

The CKC Working Certificate Program

Goldens can compete with other retriever breeds in all three areas of the Canadian Kennel Club field competitions: Working Certificates, Hunt Tests and Field Trials. This article will focus on the Working Certificate program.

The tests in the Working Certificate program are designed to assess a dog's natural abilities such as marking, memory of fall, intelligence, desire, perseverance, nose and courage. There are three levels of tests and the dog only has to pass each set of tests once to receive the title. In the Working Certificate program all gunners are seen in the field and a shot is fired before the bird is thrown. All shots, except for one in the WCX, are fired by the gunner in the field. This is a big help in aiding the dog to focus on the gunner.

Working Certificate

This is the basic set of tests. To pass this level, a dog must retrieve two birds on land and two birds on the water.

These are singles, only one bird is thrown before the dog is sent. The marks are short, less than 75 yards on land in light cover and 25 to 40 yards on the water. The dog may be brought to the line on a lead and may be held at the line; they are not expected to honour off lead. Note that dogs cannot be run with a collar. Delivery to hand is not an absolute requirement at this level but the birds must be brought back close to the handler. The WC is meant to be an instinct test and is well within the capabilities of most retrievers.

Working Certificate Intermediate

The Working Certificate Intermediate (WCI) is comprised of a land double (two birds are thrown before the dog is sent, the dog must remember where both birds land and deliver the first one back to the handler before retrieving the second) in cover of about 75 yards in length. The dogs are off leash at all times and must wait to be sent without being physically restrained by the handler. All birds at the WCI and WCX level must be delivered to hand. The dog must also complete an honour on land (dog must sit quietly and watch another dog retrieve). Dogs who complete the land part successfully then do a double water retrieve of 40 to 50 yards in length.

Working Certificate Excellent

The Working Certificate Excellent (WCX) is the highest title in this program. In this level the dog will be tested on a walk up land double (or land and water double) of 50 to 100 yards in length, an honour on a walk up and a water double of similar length to the WCI. In addition, there are two blinds run, one on land and one in the water, of 50 yards in length. A blind is to simulate a hunting situation where a bird comes down that the dog did not see. The dog must go in the direction the handler sends him, stop on a whistle and change direction at the handlers command. The dog is not supposed to just run out and hunt all over the field but must show control and obedience to the handler's instructions.