



Judge's Tailgate: Cast, Recast, Confusion, No-go

A question surfaced from one of the Regions. It was in regard to what would be considered as "confusion". If you find yourself confused (pun intended) or are not certain about the meaning of something in the rule book, I suggest first go to the source. Let's look it up.

Chapter II, Section 1, Par. 19 says "A dog should be cast from the point of origin only once, however, another attempt may be granted if, in the opinion of the judges, a dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin. If a "recast" is unsuccessful, the judges must fail the dog. If an initial misdirection is taken by a dog in the Started category and the handler immediately brings the dog back to heel, it may be given a "recast." A "recast" will never be granted to a Started dog that goes out into the field, establishes a hunt, does not find the bird and returns to its handler. This is grounds for elimination rather than another chance. ("No-goes" should be treated as a recast under this section.)"

What do we use for a definition? Con·fu·sion - lack of understanding; uncertainty, hesitancy, in doubt.

Let's backup some. A NAHRA dog is required to be steady until "ordered" to retrieve. Yes, the judges would need to release the dog prior to it being "ordered". So, when a dog "exhibits confusion" simply means the dog was uncertain, had doubt, or was confused as to **whether they had been ordered to retrieve or not.**

What is a no-go? A no-go is when a dog is ordered to retrieve and refuses to go. It warrants elimination.

Sometimes things happen while the dog is under judgement that might cause an unfairness. Examples could be: interference by another dog or person; a goose landing in between the Point of Origin and the bird to be retrieved; the wind blowing over a judge's chair or a holding blind; the possibilities are endless. These are examples of unfairness that might allow

the judges to use their discretion and prerogative to either not impose penalty or give the dog another set of birds. These are NOT examples of “confusion”.

Scenario of what might happen:

1. Started dog with two single marks from the same Point of Origin. Dog successfully retrieves the first mark, a shot live duck. Second mark is a dead duck. The dog is released, ordered to retrieve and heads towards the Area of the first mark/fall. The handler immediately stops the dog, recalls, and “recast” it to the second mark which it retrieves. Ok? Eliminated?
2. Same Started test, dog is sent for the second mark. Dog goes out halfway, starts hunting but returns to handler. Handler sends to second mark again and dog makes the retrieve. Ok? No? Confusion? Recast?
3. Intermediate dog double mark with out of order flyer (flyer shot first). Second mark a longer dead bird. Dog is released, ordered to retrieve and heads towards go bird but changes direction and retrieves the flyer. Delivery is made and handler lines dog up and sends towards the fall of the go bird. Dog starts but stops **before** leaving Point of Origin. The handler orders the dog to go and completes the retrieve. Ok? Confusion? Recast?
4. Senior water blind incorporated in water marks. Marks have been retrieved. Handler is lining the dog towards the blind. Just before being ordered to retrieve, the dog goes. It is immediately stopped, realigned and order to retrieve. The dog is handled to and makes the retrieve. Ok? Recast? Confusion?
5. Same Senior water blind with a different dog. After aligning dog towards the retrieve, the handler orders the dog to retrieve. The dog does not move. Handler again orders the dog to retrieve. Dog handles out to and makes the retrieve. Ok? Confusion? Recast? No-go?

I hope you don't think I'm going to answer these? Well ok, I'll comment. A judge has to observe everything that happens at and in front of the Point of Origin. This takes all of their awareness and attention which is crucial in evaluating and placing judgement of the suitability of a dog as a hunting retriever! An imaginary scenario is not the same as being there. You'd have to see it to be sure. But both judges should have a discussion to come to an agreement.

Here goes:

1. That dog is ok. The “recast” was allowed per the rule book.
2. This dog is eliminated per the rule book.

3. This could be judged two different ways. It could be judged as a recast or could be judged as confusion. Things to consider might be the sequencing of falls, that the dog moved but was hesitant to go. I'd be inclined to consider this confusion and most likely allow the recast.
4. Ok. The dog was not ordered to retrieve. I would not call it confusion. There is an issue of control that should be considered in their performance. I also would not consider this a recast.
5. I would consider this to be a no-go.

Are you wondering why I was using the term ordered to retrieve? It's in the rule book. Where? It's in Chapter II in the Section for each category. It is not the same but similar for each in the requirement to be steady as it discusses a **controlled break**. It's a minor infraction in Started, Hunter & Intermediate. It's a serious infraction for Senior.

"A controlled break will not fail a dog, but it must be considered a fault. (As soon as the dog leaves the point of origin and **manifests the intent to make the retrieve without being so ordered**, it must be stopped. If a dog is immediately brought under control, it will be considered a minor infraction. Repeated evidence of this fault may be considered serious and, in the opinion of the judges, an eliminating factor."

Of note: notice the part about "If a dog is immediately brought under control". What does immediately mean? It means right now right here it does not mean over there. It's a matter of safety.

Be safe. Enjoy yourself and See ya in the field!!! Harry