC)**

The Upland Instinct Certificate test is designed to test the basic hunting instincts in Poodles, even those with little or no exposure to game birds or fieldwork. The test will be conducted as an introductory training session, exciting the dog and encouraging him to succeed.

While hunting instinct is the focus of this test, basic field obedience and willingness to work with gunfire are both essential. In the interest of safety, the dog must come when called. The recall and the response to gunfire are both best established before coming to the excitement of a test.

Live-fire or No-kill test – The organizer will declare whether the UIC Quartering and Flushing test is to be a Live-fire test or a No-kill test. If it is a Live-fire test, then live ammunition is to be used and the birds shot at and retrieved. If it is a No-kill test, then poppers (field blank loads) will be used and all birds allowed to fly away.

The UIC tests include:

1. Response to Birds and Gunfire
2. Quartering and Flushing (one bird)
3. Hunt Dead

The tests should be run in this order, with one dog completing all the tests before the next dog is tested.

### **Section 1. UIC Response to Birds and Gunfire Test.**

This test shows the dog's initial interest in a bird and to gunfire at a distance, as he finds a bird that he has seen thrown nearby, has shown sustained interest in the bird, and returned to his handler when called.

Conducting the Response to Birds and Gunfire Test:

- The handler restrains the dog while the judge or an assistant shows the dog a dead bird and teases him with it. While the dog is showing interest and excitement, the bird is tossed from the line into light hunting cover between 5 to 10 yards (15' to 30') in front of the dog. While the bird is in the air, the gunner fires a shotgun in the field, about 30 to 60 yards away.
- The handler sends the dog for the bird. He doesn't need to wait until the bird hits the ground but should wait until after the shot is fired.
- The dog must find the bird and show interest in it. Making contact with the bird is good. Retrieving it is better but not required.
- The handler calls the dog back. The dog must return to the handler when called, with or without the bird.

### **Section 2. UIC Quartering and Flushing Test.**

The Quartering and Flushing Test is the heart of upland hunting. It relies on the dog's natural ability and desire to hunt with and for his handler. Upland hunting requires more independent work from the dog than waterfowl retrieving does. His nose, eyes and ears are all focused on finding and flushing birds. He should willingly go into cover where game is most likely to be found and still maintain a proper working distance from his handler. He should not continually look to the handler for directions or appear to be led to the birds.

Requirements for the UIC Quartering and Flushing Test

- A bird must be found and flushed.
- A shot must be fired. The shot is a requirement whether this is a no-kill test or a live-fire test. If it is a no-kill test, the gunners are to use popper shells.
- The dog must return when called, with or without the bird.

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Trapping the bird is considered a flush. In the UIC test, if the dog makes contact with the bird it is considered a flush. If the dog traps the bird, or the simply makes contact with the bird, or the bird flushes by running, a shot cannot safely be fired, so the shot requirement must still be completed.

**Setting up the UIC Quartering and Flushing Test:**

Ideally there should be enough usable planting locations in the field, to allow the location of the bird to be changed from one dog to the next. A hunting dog must be able to distinguish between old scent of the last bird and the fresh scent where the current bird is, though both areas should be investigated. The judges may use small pieces of orange tape, or other discrete markers, to mark the possible planting locations for the planters. The markers must not be easily visible to the dog/handler teams. It is the dog's responsibility to find the bird, not the handler's to lead him to it.

**Conducting the UIC Quartering and Flushing Test:**

- The bird is dizzied and planted for the flush. The dog and handler must not see where the bird is being planted. For the UIC, the bird will be planted between 10 and 30 yards from the start.
- A hunting party, including the dog and handler, the judges, and 2 gunners begins their walk out into the field. The dog should be quartering ahead of them. Ideally the dog should hunt in an arc between 10 and 30 yards in front of the handler and gunners, but no specific pattern is required. The handler may use whistles, commands and/or hand signals to keep the dog working in the appropriate area, as long as it is not disruptive to the hunt. The general path, or centerline, will be specified by the judges and may include changes in direction.
- In the normal case, the dog finds the bird and flushes it; the bird flies; the gunners shoot. If the bird is shot, the dog then finds it and retrieves it to the handler, or at least finds it again and shows interest in it. When called, the dog must return to the handler, with or without the bird. If the requirements of a bird flushed and a shot fired have not been met, the following steps should be taken:
  - If the flush could not be made for one of the following reasons, another bird will be planted and the test repeated. These reasons include:
    - The planted bird was a runaway (escaped without being found) with the judges or gunners verifying that the bird could not be found.
    - The bird is accidentally flushed by one of the people in the field.
    - If, on its first bird, the UIC dog needs assistance in finding or flushing the bird, a judge or gunner may assist in getting the bird to flush. In that case, a second bird will be planted and the hunt repeated. On the second bird, the dog must make the flush on his own.
  - If the judge calls a flyaway, the dog must be called back, returning within a reasonable time.
    - If the dog does not return in a reasonable time, as determined by the judges, he must not pass.
    - If he does return in a reasonable time and a shot was taken the requirements of the test have been met.
  - If the flush was made but a shot was not fired, a dead bird will be thrown and a shot fired in a safe direction. The dog should then find and retrieve the dead bird or at least go to it and show interest in it.

**Important Considerations in the UIC Quartering and Flushing Test:**

- The dog must succeed in making a flush. Making contact with the bird (touching it) can count as a flush at the UIC level. If the dog is unable to find a bird or unwilling to make a flush, he cannot pass.
- Flyaways - When the judges decide that the bird is out of the dog's reach (too high or too far ahead of him) and the gunners do not have a good shot at it (out of range or not in a safe direction), they call a flyaway and the dog must be recalled. It is the judges' decision when to call a flyaway.
- Returning after a flyaway - If a flyaway is called, the handler must recall the dog and the dog must return within a reasonable time. If not, he will not pass. It is the judges' decision what a reasonable length of time is.
- Note – if the handler slows or stops the dog to give the gunners a better shot, it is not to be penalized, whether or not it is successful. Sit to flush is not required.
- If after the required flush, the judges feel that the dog has not adequately demonstrated his quartering ability, some extra quartering with no find or flush may be needed to allow the dog to better show his skill. Often this can be done while moving out of the field or on to the next test area.

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**Section 3. UIC Hunt Dead Test.**

The Hunt Dead demonstrates the dog's desire and natural ability to hunt. He should eagerly enter cover, finding the bird and retrieving it to his handler. For the UIC dogs, this test also demonstrates their willingness to leave the handler and hunt for more birds after flushing the live bird. The Find area should be approximately 25 yards by 25 yards with light cover available.

Conducting the Hunt Dead Test:

- A dead bird is placed (planted) in light cover, hiding the bird from the dog's view. The location where the bird is hidden changes frequently, so neither the dog nor the handler knows exactly where it is. A hunting dog should be able to distinguish between old scent and the fresh scent of the bird.
- There is no gunshot for this test.
- The handler and dog go to the edge of the Find area to start.
- The handler sends the dog to find the bird.
- After sending the dog, the handler may follow and encourage the dog, but the dog must find the bird on its own.
- If the dog leaves the area, it may be called or handled back to the area and further encouraged to hunt.
- The dog should find the bird in a reasonable time. In the UIC, retrieving the bird is not required, but the dog must find the bird and show interest in it.

**Section 4. UIC General Requirements.**

- Cover – should be light, but tall enough to hide the birds and dense enough to hold them. The birds should not be readily visible.
- Retrieving and delivery of the bird – Retrieving the bird is not required for the UIC, but the dog must show sustained interest in the birds. Picking up the bird and dropping it without delivering it to the handler is one way of demonstrating sustained interest. Any contact with the bird would qualify as sustained interest, including nosing it.
- Recasts:
  - One recast is allowed in the Response to Birds and Gunfire.
  - One recast is allowed in the Hunt Dead.
- Steadiness to shot and flush / Sit to flush – not required but the dog must not be gun shy. The dog may be startled by the gunfire, but must work through it. In fairness to the dog, if he shows too much gun shyness, the test will be stopped and the dog will not pass. If the dog startles at the gunshot, but keeps working, the test may continue with the shyness noted.
- Steadiness at the line – not required. The dog may be restrained. The dog may be put on leash to go from one area to the next. The dog may be restrained at the line on a snap leash, check cord, or by holding the collar. If a slip lead was used to bring the dog to the line, it must be removed before each test begins. The leash or check cord must be removed before sending the dog.
- Touching the dog – Handlers may touch their dogs during the test, including taking a hold of the collar before taking the bird from the dog, as long there is no intimidation.

**Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program**  
**Rules and Regulations – Chapter 3. Upland Working Certificate (UWC)**

## **Chapter 3. Upland Working Certificate (UWC)**

The Upland Working Certificate test (UWC) is for Poodles with the desire, ability and training to be good upland hunting partners. They should have already demonstrated their prey drive and willingness to work through gunfire. Dogs currently being used for upland type hunting should be able to pass this level. With some training, non-hunting dogs that possess the drive and instinct should also be able to pass this test.

The UWC tests include:

1. Walkup and Retrieve
2. Hunt Dead
3. Quartering and Flushing (two birds)

The tests should be run in this order, with one dog completing all the tests before the next dog is tested.

### **Section 1. UWC Walkup and Retrieve Test.**

The purpose of the Walkup and Retrieve is to evaluate the dog's response to gunfire, his ability to find a bird that he saw thrown, and his willingness to retrieve the bird to his handler.

#### **Conducting the Walkup and Retrieve Test:**

- A hunting party, consisting of a dog, handler and judges, begins their walk out into the field. The gunner and thrower are in the field, around 25 to 40 yards away.
- At a signal from one of the judges, the thrower calls "here comes one" and throws a (dead) bird. The gunner, who must be visible, shoots toward the bird. The bird should land about 25 to 40 yards in front of the dog, in light to moderate hunting cover.
- The handler sends the dog to retrieve the bird. He doesn't need to wait until the bird hits the ground but it should be close.
- The dog retrieves the bird to the area of the handler (within 6').

### **Section 2. UWC Quartering and Flushing Test.**

The UWC Quartering and Flushing is the same as the UIC Quartering and Flushing except for the following:

- Two birds are to be planted, hunted and flushed.
- Cover should be light to moderate.
- Test Requirements for the UWC Quartering and Flushing
  - Two birds must be found and flushed
  - At least one bird must be shot at.
  - At least one bird should be retrieved, though failure to retrieve a bird in the Quartering and Flushing will not keep the dog from passing if the other work is solid.
- After two birds, have been flushed by the dog, if the requirements have not been met for at least one bird shot at and at least one bird retrieved, the following sequence should be followed:
  - A third live bird is to be planted, hunted, flushed and hopefully shot and retrieved.
  - If the requirements have still not been met, a live bird is to be hand thrown for the gunners to shoot.
  - If this still does not produce shots or a retrievable bird, a dead bird (hopefully bloodied but in good condition) is to be thrown as a shot is fired.This will give the dog the opportunity to be successful.
- All retrievable birds should be retrieved to the area of the handler. Birds which go past fences, lodge in trees, etc. are not retrievable. The judges decide whether it is a retrievable bird. This is not specifically a marking test, so the handler and judges may help find the bird. Precise handling

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(retriever style) is discouraged, since the exact location of the bird is not really known. Upland dogs are relied on for finding birds.

**Section 3. UWC Hunt Dead.**

The UWC Hunt Dead is the same as the UIC Hunt Dead except for the following:

- The bird will be planted in light to moderate cover.
- The handler may move laterally as needed, but is not allowed to enter the Find area.
- The bird must be retrieved to the area of the handler (within 6').

**Section 4. UWC General Requirements.**

- Cover – the birds should be in light to moderate hunting cover. The cover needs to be dense enough to hold a bird and tall enough so the birds are not seen by dog and handler.
- Delivery of the bird:
  - The dog must deliver the bird to the area of the handler (within 6'). Then the handler may move up to take the bird either from the dog or off the ground, taking a hold of the collar if necessary.
  - With live birds, the dog must maintain control of the bird until the handler takes it. He does not have to hold the bird off the ground, but dropping a live bird and leaving it for the handler to pick up will not pass. If the dog drops the bird, he must pick it up or pin it down again before the handler takes it. Pinning down a struggling bird would count as maintaining control.
  - If the bird escapes, the dog should recapture it and bring it back again.
- Recasts – In the UWC, one recast is allowed in the Walkup (after the dog was sent for the retrieve) or in the Hunt Dead.
- Steadiness to shot and flush / Sit to flush – not required but the dog must not be gun shy.
- Steadiness at the line – not required. The dog may be restrained. The dog may be put on leash to go from one area to the next. The dog may be restrained at the line on a snap leash, a check cord, or by holding the collar. If a slip lead was used to bring the dog to the line, it must be removed before each test begins. The leash or check cord must be removed before sending the dog.
- Touching the dog – Handlers may touch their dogs during the test, including taking a hold of the collar before taking the bird from the dog. Intimidation is not allowed.

**Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program**  
**Rules and Regulations – Chapter 4. Upland Working Certificate Excellent (UWCX)**

## **Chapter 4. Upland Working Certificate Excellent (UWCX)**

The Upland Working Certificate Excellent test (UWCX) is for Poodles which have earned the UWC, showing their upland hunting abilities. Good, experienced hunting dogs should be able to pass this test. Non-hunting dogs with drive, hunting and retrieving instincts and training should also be able to pass.

The UWCX tests include:

1. Walkup, Retrieve and Honor
2. Quartering and Flushing (two birds)
3. Hunt Dead

The tests should be run in this order, with one dog completing all of the tests from the Walkup/Retrieve through the Hunt Dead. When the next dog comes to the line, the previous dog becomes the honor dog to complete his test.

### **Section 1. UWCX Walkup, Retrieve and Honor Test.**

The purpose of the UWCX Walkup, Retrieve and Honor is to demonstrate the dog's control, his ability to find and retrieve a bird that he saw fall, and his willingness to work near another dog and to honor another dog at work. The test is the same as the UWC Walkup and Retrieve with the addition of the honor dog and handler.

#### **Conducting the Walkup and Honor Test:**

- The working dog and the honor dog, which has just finished his other tests, are brought to the line off lead. Both dogs should be at heel. Both dogs must be able to see the test and the other dog. Steadiness is not required, but the dogs must not interfere with each other.
- A hunting party, consisting of a working dog and handler, the honor dog and handler, and the judges, begin their walk out into the field. The gunner and thrower are in the field, 25 to 40 yards away. The honor dog and handler walk with the group, approximately 15 to 30 yards to the side.
- At a signal from one of the judges, the thrower calls "here comes one" and throws a (dead) bird. The gunner, who must be visible, shoots toward the bird. The bird should land about 25 to 40 yards in front of the dogs.
- The handler sends the working dog to retrieve the bird. The working dog is sent by the handler after the bird hits the ground. The honor dog must remain with his handler. The honoring handler is allowed to talk quietly to his dog, but must not interfere with the working dog.
- The judge will release the honor dog when his test is finished, usually after the working dog is sent to retrieve. The honor dog may be put on lead immediately. A controlled break will not keep the honor dog from passing if it is short and the dog can be re-heeled without interfering with the working dog.
- The working dog retrieves the bird to his handler.
- The working dog will return at the end of his UWCX tests, to become the honor dog for the next working dog, completing his test.

### **Section 2. UWCX Quartering and Flushing Test.**

The UWCX Quartering and Flushing, with 2 birds found and flushed, is the same as the UWC Quartering and Flushing except for the following

- The test should include moderate to heavy cover.
- The bird must be retrieved to hand to the handler, not just to the area of the handler.

### **Section 3. UWCX Hunt Dead Test.**

The UWCX Hunt Dead is the same as the UIC Hunt Dead except for the following:

- The bird should be hidden in moderate to heavy cover.

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- The dog is sent from a starting line that is between 15 and 25 yards from the Find area. The dog may be handled to the Hunt Dead area, but not within the area.
- After the dog enters the Hunt Dead area, the handler may move forward up to half the distance to the area. The handler may move laterally as needed, but may not go more than the halfway to the Find area.
- The bird must be retrieved to the handler.

**Section 4. UWCX General Information and Requirements.**

- Cover – the birds should be in moderate to heavy hunting cover. Height of the cover is not nearly as important as the density of the cover and the ability of the cover to hold and conceal the birds. It should be realistic hunting cover.
- Delivery of the bird:
  - The dog must deliver the bird to hand to the handler.
  - With live birds, the dog must maintain control of the bird until the handler takes it. He does not have to hold the bird off the ground, but dropping it and leaving it for the handler to pick up will not pass. If the dog drops the bird, he must pick it up and deliver it to the handlers hand.
  - If the bird escapes, the dog should recapture it and bring it back again.
- Recasts:
  - One recast is allowed on the Hunt Dead.
- Steadiness to wing and shot, or Sit to flush – not required.
- Steadiness at the line – required. The dog is brought to the line off-lead and remains off-lead for the test
- Touching the dog – The handler may not touch the dog during the test. This includes while the dog is honoring. Incidental touching while the handler is taking the bird from the dog will not be faulted unless it is attempted intimidation or abuse.

**Poodle Club of America – Upland Hunting Program**  
**Rules and Regulations – Chapter 4. Upland Working Certificate Excellent (UWCX)**

## **Chapter 4. Upland Working Certificate Master (UWCM)**

The Upland Working Certificate Master test (UWCM) is for Poodles which have earned the UWCX, showing their advanced upland hunting abilities. Exceptional, experienced hunting dogs will find this a difficult test. Non-hunting dogs with drive, hunting and retrieving instincts and training may be able to pass with sufficient advanced training.

The UWCM tests include:

1. Quartering and flushing of two birds with steady to wing and shot, with delivery to hand
2. Trailing and retrieve

The tests should be run in this order, with one dog completing all of the tests. The exception to this sequence would be if the Trailing Test needed to be moved to another location for better scenting conditions.

### **Section 1. UWCM Quartering and Flushing Test.**

The UWCM Quartering and Flushing, with 2 birds found and flushed, is the same as the UWC Quartering and Flushing except for the following

- The test should include moderate to heavy cover.
- The dog must be steady to wing and shot.

### **Section 2. UWCM Trailing Test**

This test simulates trailing, finding and retrieving a crippled bird. The dog should indicate that he has located scent, follow the trail to the bird, and retrieve the bird to the handler. Once the dog has located the trail, he should continue to make progress toward the bird, with no more than brief instances of back-tracking in case of confusion about the trail.

#### **The Trail:**

- The trail should be 40 to 50 yards long, with at least change of direction. It should simulate the realistic trail of a crippled bird. The bird used to drag the trail should be planted at the end, for the dog to find and retrieve.  
Or a harnessed bird may be used to lay a trail, with a dead bird planted at the end of the trail.
- Wind direction needs to be taken into consideration so that the dog will not be able to air scent from a distance instead of trailing.
- The trail and the location of the bird should be changed frequently.
- Ideally a fresh trail in a fresh area should be laid for each dog, but this may not be possible. If the same trail is used for more than one dog, it will not necessarily be re-laid, as this would over-scent the trail, making it more difficult. It should only be re-laid if more than a half hour has passed since its last use. A trail should only be reused once without re-laying it and only be re-laid once. That means that no more than 4 dogs should be run on a given trail.
- Whenever possible, the trail should be laid by suspending the dead bird between 2 track layers with at least 6 feet between the bird and each track layer. By having at least, a 12 feet distance between the track layers, the dog should clearly be trailing the bird and not the track layers.
- An optional method is to have a 'trailing' pole of at least 6'-8' suspending the dead bird drag, or a live harnessed bird to be walked, at the end of the pole, carried by a single trail layer.
- A discrete marker should indicate the area of the change of direction, allowing the trail to be re-laid consistently.

#### **Conducting the Trailing test:**

- The trail is laid with a dead bird that is planted at the end of the trail. Or a live harnessed bird with a dead bird planted at the end of the trail.

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- The dog and handler go to the start of the trail and the dog is told to find and follow the trail. The handler remains at the start of the trail, not entering the area of the trail.
- Once the dog has been set on the trail, the handler may encourage him verbally, by hand gestures or by whistles. Commands such as “back” and “over”, hand signals or whistle commands indicate handling and are inappropriate. These shall not be used.
- One recast is allowed.
- When the dog finds the bird, he is to retrieve it to the handler.

**Other Information on the Trailing test:**

- The style of trailing does not matter, but the dog must clearly trail the bird, not quarter to find it. The dog may stay precisely on the trail with nose down, or work the trail with head up, or a combination. But it must be obvious the dog is trailing and not lining or quartering.
- A dog that quarters widely and does not demonstrate that it is following the trail shall not pass.
- Regardless of the style, the dog must continue to make progress along the trail in the direction of the bird, with no more than brief backtracking to work through problems.

**Section 4. UWCM General Information and Requirements.**

- Cover – the birds should be in heavy hunting cover. Height of the cover is not nearly as important as the density of the cover and the ability of the cover to hold and conceal the birds. It should be realistic hunting cover.
- Delivery of the bird:
  - The dog must deliver the bird to the handler. Delivery to hand is required.
- Recasts:
  - One recast is allowed in the Trailing Test.
- Steadiness to wing and shot. After the shot, a master hunting dog must positively demonstrate its steadiness to wing and shot. A sit to flush, while preferred, is not required, however stopping forward motion as the birds gets up taking wing, after escaping the dog’s grasp –is required. The handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated. The judge will indicate to the handler when to release the dog to retrieve, or in event of a fly off when to recall the dog.
- Steadiness at the line – required. The dog is brought to the line off-lead and remains off-lead for the test
- Touching the dog – The handler may not touch the dog during the test. Incidental touching while the handler is taking the bird from the dog will not be faulted unless it is attempted intimidation or abuse.
- Guns- An unloaded shotgun (or facsimile) shall be carried by the handler for the field portion of the test. The gun will be shouldered and gun safety shall be judged.

## **Chapter 5. Judging Guidelines**

### **Section 1. Upland Hunting Style of the Poodle.**

The Poodle is a versatile, all-purpose hunting dog, adept at finding and retrieving upland game birds and retrieving waterfowl. Training and field experience can affect the degree to which the Poodle exhibits the hunting style described below. The following is an overview of the typical characteristics shown by a Poodle while hunting upland game.

The Poodle will cover ground efficiently and at a moderately quick pace, allowing it to maintain its endurance throughout a day in the field. Some Poodles will occasionally employ a bouncing technique, particularly in high, dense cover. The Poodle possesses an excellent nose, exceptional hearing, strong drive and great intelligence and will use ground and air scent as well as hearing to find and flush game. The Poodle will generally maintain a reasonable working distance, quartering gun to gun if trained to do so, although windshield wiper-like quartering may not be typical. Rather than spending time in

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unproductive areas, it will focus on those areas that are more likely to hold birds, showing no reluctance to enter even the densest cover.

After finding game, the Poodle may pause, hesitating as it attempts to locate the bird using sight, hearing or scent. A determined drive toward the bird then completes the flush. Both hard and softer flushes are equally acceptable. The athleticism of the Poodle will sometimes enable it to catch a flushed bird. Trapping the bird is considered the most difficult form of flushing and is one that many Poodles excel at. In these tests, it is counted as a flush. In the UWC and UWCX, the Poodle should show no reluctance to retrieve the bird to the handler.

In conclusion, a Poodle is a very capable upland hunting dog. He is an efficient hunter who will search the field to find birds. The “style” demonstrated by a flushing dog of any breed must culminate in finding/flushing and retrieving the birds. A dog that fails to find and flush must not pass, no matter his style.

## **Section 2. Philosophy Behind These Tests.**

Poodles were actually a foundation breed for several of the multipurpose spaniels (Irish Water Spaniel, American Water Spaniel) and versatile retrievers (Curly Coated), having been selected for their intelligence, tenacity and talent in the tasks of searching for, and finding various types of “game”.

**The UIC test is an instinct test**, but requires some basic obedience. It should be done like an easy training session, exciting the dog without overwhelming him. Watch the dog’s responses to see what instincts he shows. If he shows gun shyness or fear, the test should be stopped and the dog does not pass. Retrieving is not required at this level, but it is very desirable. Any birds retrieved must be fit for the table.

- The Response to Birds and Gunfire test is to test the dog’s interest in birds and tolerance of gunfire at a distance. After being teased with a dead bird, he should be interested in it as it’s tossed into light hunting cover, 15’ to 30’ in front of him. A gunshot will come from the field as the bird is tossed. He should find the bird and show sustained interest in it, whether or not he retrieves it.
- The Quartering and Flushing test is to test his willingness to go hunt some more, including hunting in light cover. He must flush a bird and hear the gunfire when it flushes. Retrieving is desirable, but not required. If it’s a no-kill test, all birds are automatically fly away. The dog must return to the handler when called, with or without the bird.
- The Hunt Dead is run last to see if the dog will leave the handler and go back into cover to hunt again. It is also to see if he is still interested in a dead bird after having flushed a live one. He must find the bird, but does not have to retrieve it.

**The UWC is a working level test.** A good upland hunting dog should be able to pass this level. A non-hunting dog with drive, instinct and a little training should also be able to pass. The non-hunting dogs should have had some field training and exposure to birds, but they may not have. If the dog shows gun shyness or fear, the test should be stopped and the dog not passed. New handlers should be helped and encouraged. The birds retrieved must be fit for the table.

- The Walkup is intended to safely test the dog’s interest in a bird thrown into light cover, his response to gunfire at a distance, his ability to find the bird, and his willingness to retrieve the dead bird.
- The Quarter and Flushing test is to see them quarter and hunt in light to moderate cover. They must flush two birds for the gunners. They should retrieve at least one bird.
- The Hunt Dea is run next to see if the dog will leave the handler without seeing a bird thrown, and go into cover to hunt up a bird and bring it back.

**The UWCX is an advanced test for good, experienced hunting companions.** The dogs should be judged as such, whether or not they have had the chance to hunt. They must work off-lead, honor while another dog works, and have another dog honor them while they work. They are to be steady at the line, but not steady to wing and shot.

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- The Walkup is to test off-lead control and the dog's willingness to work with an honor dog in the area. The test should not be set up particularly as a breaking test or a marking test, though the dog must mark and retrieve.
- The Quarter and Flushing test is to test their willingness to challenge moderate to heavy cover to find and flush birds. They must flush two birds, retrieving at least one. They must retrieve any bird that the judges determine is retrievable, but retrieving at least one bird is required.
- For the Hunt Dead, the dog is sent to the Find area. He may be handled to the area, but then it's up to the dog to find the bird and retrieve it. This is not a retriever style blind.
- The Honor is to see if, after the excitement of flushing live birds, they will honor another dog that is working.

**The UWCX is an upper level test for exceptional, experienced hunting companions.** The dogs should be judged as such, whether or not they have had the chance to hunt. They must work off-lead, and are to be steady at the line, as well as steady to wing and shot.

- The Quarter and Flushing test is to test their willingness to challenge heavy cover to find and flush birds. They must flush two birds, retrieving at least one. They must retrieve any bird that the judges determine is retrievable, but retrieving at least one bird is required. They must show steadiness to wing and shot on all flushes.
- The Trailing test is to see if they will track a cripple and retrieve it. They must find the trail and follow it to the planted bird, not simply quarter the area until they find it. The tracking style does not matter as long as they are obviously trailing, not lining, quartering or wind-scenting.

### **Section 3. Judging Information.**

**Judging is to be Pass/Fail** – Except as noted in these rules, these tests are to be judged in accordance with the *Regulations & Guidelines for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels*. PCA's intention is to encourage the participation of Poodle owners and handlers in all aspects of field work with these tests. Score sheets are available to be used in evaluating and documenting the performance of the dogs.

**Decisions** – The decision of the judges shall be final in all matters relating to the test performance of the dogs. Full discretionary power is given to the judges to withhold any certificate award for want of merit. It is the judges' job to set up the tests, not the committee's job, but judges should be receptive to suggestions from the Upland Committee.

**Questions** – Should the judges have questions prior to a judging assignment, they may contact the test committee of the club for answers.

**Controlled Breaks, Recasting, Other Disqualifying Behaviors** – Refer to the *AKC Spaniel Hunt Test Rules / Guidelines for Spaniel Hunting Tests / Part IV Scoring / B. Ability Categories, Disqualifying Traits* for definitions and interpretational issues. These include blinking a bird, failure to find birds, refusal to flush, recast, gun shyness, viciousness and out of control, hard mouth, and refused retrieve.