



## ECSCA – FTC

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## **ECSCA Field Trial Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 15, 2022**

**Call to Order-** Cheryl Dooley called the meeting to order at 5:45 CST.

**Present** – John Alstad, Ron Bullock, Jack Glinsky, Ted McCue, Susan Sarracino-Deihl, David Williams & Cheryl Dooley.

**Minutes from January 18, 2022-** The minutes from the January FTC meeting were approved via email by the 2022 FTC and circulated to Cocker Owners via email.

**Agenda:** A question arose regarding the addition to the Agenda to discuss the possibility of the FTC appointing the next FT Rep for the ECSCA Board. Cheryl reported this issue is still in front of the ECSCA Board and we are awaiting their decision. Hearing no other additions Dave made a motion to approve the agenda. John seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Review of the FTC Mission Statement & Objections:** These items were emailed to FTC Members for review. Only one Member responded so far, indicating no changes needed. Hearing no other comments, it was decided to allow a few more weeks for Folks to review these documents.

**NCC & NACC Budgets** - Cheryl reported the 2021 National budgets have not been finalized. The NCC - New Jersey is close to being finalized. The NACC - Virginia recently received receipts requiring reimbursement, so Kathy Moseley ECSCA Treasurer is factoring those in the budget. These agenda items will be tabled until the March FTC meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**NACC Qualification:** Cheryl informed the Group of a proposal to allow Amateur Dogs/Handlers placing in an Open Stake to be eligible for the 2022 NACC – North

Dakota. There are multiple reasons for promoting this potential new rule. Two important ones would be:

- 1) increase the number of Qualified dogs for the NACC and therefore avoid the low entry numbers experienced at the Ohio and Virginia NACC's and
- 2) take the pressure off Clubs to host a Trial with 1- Open and 1- Amateur Stake as we are finding the Trials are not attractive to Pros or Folks who are not interested in the Amateur Stakes, leading to low entry numbers and a financial burden on the Clubs.

Cheryl also mentioned that, while we are just beginning the 2022 FT Season, currently there are only 64- dogs qualified for the NACC. At best, we could hope to get two-thirds of those dogs entered leaving entries around 40-dogs. As was experienced recently in Virginia, a 40 - dog entry is not enough when there could be 5-6 scratches.

Cheryl mentioned she spoke with Tom Meyer of the AKC and the AKC agrees with this potential rule.

The topic was opened for discussion and points mentioned were:

- A. It would be important to clarify:
  1. Points earned with the OPEN placement would not apply to earning an Amateur Field Championship.
  2. The dog MUST be handled in the OPEN by an Amateur
  3. We would need to specify if this would include 2021 or just 2022
- B. A worry that this could potentially lead to the demise of Amateur Stakes.
  - a. So, it was suggested this be a ONE TIME/ONE YEAR rule to help North Dakota get plenty of entries and have a successful NACC. Later the FTC should re-evaluate the rule.
- C. Along with this, it was mentioned having a two-year qualification with Amateur stakes, might keep Folks interested in attending Amateur Trials versus the one-year qualification for the Open stakes.
- D. It was mentioned it might be a good idea to raise the minimum entry number for Amateur stakes to 15 dogs instead of 10.
  - a. This would eliminate the common occurrence of having no third series to test the dogs or only a few dogs making the third series with only a couple of placements awarded. It was mentioned sometimes it seems dogs are given leniency during an Amateur Stake.
  - b. The FTC all agreed that smaller Trials as well as Trials with no Third Series are leading to the crowning Amateur Field Champions that are not being fairly tested. Everyone concurred it is the Third Series that offers an important challenge and a number of Cockers have trouble meeting that challenge.
  - c. Raising the minimum entry number to 15 would conceivably offer better competition. There was also mention of requiring there be a Third Series to challenge dogs.

- d. A question arose as to the minimum for Open Trials. It was suggested that also be raised to 15 dogs. Although, it was pointed out, generally Open Trials don't have a problem with low entry numbers unless there is only one Open stake offered.
- E. It was suggested the FTC be careful not to discourage Amateur Stakes.
  - a. Many new Folks to the sport are intimidated by the Open Stakes and the increasing number of Pros. Having Amateur Stakes nurtures these Folks as they gain confidence.
- F. Point D was rebutted with a comment that any Stake should have real meaning and not appear to be a 'fun Club Trial' with no quality or real competition. The best dog in any Trial can fall apart in a Third Series. Not having enough dogs to run a Third leaves that challenge undone. It was also mentioned the sport is growing quite rapidly. But the subject of growth brought forth the comment that we don't want to grow too fast and hurt the standard of the breed. It was suggested we have a separate conversation on growth of the sport and layout plans so that as we grow, we keep in mind what is best for the breed. As long as the dog's qualities are sustained growth is good. But, if we go too fast, qualities might suffer. It was suggested we focus on the standard and improving the breed.
- G. It was also pointed out that while the number of Pros in the sport has increased over the past few years, Amateurs who train hard can still compete with Pros. This is evidenced by the fact that Amateurs still have dogs earning Field Championship titles.
- H. Ultimately, the idea at Trials is to find the best dog of the day who depicts the best qualities to carry on the breed. Ultimately, everyone would like to see quality events with quality competition.
- I. Overall, the FTC agreed increasing the number of entries at Trials and trying to salvage the NACC was a good idea.
- J. Dave made the following motion:
  - a. All Amateur Dogs placing in a 2022 OPEN stake with an AMATEUR HANDLER will be eligible to enter the 2022 NACC North Dakota.
  - b. This rule will be retroactive to the first Trials of the 2022 Calendar.
  - c. No points earned in said OPEN stake will be applied towards an Amateur Field Championship or any High Point Amateur Award.
  - d. This will be a ONE YEAR rule applicable only for the 2022 NACC North Dakota.
  - e. The FTC will revisit this rule at the end of the year and determine at that point the status of the NACC, addressing if the NACC should be every other year, spring versus fall, dog qualifications, etc.....
  - f. Likewise, the FTC will examine any effects this rule might have on Open and Amateur Stake entries.

The motion was seconded by Jack. There were 6-votes in favor and one abstention.

- K. Cheryl indicated she will contact the ECSCA Board and seek approval for this proposal. Should the ECSCA approve, it will be critical to spread the word quickly to Amateur Cocker Owners so they can plan their 2022 Field Trial Season accordingly.

**Amateurs Handling Pro Owned Dogs:** Cheryl mentioned being contacted about the FTC addressing whether Amateurs should be allowed to handle Pro-owned dogs. There was some discussion on the issue with a number of scenarios brought forth making the issue somewhat confusing. Cheryl will locate the exact wording on the rule and share that via email. At that point, the FTC can determine if better clarification is necessary so everyone understands what is allowed or not allowed.

**Judge Mentoring Program:**

- a. Cheryl mentioned there is a program trying to gain ground in the Field Trial world where Mentors are asked to follow along behind each Judge during a Trial. No comment is made by the Mentors until the Trial and Placements are complete. Then, the Four Judges get together and discuss the trial and how decisions were made for certain scenarios.
- b. The FTC discussed the Program and feels on the surface it appears to be a great educational tool.
- c. There was mention that for the Cockers this could be a great program that could remind Judges of the rule that Cockers are to use their natural instincts and the wind, not just run gun to gun.
- d. There was discussion around the fact that there is a black and white rule book but during a trial a Judge is forced to make a quick decision about unusual situations that arise.
- e. There was a number of comments on how it is determined who would be eligible to be a Mentor. This is where the concept of the Program becomes complicated. Some Folks clearly will have different opinions on who should Mentor and who shouldn't.
- f. It was suggested that the name be changed to something other than Mentoring as mentoring implies a higher authority.
- g. There was discussion around using this Program as part of a Judges training process. Less experienced Judges could be assigned a Mentor at one of their early assignments. This could potentially allow for a great educational tool.
- h. The FTC decided conceptionally, this seems like a great Program, however planning the details on how it is carried out might be difficult.
- i. There was a suggestion the FTC reach out to Judges and Handlers asking for input on how they view advantages or disadvantages to the Mentoring Program and how they feel it could best be managed.

**Adjournment** - Hearing no comments to address any other issues this evening, Cheryl requested a motion to adjourn. Ted made a motion to adjourn. Dave seconded the

motion and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM (CST)

Respectfully submitted: Cheryl Dooley – FTC Chair

**Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday, March 15, 2022**