

Strategic Planning

Developing a Foundation Based Training Plan
to Achieve The Goals for your Dog

Jake Heesacker, RMC NAVHDA President



DISCLAIMER!

- No one way to train a bird dog
- No one size fits all timetable
- Not all dogs learn the same way
- Develop Progression Based Foundational Work





GOAL SETTING

- Define a Good Hunting Dog
- Define your Hunting Style
- Define the Situations Your Dog will Hunt



SPECIFIC

2P3C1FIC



MEASURABLE

MEASURABLE



ACHIEVABLE

ACHIEVABLE



RELEVANT

RELEVANT



TIMELY

TIMELY



Definitions

- Teaching
- Correction
- Punishment
- Force
- Pressure



Training is a Balancing Act!

Cooperation
Obedience

Independence
Critical thinking



Puppy Development

- Cultivate a good relationship with your breeder to develop your training program based on the bloodline's inherent characteristics
- Utilize NAVHDA database to research bloodlines as clues into talents/struggles of performance at certain ages
- Develop training plan around seasonal timing versus age



Successful Start

- Utilize Puppy Obedience classes
 - Appropriate Social Interactions
 - Obedience Foundation
 - Developing a Civil Citizen
- Child Genius Syndrome
- Focus on the Skills - training is not a race!

**CREATE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PUPPY!
YOU ARE DEVELOPING A HUNTING PARTNER FOR THE NEXT 10+ YEARS!
DON'T EXPECT PERFECTION YEAR 1 AND 2!**



How to Utilize Test Components

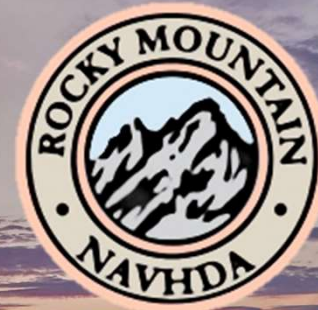
- Develop underlying skills
- NAVHDA encourages training for Applicable Real Life Hunting Scenarios
- Don't train the test!
- Creatively modify the test components to mentally stimulate and challenge your dog's skill level



Foundational Training Time Commitment

- Not once a month
- 10-15 minutes daily
- Critical time in between field sessions

**TRAIN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE THAT THE DOG WANTS TO DO
WHAT YOU WANT AND THE MAJOR OBSTACLE IS YOU
COMMUNICATING WHAT YOU WANT.**





What is Progressional Training?

- Develop foundation in stages with overlay of previous teaching
- Step ahead always includes the step prior
- Go back to familiar place with each new level before continuing
- E-collar is for reinforcement....not teaching.

**IF YOU DON'T TEACH A TASK...
IT IS UNFAIR TO ENFORCE A SUBPAR PERFORMANCE FROM
YOUR DOG!**





Mental Maturity

- Be willing to change your plan to your dog's growth and development
- Not every dog will be mentally ready for the same task at the same time
- Lack of understanding could relay confusion but it could also mean the dog isn't mentally ready for the next step of training





Training Preparation

- Enter every training session with a defined plan
- Ask for one small step better than the last session

Overcoming challenges and struggles (making corrections) is a good thing! The dog is learning and developing their understanding of the task being asked of them!

**DON'T TRAIN EVERY COMPONENT EVERY DAY!
DON'T TRAIN COMPONENTS IN THE SAME ORDER!**





Analyzing your Progress

- When and how to stop a training session
- Moving on
- Take a step back
- Evaluating progress in new locations

NEVER LET THE NUMBER OF BIRDS, THE DISTANCE DROVE OR THE AMOUNT OF DAYLIGHT LEFT IN A DAY DICTATE YOUR DOG'S TRAINING SCHEDULE!



After a “Bad” Training Session

- Have I adequately prepared the dog for the behavior being asked for?
- Have I adequately prepared the dog to perform the task in the presence of distractions?
- Was I able to simplify the task or lower the distraction level so the dog could find success?
- Were my signals (voice, body movement) clear to give the dog every opportunity to be successful?
- Have I missed a stage in my dog’s foundational work that I can readdress to provide more clarity in training?





What to Do When...

- Feeling Stuck in stage of Progression?
- Hit a Road Block?
- Confusion in Dog?
- Unexpected Behavior in Training Scenario?
- Problems Arising in Other Training?

**REACH OUT FOR HELP!
CONSULT YOUR BREEDER, TRAINER, NAVHDA JUDGE, OR
OTHER MENTORS FOR ADVISE AND SUGGESTIONS!**



Tips to be successful

- Whole Family Involvement
- Never stop teaching your dog
 - Seek out new drills and challenges
- Never stop learning
 - Different methodologies – books/DVDs
 - Seminars and Clinics

