

ARHA Progressive Pack Certification Procedures & Rules

Revised 5/7/2021

RABBIT CHAMPION CERTIFICATION

In order to be eligible to certify for Rabbit Champion an open class hound must have at least two (2) sanctioned hunt wins from at least two (2) different clubs or one (1) State or Big Six win and one hundred (100) points. No more than fifty (50) points can come from any one club. Prior to the certification test the owner/handler must provide the certification judges with win certificates or copies of same showing that the hound has met the eligibility criteria.

A. Certification Procedures:

1. Certification testing shall be conducted in the same manner as Progressive Pack competition in respect to the conduct of owners/handlers and spectators. The Executive Board's appointed members shall have authority over the process. This test is to determine that the hound will hunt and verify that it can circle a rabbit to the gun, can continue the process after the shot if necessary and is not gun shy. The successful hound earns and deserves the title "Progressive Pack Rabbit Champion."
2. Certification on a specific date is permissible if advertised in THE RABBIT HUNTER and/or is posted on the NKC website in the Progressive Pack forum at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the proposed certification test(s). Certification may also be held during, or at the close of a sanctioned hunt, an advertised fun hunt, or on the next day following one of these hunts, if it is announced before the close of the hunt.
3. The certification test will be conducted by two (2) Progressive Pack judges, with both judges being either Progressive Pack certification judges or at least one (1) must be a licensed certification judge and the other must be a licensed Progressive Pack judge. Either combination is acceptable. It is immaterial as to what state the certification judge/s are from. There will be no exception to this rule. If any certifications are turned in, and it is found that there was no certification judge present, the certification will be denied.
4. All hounds that are present at the time of the scheduled certification shall be drawn out in random order. Additional hounds, not previously there at scheduled time, will be drawn out to be tested at the conclusion of the first tests, if time permits. When testing is conducted after a hunt all hounds are drawn with no preference. The hound's owner or handler must present to the judges the necessary paperwork to prove that the hound is eligible for certification.
5. **All hounds must be measured at the time of certification.** No hound over 15" will be tested. The hound's height shall be noted at the top of the certification form.
6. **Certification tests are to be held during daylight hours. No certification test shall begin prior to thirty (30) minutes before legal sunrise. No certification test shall continue beyond fifteen (15) minutes after legal sunset regardless of the time left on the one hour cast time clock or the twenty minute running clock.** If a certification test is to begin late in the afternoon, prior to the hound being cast the lead judge shall determine the time of day at which fifteen (15) minutes after legal sunset will be reached. The lead judge shall make the owner/handler and the other judge/s aware that the test will conclude at exactly that time **no matter what.**
7. The hounds will be taken to the field and put down in the order they were drawn. No certification can be conducted in a pen or enclosure unless the enclosure has at least 30 acres and the enclosure is certified by the State Representative of that state. It is advisable to take more than one hound at a time to the field. The handlers of the hounds waiting to be certified will keep their hounds quiet while the other

hounds are being tested. As soon as one hound has completed the certification test, the next hound will be put down for testing.

8. No certification judge or field judge can be involved in the certification testing of his/her own hound or a hound that he/she has owned within the past 6 months. This date goes from the time that the papers are changed with ARHA. They may not test a hound owned by a member of his/her immediate family (as outlined in the P.P. Rules, Paragraph IV B).

9. There must be two stopwatches used in the certification test to be sure that the time is correct. One judge will be the lead judge and will instruct the other judges as to starting and stopping of their stop watches. The judges must go with the hound. One shall keep the stop watch for the running time and the other shall keep the time for the 4 minute rule on strikes and also the 4 minute rule on breakdowns. The lead judge shall keep the one hour cast time on a regular watch or stop watch and shall act as the gunner. The lead judge must stay within earshot of the hound and the other judge/s in order to record any timeouts.

10. The hound being cast will be hunted by itself and cast in the same manner as in a Progressive Pack competition. Once the hound being tested is cast in the field, the judges will stay within sight of, but behind the hound. The handler, with the judges' permission, may call or talk to his hound for the sole purpose of letting the hound know that he/she is close by. The handler may in no way encourage his/her hound to hunt. The judges must be certain the hound will hunt on its own before passing the hound.

11. If and when a rabbit or hare is started, the judges will go with the hound being tested as it pursues the rabbit staying behind the hound so as not to interfere with the hound and also staying back from the check areas so as not to interfere with the hound's check work.

12. Once a rabbit or hare is started the owner/handler becomes a spectator and shall remain near the lead judge/gunner. He/she must abide by this rule as long as the chase is going on unless the judges ask him/her to handle the hound.

13. The 20 minute clock is not to be started until a rabbit or hare is produced and should only be running while the hound is making forward progress on the line. The judges must agree that the rabbit has been produced. The 20 minute clock must be stopped any time the hound is working a check or not advancing the track. The 20 minute running time does not have to be achieved on the same rabbit. The 20 minutes may be accumulated on any number of different rabbits.

14. At some point while the hound is actively running a track, a blank pistol shall be fired into the air within a reasonable proximity of the hound to test for gun shyness. Some gundog rabbit hounds will hark to the gun, but a gun-shy hound will quit the track and refuse to hunt or take the line again. **A hound is not disqualified for harking to the gun. In the event that a hound harks in to the gun, the handler shall be allowed to attempt to put the hound back on the line to verify whether or not it is gun-shy. A hound that demonstrates gun-shyness has immediately failed the test, regardless of the hound's performance on the other facets of the test.**

15. A dead track may be called if it is apparent that the hound has hopelessly lost the line. The owner/handler should be asked if he/she is agreeable to calling the track dead. In the event of a loss of the track that lasts four (4) minutes, a dead track shall be called at the four minute mark, time out is called and the hound shall be moved and released to hunt if time permits.

16. The owner/handler may call a time out at any time, including while his/her hound is on the four (4) minute breakdown clock or the twenty (20) minute running time clock, unless doing so to avoid a penalty. The judges following the hound shall have the final say in whether the time out is to be allowed as they are in a better position to determine if the hound is getting into a penalty situation.

17. Any time the hound is entering a restricted area such as posted land or a dangerous situation, the judges shall call time out and have the hound caught. Any time the hound is leashed a time out must be

called. **Regardless of the reason for a time out, no time spent in time out shall count towards the one hour time limit.**

18. In the event that a rabbit or hare is not produced within 41 minutes from the time the hound is first cast, excluding timeouts, the testing is concluded and the hound has failed the test. However, if the hound has any running time on the clock within the first 41 minutes, and is actively running a rabbit at the time the one hour clock expires, the hound may continue the test under the applicable rules until it either passes or fails. Once the hour has expired, a four (4) minute breakdown will end the certification test. **Under no circumstance will the hound be allowed to search for another rabbit beyond the one-hour time frame.**

19. The hound being tested is subject to all current Progressive Pack running rules concerning minus points and disqualification for running off game, or failing to hunt for 5 consecutive minutes. No score shall be kept except minus points. If the hound is on the clock for not hunting a time out is not permissible. The test shall be for no more than one hour, (not including time outs), unless a strike occurs within the last four minutes, in which case the hound shall be given the full four minutes to produce the rabbit. If the rabbit is produced within these four minutes, the run shall continue until twenty (20) minutes of running time is achieved or a four (4) minute breakdown occurs.

20. If a rabbit is jumped by a judge, handler/owner, or spectator the hound will not be called in and put on the track. All individuals will back up and provide the hound the opportunity to find the track itself. If the hound has received no help in finding the track, this rabbit can be used in the certification process.

21. No area where a rabbit has been seen can be used for certification, the hound must be moved some distance away from this area as determined by the certification judge, however during the hunting process, if a rabbit or hare is seen and the hound goes into the area unaided, this rabbit can be used in the certification.

22. Anytime the judges feel there is not enough game in the immediate area to conduct a certification testing, a time out may be called and the hound re-cast in a different area with the remaining time left for the test.

23. The following example is typical of a certification test:

a. Example: A hound is up for Rabbit Champion Certification and all rules that apply to any certification have been met. The judges (two certification judges or one certification judge and one field judge) are present and have agreed on who will act as lead judge and what time each judge will keep. The hound is taken to the field and released as in a normal Progressive Pack cast.

b. Upon release of the hound, the lead judge will start the one hour clock. When and if the hound strikes (3 barks) the judge with the strike watch (4 minutes) will start their watch. If no rabbit is produced, the hound receives a minus and the judge will clear his/her watch of the 4 minutes.

c. If a rabbit is produced in the agreement of the judges, the judge keeping the total running time (20 Minutes) will start his/her stop watch. In the event of a breakdown in the track by the hound, the judge keeping the 20 minute clock will stop his/her watch and tell the other judge/s when he/she has done so. At this point the judge keeping the 4 minutes on breakdowns will start his/her watch. This will be the same judge that was keeping the 4 minutes on the strike.

d. When the hound picks up the track again, the judge keeping the running time (20 minutes) will again start his/her watch and again tell the judge that is keeping the four (4) minutes on the breakdowns to clear his/her watch. This process will continue over and over for as long as is necessary to reach for the hound to either pass or fail the test. Any time a breakdown exceeds 4 minutes a dead track is declared, the hound is moved and the process is started over, assuming time permits. If the hound continues to pick up the track in less than 4 minutes on any check, it will continue to run until the 20 minute total running time is achieved.

e. If, during this run, the judge keeping the one hour cast time announces that the cast time has expired, the run will continue until the 20 minute running time is achieved or a four (4) minute breakdown occurs.

24. The test is over and the hound declared failed when any of the following points are reached:

a. The hound pursues anything other than a rabbit or hare.

b. 30 minus points are given in accordance with Progressive Pack running rules.

c. No rabbit or hare has been produced in the first 41 minutes of the cast.

d. The hound demonstrates gun shyness.

e. The one hour time limit has elapsed without the dog achieving the 20 minute running time and the dog is not actively running a rabbit. -OR- The one hour time limit has elapsed without the dog achieving the 20 minute running time and a four minute breakdown occurs.

f. The time of day is fifteen (15) minutes after legal sunset and the 20 minutes of running time has not been achieved.

B. GENERAL CRITERIA AND RULES FOR THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1. The three part form must be filled out at the end of the certification and marked whether the hound passed or failed. **All judges must sign the form.** The white copy is mailed to the NKC/ARHA office, the yellow copy is kept in the sponsoring club's files and the pink copy is given to the owner. The date of the sponsoring club's most recent hunt preceding or on the date of the certification should be noted on the form beside the name of the sponsoring club.

2. The owner/handler must bring with them proof that his/her hound has met the criteria for certification (winner's certificates or legible copies of same).

3. Any and all decisions regarding passing or failing the certification test must be unanimous. No such decisions shall be based on majority.

4. Any Certification Judge found to be in violation of ARHA Progressive Pack running and/or certification rules by the Watchdog Committee will permanently lose his/her certification judge status by order of the Chairman of the Board.

5. Any Certification Judge so removed will have any or all certifications previously approved by this individual subject to investigation. If, in the event any rules were found to be broken, all certifications handled by this individual in whom this happened will be subject to annulment and the hounds involved called for re-certification.

6. Questions arising from Certification Judges involving certification procedures will be directed to the Chairman of the Board.

GRAND RABBIT CHAMPION CERTIFICATION

There is no longer certification testing required for a hound to progress from Rabbit Champion to Grand Rabbit Champion. The hound may progress from Rabbit Champion to Grand Rabbit Champion in the following manner:

1. To qualify as Grand Rabbit Champion a hound must have at least 3 first place wins in a Champion Class in licensed hunts, 1 of which must be a state or Big Six hunt, or place first in at least 5 licensed hunts in the Champion Class in at least 3 or more different clubs.

2. The owner must complete an "Application for Champion Certificate" (form is available on the NKC website) and send it along with proof that the dog has met the criteria for Grand Rabbit Champion (winner's certificates or copies of them) to the NKC/ARHA office.