

Alternative Field Pass Survey Results

In the last issue of **QUACKERS**, an article was published on the Alternative Field Pass and its use to satisfy the field requirement for the Club Championship. As previously published, the Board was approached by a member suggesting that for the US club championship, our rules should be either accept any retriever field organization pass or accept only AKC and NSDTRC (USA) field passes. Any retriever field organization was further defined to include non-US organizations offering field tests comparable to tests offered by the various currently approved organizations. Subsequently several members expressed different views on what should constitute a valid field pass to be recognized as an NSDTRC (USA) Champion. To assist the Board in having a better understanding of the views of a larger sampling of the membership, members were invited to participate in an online survey or write letters to the Secretary to express their thoughts and opinions.

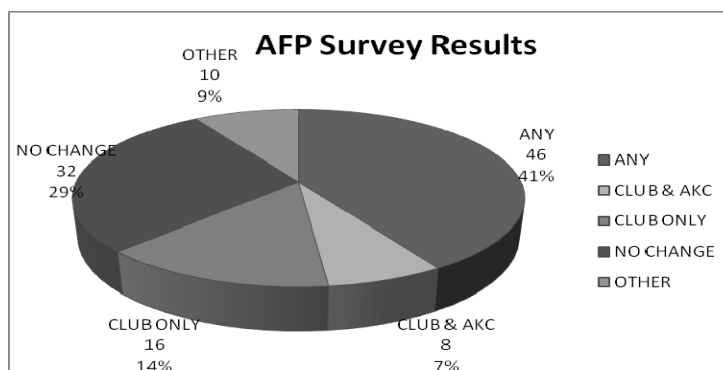
The survey was made available online on March 1st with the deadline for responding as April 15th. At the time of the survey, the Club listed 752 individual members. After removing duplicate responses from several members, there were 112 responses to the survey. One letter was received and two responses were privately emailed. The remaining 109 responses were made using the online survey. Forty-seven respondents offered comments and are provided in this issue of Quackers as well as on the Club website.

The survey offered five response choices and results are provided in the following table:

Response Choice	No.	Percent
Leave the rules the same.	32	29%
Allow any retriever organization field pass from ANY organization that meets or exceeds the Alternative Field Pass requirements.	46	41%
Allow only NSDTRC (USA) and AKC field passes.	8	7%
Only allow NSDTRC (USA) field passes.	16	14%
Other	10	9%
TOTAL	112	100%

Where Do We Go From Here?

The Board will be addressing the results of the survey at their online Board session beginning in June. As was pointed out this was not a vote of the membership on what changes would be made to our present rules, but a soliciting of opinions from you, the membership, to assist the Board in its further deliberations.



The Board sincerely offers a big THANK-YOU to all of you that responded to the survey. Your comments are greatly appreciated and offer a lot of “food for thought” as the Board addresses the issue at hand.

Alternative Field Pass Survey Comments

Allow any retriever organization field pass from ANY organization that meets or exceeds the Alternative Field Pass* requirements.

1.	The field requirement is to show the dog has abilities, and so what difference is it if that happens in Canada or the US? I feel the club tests are the best, but they are not easy to get to for everyone. And AKC hunt tests are pretty intimidating to newcomers if they have never tried any field work. I like the fact that the BRT can be used to encourage new people to try field with their dogs, and have found the UKC tests are also very welcoming and easy to convince people to give it a try. And once people get started in field work, they often continue. So let's not make it any more difficult.
2.	Our rules all ready state "...any other AKC Retriever Club WC Test, the pass may be used as an alternative to fulfilling the NSDTRC Championship requirement in place of passing the Basic Retrieving and Tolling Test Not to complicate matters, but does the board know that a lab WC only requires one land retrieve? Our club tests are far and few between and limit field testing opportunities. Having put on 3 sets of club tests in conjunction with the YGRC, it is time consuming, costly and often difficult to find workers, land and even birds sometimes. Quite frankly the tolling aspect of the test sets us apart, but to limit the club CH to that aspect alone would limit opportunities. The club set a precedent long ago by allowing alternative passes. It was to test basic instinct, which the alternative tests would do. I would like to encourage more fields testing of potential club champions, not less.
3.	Although the idea of requiring a tolling test seems theoretically appropriate, for some very birdy dogs, it may require a great deal of training. I'm thinking specifically of [Name Withheld] who got his CH with 3 5-point majors, but couldn't pass the tolling section of the BRT because he wanted birds more than bumpers. He refused to toll when he knew there were ducks out there. Therefore, he didn't get his club CH until he passed an alternate test that didn't require tolling. Should he have been deprived of his club championship because he was birdy and didn't have an experienced field trainer? That would seem counter to the purpose/spirit of the requirement.
4.	Make hunt tests more readily available; therefore, providing less travel time to tests and more NSDTR (USA) CH titles. It is important to encourage breeders to breed first for hunting ability, second for conformation - but both are important. Let's keep the tollers as they were originally bred. I would hate to see the breed divided like so many others breeds are. I intend to use the tests that are now available (AKC, UKC, WC) because I live in an area where they are within a couple hours' driving time. Everyone should have the same opportunity.
5.	Since the requirement is for a basic field test, any organization that puts on field tests should suffice.
6.	Though I am new to Tollers, preserving the natural retrieving and hunting drive in Tollers is very important. We do not want a drastic breed split like Labs, Golden Retrievers, and Setters. If these other organizations meet or exceeds the Alternative Field Pass then I see no problem including them, especially since I see a NSDTR USA Club championship to be more important than an AKC one, at least ours requires the dogs to do what they were bred to do, Retrieve. If someone takes the time, effort and money to train their Toller, travel to a test site and run their dog and receive a pass then they should not be punished for not running at a Club test, or AKC test, especially if the rules exceed what the USA Club already requires.
7.	I think that the second choice brings the US Toller Club more in line with the NSDTR Club of Canada. In Canada the Gun Dog class is an unofficial class at CKC Specialty shows and CKC has not objected to the presence of dogs with titles from US organizations such as NSDTRC(USA), NAHRA and UKC, as well as AKC. After all, this ruling is for Club functions only, I see no reason why AKC should object, but I am not all that familiar with AKC rules. However, surely NSDTRC(USA) is allowed some autonomy in purely internal affairs.
8.	I can see the reasoning behind only allowing the club test to be used - since it involves tolling. But if you are going to accept AKC JH, which doesn't involve tolling, then you might as well open it up to other organizations requiring the same 2 landmarks/2 watermarks.
9.	We (the Club) want to encourage Tollers to do field activities and demonstrate hunting abilities/instincts to preserve these in the breed, so, I think any qualified organization's field pass (that meets our requirements) should be allowed. Hunting instinct or ability is not something that is limited to one country. Let's do all we can to encourage people to participate. Field training is very time consuming, often requiring lots of travel and expense so I think it would be helpful to do whatever we can do to encourage people. Thanks.

10.	<p>My NSDTR is two years old and an avid tolling/retriever. We have been training to go to the Backyard Classic in May 2007 (Region 2). Another family event is now scheduled and we will miss the opportunity to get her BRT or better. If another retriever organization field pass was accepted then we would not have to wait until the Nationals to attempt what we have been training so long for!</p> <p>The other retriever breeds accept one another's field passes. I don't know of any Toller that retrieves on land and water that won't "toll". As I see it, that is the big thing that separates our organization. Is that what this is about...being separate, different and isolated or being inclusive?</p> <p>I'm not into the "pretty" dog syndrome nor am I about my dog is better than your dog. It is interesting to see other breeds work and do their best. I never had heard of a "Toller" before I saw one do Agility at an AKC Collie Club Trial! Hmm...a Toller at a Collie Club Trial...interesting!</p> <p>By being exclusive the NSDTR might find they are excluded. That would be a terrible shame.</p>
11.	<p>NAHRA has long been a supporter of our breed and its program is an excellent test of hunting ability.</p>
12.	<p>I think the BRT should be discontinued all together. It is embarrassingly easy because the marks are so short. It is difficult to find judges that understand the test. It takes extra club resources and grounds to hold the test. Most dogs fail it multiple times before passing, cheapening the test and not really proving anything.</p> <p>I have two ideas:</p> <p>1 - Make the club CH require the WC title, or a pass from any other organization - all of these tests (from other organizations) are more difficult than the BRT anyway. If most people are getting their pass that way, it doesn't make sense to keep the BRT. The WC is comparable in difficulty to an HRC test.</p> <p>2 - One other suggestion - put a maximum age limit on dogs that can run the BRT - like 18 months. So we don't end up having dogs that fail it many times before passing, which doesn't really prove that they have natural ability anyway.</p>
13.	<p>I think in fairness to the Canadian members of our organization that compete in conformation in the US, we should allow any CKC field pass to meet the requirements.</p>
14.	<p>"All dogs shall be required to pass a basic hunting test." If that is the rule, then any recognized, organization putting on a sanctioned test should qualify to meet the requirements. This includes CKC WC.</p>
15.	<p>NB *This comment may have already been sent in error. Please check for duplication. Thanks! "When it comes to approving judges for field tests, the NSDTRC(USA) currently recognizes CKC field titles as acceptable judging qualifications as set out in Club test rules and regulations. In other words, CKC titles are acceptable equivalents for persons putting titles ON their dogs but the titles themselves are not currently recognized as meeting Awards criteria. Is this perhaps a bit of a double standard?</p>
16.	<p>The idea is to encourage people to do field work. As long as the test is comprobable in requirements I don't see why we would not allow it.</p>
17.	<p>My understanding is that the goal of the field requirement for the US Toller Championship title is to preserve and foster the hunting instinct in the breed. While I undeniably support the requirement, I also believe that if the dog has demonstrated its hunting ability and met the requirement, it is irrelevant what organization administered the test.</p>

Allow only NSDTRC (USA) and AKC field passes.

1.	<p>Realistically, it should be limited to club tests only which incorporate the tolling test. However, since we are an AKC club, and club tests are few and far between, AKC tests should count also as they are generally widely available. (I also believe the VC/X program should be limited to AKC and club titles)</p> <p>I would also like to see the BRT limited by age, 2 years or less. This level is a puppy test and having MUCH older dogs pass it after trying for year after year, dilutes the Club Championship philosophy.</p> <p>It takes very limited training for a well bred toller to pass this test. It has little to do with access to birds, guns and water, but more with pedigree.</p>
2.	<p>I think we should apply to the AKC to request that JH only be awarded to a dog that passes a tolling test. The AKC already does this with the American Water Spaniel.</p>
3.	<p>it is a "US" club, therefore, use only AKC and the club passes, when you get into other organizations requirements, they may not be the same,</p>

Only allow NSDTRC (USA) field passes.

1.	<p>I like the idea of a Toller actually Tolling to earn their NSDTRC (USA) club championship. This is a US club championship so they must earn it on US soil.</p>
2.	<p>Tolling is what our breed is about, Nova Scotia Duck "Tolling" Retriever..... The title is NSDTR Club of USA title. By limiting the title to club tests only would encourage more participation</p>

	<p>in club tests, thus encouraging members to become involved and participate in putting on a club field event in their region. I believe every region could and should have a field event. Tollers from other countries can participate and earn the NSDTRC US Championship title too, but they need to come here to do it, just as we have to go to other countries to earn the titles there.</p>
	<p>I would like to see the rule changed to only allow NSDTRC (USA) field tests for several reasons: 1.) The breed was developed to toll and tolling should be part of the test. 2.) This is a club title and I feel that it should be earned at a club event. 3.) I think that it will encourage people to become more involved in the club. 4.) I think that it will also encourage more club field tests, especially at regional specialties.</p>
3.	<p>The club could maintain a list of individual members that would be willing to help a region put on a field test. There could be a pamphlet, a seminar or even a video about organizing a club field test. I would be willing to take part in any or all of these projects.</p> <p>If the club is going to allow AFP I would strongly oppose not allowing NAHRA & HRC tests. These organizations allowed us to play the game long before AKC did.</p>
4.	<p>Ok, guys. I've already voted. But I'd like to stress the fact that I'd prefer that only NSDTR passes count. For that, I mean, that the dog must TOLL!</p>
5.	<p>Other club test could be allowed ONLY if there is a tolling test incorporated into the test. If this is not done, we are breeding out an instinct that took years to incorporate into the breed. The main objective for the breed is to toll. What the heck would it be like if we had Nova Scotia Duck Retrievers. Let's keep the TOLLER in the name.</p>
6.	<p>If the purpose of the club is to preserve the integrity of the breed than the tolling segment of the test is imperative. If the club test is the only test that has tolling, it should be the only approved test.</p> <p>To that end, the club should provide opportunities to pass the test and every region should be required to have at least one test per year.</p> <p>If the purpose of the club is to be a social organization that has an interest in Tollers, then the preservation of the tolling isn't the most important thing and any test should be ok.</p>
7.	<p>This is an American club title and therefore I believe that it should be earned in the US. The alternative pass does not require tolling. I don't think that this is a trivial portion of our club test and it sets our breed apart. If we do change the guidelines then maybe it will encourage our regions to hold more tests. I would also be in favor of asking for tolling to be added to, for example, a Golden clubs WC test.</p>
8.	<p>I believe members should support the Club and Club activities, therefore only NSDTRC (USA) field passes, by which I mean those put on by the Club as well as those put on by other clubs but under NSDTRC (USA) rules, should be accepted toward a Club CH. Only our Club field tests call for a tolling test, and tolling is what makes our breed distinctive. Those of us who have belonged to the Club for a long time are accustomed to travelling far and wide in search of Club titles, and folks can always get a retriever club in their area to add an NSDTRC (USA) WC series to Golden and Lab WC tests.</p>
9	<p>Let us continue to keep the Tollers tolling.</p>
10.	<p>I am writing in regards to the Alternate Field Test discussion.</p> <p>To begin with, I think we need a definition of our emphasis. Are we testing a Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, or are we testing a Nova Scotia Duck Retriever. That is the crux. All alternate field titles leave out the tolling definition. Does the Club as a whole find that important or a non-issue.</p> <p>Historically, we were able to obtain a Club Championship without tolling. Now we can obtain an AKC Championship without stepping foot into the field. There is no longer incentive to working in the field. Those who chose to do so should be rewarded.</p> <p>I believe that this now places special emphasis on our Club tests, and their importance. In my opinion, the Club Championship now becomes the jewel in the crown. Obtaining a Club Championship should be a challenge. Tolling is the definitive mark of the breed. It should be maintained within the Club Field Program with no alternative field passes allowed.</p> <p>If one takes seriously the need for alternate field titles (without tolling) for those unable to attend club sponsored events, then we need to address the WC portion of the Rusty Jones Awards. Although the RJA's are privately sponsored and the criteria by donors, it is still a Club sanctioned award. Is there a need to provide alternatives for members who cannot get to a Club test?</p> <p>From my perspective, I see more Club field events cropping up than ever before. The lack of Club sponsored field events in certain areas of the country can be remedied by those Regional members organizing their own field event. I spent many years planning and hosting field events, and only stepped down when the quality of the dogs</p>

	<p>had advanced beyond available space to run events on our property.</p> <p>Again, I see this as a question of what we want our Club Championship to be. Since becoming AKC, the significance of the Club Championship has dwindled. If tolling is the hallmark of the breed, then our tests and our titles should reflect it.</p> <p>We are AKC, but more importantly, we are NSDTRC. AKC allowances should not preclude what we as the guardians of the breed, feel is important and of value.</p>
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Leave the rules the same.

1.	<p>At this time and as the article says most applicants are using the NSDTRC(USA) Tests to qualify. I think if we start including any retriever organization in any country that we may see a drop in attendance at our club tests.</p>
	<p>Thank you for seeking feedback from the membership on this issue.</p> <p>Although I selected "Leave the rules the same," I would prefer to see the Labrador Retriever WC removed from the list of approved alternate field passes because their test requires only a single land mark:</p>
2.	<p>"The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. Working Certificate requires the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A land single retrieve of approximately 50 yards in light cover. 2. Back to back singles or a double in the water. One bird should be retrieved in swimming water if possible. 3. The dog is not required to be steady or deliver to hand, however the judge(s) may designate an area for delivery. 4. The dog should not be gun shy."
3.	<p>I feel that if the field opportunities are decreased, interest and participation will also decrease. I live in an area that does not offer club tests, with the closest one being 6-7 hrs. from me. It is not feasible for me to make that kind of trip, because I save that kind of time off for the national specialties. However, AKC and UKC tests are plentiful in my area, allowing me ample opportunities(in addition to the once a year specialty tests) to get my dogs out in the field and if need be, utilize those passes for club championships. I strongly believe the rules should remain unchanged.</p>
4.	<p>Taking away the alternate field pass and making the test confined to getting a club ch out of reach of many and very discouraging to the beginners. I can't begin to tell you how many phone calls from puppy owners I have gotten from very upset owners that their dog may never get a chance to be a Club CH cause they can't travel the 1500 miles to the National Specialty or even the 7 or 8 hour drive to the Region 6 test. From my perspective also as a breeder, I can't always just drop everything and drive 1500 miles to the Back Yard Classic - or the National Specialty, etc. There have been hunt tests in Region 6 for the last two years because I took the initiative and organized them - prior to that, barring the national in 04 - we had not had a test since 2000. The reality is unless the club can somehow make club tests more readily available for the average members, then I say NO to any changes in the current rules.</p>
5.	<p>Instead of adding additional ways to obtain the club championship I would encourage more people to organize and run club tests. The select few doing the tests need some help. So, get out and do it for the dogs and quit trying to make it easy on yourself. After all the best part of passing a hunt test to qualify for the club title is having other Toller people watch you do it.</p>
6.	<p>Region 2 member-- Certainly like the idea of incorporating the tolling into the test scenario, but we have already gone beyond that with the AFP; hence I am in favor of the status quo. Even though we do title our dogs in both the US and Canada, I see no reason to open it to the CKC or other groups, as that could open a new can of worms. With the AKC offerings all around the country, I for one, think there are plenty of opportunities. For those who think the AKC tests are too challenging, perhaps this will encourage them and others in different parts of the country to host their own Club tests.</p>
7.	<p>Too few club tests to limit to that. Alternative (US) tests provide valid options as long as they meet minimum requirements and they may be more realistic tests of ability than AKC JH. Also they have had longer history of welcoming tollers and that should not be forgotten. This is a US club and should stick with US organizations for tests that qualify-- if a UKC test is run in Canada or Sweden that should count but CKC, Canadian Toller Club or Swedish Kennel Club tests should not. No US title or pass counts for any *title* in another country, nor should foreign titles count toward US title -- that is completely fair and follows long-established precedent, not just US club precedent. there are other awards and certificates of achievement that count titles earned anywhere. We need to balance convenience of tests for members with maintaining the US-awarded nature of the club title</p>
8.	<p>Let's maintain a little control over what tests are approved.</p>

9.	Being new to the breed and club I've enjoyed reading the online "action" this issue has created and learned a bit. I do believe that the rules should be revised but also that we have to make sure the tests required for the NSDTRC is encouraged and made possible to access in all regions. I'm glad that the club carefully consider this issue since it is of utmost importance that we keep this breed a "working breed" the future generations of tollers rely on it.
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Other

1.	I think all accepted field titles need to contain a Tolling Test. It is what makes this breed unique. The Toller relieves the hunter of lugging decoys to the field...a major advantage. Let's not put our dogs in the position to become just another retriever.
2.	Because we are a US club I believe we should only count those AFPs obtained in the US from any organization that meets or exceeds the AFP requirements. I would hate to see our club discount organizations like UKC and others who embraced our breed and gave us the chance to showcase their talents long before AKC even thought about us. By only accepting AKC field passes we must then address other club awards such as the versatility and Evelyn Williams Award programs that accept higher levels of success achieved in other organizations such as USDAA and NADAC for agility, UKC for obedience, agility and conformation, FEMA for search and rescue, TDI or Delta for therapy work.....the list goes on. Will we stop accepting those achievements strictly because they are not AKC or US Club sponsored?
3.	While I would like to see all Tollers pass a Toller test which includes a tolling portion, only because of lack of available tests, I feel we should allow tests from other organizations. I feel we need to spell out exactly which clubs we will accept, not just say any that meets or exceeds.
4.	Allow NSDTRC (USA), AKC field passes, and specific retriever organization field passes, as defined by the NSDTRC (USA). Allow any retriever organization field pass from ANY organization that meets or exceeds the Alternative Field Pass* requirements , WHEN THE TESTS HAVE BEEN HELD IN THE UNITED STATES. and that is from a Canadian Resident, US Club Member :)
5.	I can understand limiting it to NSDTRC-USA test passes only since it is the only organization that includes the Tolling segment. That said, the Tolling segment of the BRT test (which is all that is required for the Club CH) is hardly something worth holding up as an achievement. If other organizations are going to be accepted then I don't understand the rational to exclude those organizations that have a comparable (or more difficult) entry level test. If the rational is to ensure that the Toller does not become "just another pretty show dog" then a field title from any organization worldwide should achieve that goal. I could be wrong but I can't think of any organization that has a more basic entry level than the BRT...and that after all is all that is required within the Club tests. I dare say that it is probably time to require more than just a BRT pass...but that's a subject for another survey!
6.	Only allow NSDTRC (USA) field passes or passes by any organization that will run the test according to the NSDTRC working certificate rules. I fervently believe that a "Toller" Champion should be able to "Toll". This is the only real working characteristic that sets Tollers apart from any other retrieving breed. I have seen dogs that can retrieve and not Toll. This says to me that we can lose this trait easily by proclaiming dogs that cannot toll as toller champions. Keep Tolling in the test and accept passes from whomever is civil and kind enough to run our test alongside their own. We have found plenty of reasonable folks who will, especially if your part of their community.
7.	I feel at this time we should leave the rules the same, with alternative field passes available to members who live in areas where Club tests are not held. Furthermore, I feel the field test must be held within the US. Despite being a Canadian origin breed, we are an American club. Since members living in Mexico and Canada must travel to the US to earn their AKC championships, it is only reasonable that they do the same for the Club championship.
8.	Leave the same except add any CKC tests meeting the current requirements. I don't need to be contacted, but will sign.