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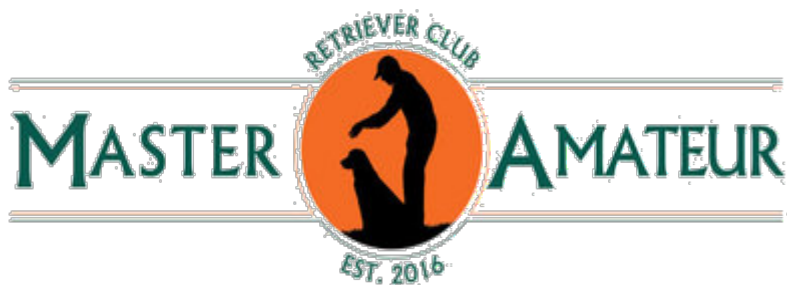
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2025 MAI

Waterville, ME

June 22-29 2025



President's Message:

Greetings,

Welcome to the new year!

During this time of the year, we look back at the past year with our family, friends, and the accomplishments of our canine companions. It is also the time of year that we look ahead to the coming year of what we want to accomplish with our retrievers, like the MAI.

The end of February is a key time for the Master Amateur Retriever Club as it marks the end of the qualifying year. The June event will be in the state of Maine for the 2025 MAI. Check the website for event information and look at the qualifying list. The list gets updated every couple weeks until the end of the qualifying year. If you have questions, send an email to the address at the bottom of our website.

March 1st 2025 will be the start of the next qualifying year for the event in 2026, remember you must be a MARC member before you start qualifying. This can be done through the Master Amateur Retriever Club website, masteramateur.com, go to the membership tab and scroll down to find options.

Our club has been able to sustain itself for eight years from the support from members like you. I see many more years to come for the club. We find our members to be involved, concerned, helpful, and want to continue to preserve the sport for future amateurs. Thank you!

Looking Forward,

Jace Tramontin

Region 4 Director - David Markham

We are in the throes of winter in Central Oregon, and this is when I want to pack up the 5th wheel and head to warmer climates of the Western Region for dog training. The weather in Bend, Oregon this time of year consists of rain, snow, ice, wind and more snow. The weather doesn't matter to my dogs, they just want to play the game.

Training in the winter months can require creativity, especially when it comes to reinforcing technical water concepts. The areas that I train with water during spring and summer are now dry pond beds. These dry ponds can still be used for concepts like two down the shore, bank cheating and shoreline blinds. My dogs remember working these concepts when the ponds had water so it's not any different without the water. When the water returns in the spring, my dogs are dialed in.

Prior to my retirement, weekday training during the winter months could only take place at night and required the use of floodlights, extension cords and layers of warm clothing. Every evening at 7:00 PM we were working drills and concepts with short marks in my pastures, many times with snow covering the ground and temperatures in the low teens. My dogs loved training at night in the snow under the floodlights. It was different and that got them more excited.



Winter training doesn't need to take a lot of time or complexity, it only needs thought and creativity to create success with your dog.

For MARC members living in the Western Region and needing to complete qualification by February 28, 2025, for the Master Amateur Invitational in Waterville, Maine, there are numerous hunt tests taking place in January and February. I'll be taking advantage of hunt tests in California and Nevada in February, and this will give me a measurement on the success of my winter training.

I wish you success with winter training and hope to see you in Waterville, Maine in June. It will be worth every mile that you drive.

Enjoy every moment with your dogs because they leave us too soon. Happy New Year!

Region 1 Director – John Dawber

Hello,

I hope this finds everyone resting from a very hectic 2024. We are just finishing up this year's hunting season, getting our last chances at those remaining birds. I'm hoping everyone's bags are full and their holiday season is filled with family memories and wonderful moments with your dogs.

As we start the year 2025, it's time to start thinking about our goals for this season. If you are planning on attending the 2025 Master Amateur in Waterville, ME or if you are qualifying for the 2026 event that will be held in the central region, this is a good time to think about renewing your Master Amateur Club Membership as you will need to be a member to participate in either one of these events. If you have any problems renewing your membership please drop me a line and I will get back to you promptly.

Most of you know that the 2025 MAI will be held on property in the Waterville, ME area. As the new year starts the MAI Club is getting very busy planning for this event by having committee meetings and assigning people to jobs that need to get done. I cannot say enough about the people that have stepped forward and taken on these responsibilities. Because the Master Amateur Retriever Club has the luxury of being able to draw people from all over the country that manage these jobs within their own local clubs, it puts us in a unique position to be able to host a wonderful national Hunt Test. Thank you everyone for stepping forward.

Training opportunities during this time of the year can be difficult to find and very sporadic. As I write this letter it's snowing outside and snowing all the way south into Georgia. This brings problems with cold weather and ice that makes footing very challenging. Even though we are all excited to start our training year off, please be patient, let the ice and snow clear, our bodies and dogs will thank you for it. As the weather warms up, take it slow and go back to basics. This will help your dog get physically and mentally ready for more challenging concepts.

Respectfully submitted

John Dawber

MARC Eastern Region Director

What does the AKC rule book say.

Chapter 3 Section 25. Diversion Birds or Shots

A diversion shot is a shot in which no bird is thrown, and shall only be fired in Senior or Master Tests.

Diversion birds may appear on a blind retrieve either after the dog has been sent for, or when a dog is returning from the blind retrieve; however, diversion birds shall only appear on marks when the dog is returning from a retrieve.

Diversion birds shall always be initiated in front of the working dog. The diversion bird is not a mark but constitutes a trainability situation. It is always retrieved by the working dog. Diversion birds shall be shot or thrown when the working dog is in a location that it should be able to see the bird as it goes up into the air and as it falls.



QUALIFYING PERIOD
MARCH 1, 2024
TO
FEBRUARY 28, 2025

2025

MASTER AMATEUR INVITATIONAL

WATERVILLE, MAINE

**RUNNING DOGS
JUNE 22ND-29TH**

- 1. JOIN MARC**
- 2. EARN MH TITLE**
- 3. GET 4 MH PASSES TO QUALIFY
2025 MAI IN MAINE**

USE THE QR CODE
FOR MORE INFO



Training Tips:

Region 3 Director Doug McQuire

Kick up the Cues

Most of us use verbal cues to help communicate with our dogs when we're running blinds in hunt tests. Probably the most widely-used cues relate to distance. I use "easy" and "way out" to let my dog know if it's a short blind or a long blind. Same applies to marks ... giving the dog a sense of the distance to the bird can definitely help them make a great retrieve. But distance is only one of the factors in any given blind, and teaching your dog cues to help them with other common factors they may encounter in the field can help them succeed.

In the lead-ups to the 2022 and 2023 Invitationals, I had the opportunity to train with a group of folks led by a talented pro trainer in Central Texas. One of the things I learned from Richard during those sessions is that teaching cue words associated with factors that are commonly encountered on blinds can make a huge difference in the dog's performance. Richard teaches several cue words: "key" tells the dog there is a slot or keyhole on the way to the bird, "wawa" tells the dog it will need to get in the water, "bust" means there will be a significant cover change along the way (the dog will need to "bust the cover"), and so on. The specific words you use aren't important, but how you train your dog to interpret them is.

As an example, when teaching "key," you want to start close and use a wide slot. Position the dog centered on the slot, with the bumper pile just past it, and mark the pile with a pole if needed. Cue the dog "Dead bird. Key." and send it to the pile. If the dog does well, praise it and move back a few steps. The rest is progression: gradually build distance (on both sides of the slot), make your target slots narrower, and shift the angle of approach so the dog doesn't learn that a slot is always 90° from the line they're carrying. Start simple and gradually add complexity, one element (distance, width of slot, angle of approach) at a time, only progressing to the next step when you're sure the dog has the concept down cold. Back up and repeat steps as needed.

Training verbal cues can help your dog think about the task at hand before he or she is sent to retrieve, which in turn can help them successfully negotiate the factors in any retrieve. Watching Richard work dogs that understood his cues was fascinating. He would heel the dog to the line and tell it to sit. As soon as he said “dead bird,” the dog’s head would move side to side as it scanned the field. When he said “key,” I could see the dog become more focused in its scanning until it found the slot, at which point it locked on, quit head-swinging, and leaned forward ready to go. His dogs eventually learned to incorporate multiple cues: “Dead bird. Way out. Key. Wawa” meant “This is a blind. It’s far, not close. You’ll go through a keyhole and then into the water.” And they really did get it.

These are just a few examples of cues for specific factors. You are, of course, free to use whatever words you like for as many factors you wish. I’ve found cues to be a valuable tool to have in the kit, especially when negotiating tricky blinds in unfamiliar locations. Hopefully you will as well.

MASTER NATIONAL NEWS

On the Master National website there a fantastic article titled [“Master National Dogs featured in a Kentucky Magazine”](#). Although the article was focused on Master National dogs and handlers many in this article are also members of the Master Amateur Retriever Club including our current President Jace Tramontin. Visit the Master National Retriever Club website and look in their blog section for the full article.

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Submitted by

Mike Heard

Communication Director

