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2025 MAI

Waterville, ME

June 22-29 2025



President's Message:

Greetings,

Many of you know who I am but let me take the opportunity to introduce myself. I live in Northern Minnesota where the winters are long and the training is short. Denise and I have put two dogs into the Master National RC Hall of Fame, and one into the Master Amateur Hall of Fame.

I have been involved in the retriever community since 2002. I have held many positions in my local club as well as being on the MNRC board for 10 years, I also assisted in starting the Master Amateur Retriever Club and have attended every MAI.

Here are some of my goals for MARC: to increase communications to its members through timely newsletters, social media, and one to one contact. To help all amateurs by providing additional information and resources for example, training tips. Lastly, we will continue to put on a quality yearly Invitational event.

The retriever community is a very passionate group of people involved in training their dogs and your input will help the club grow and provide more to the community. Sportsmanship is one of the backbones of our sport. I believe each of us has some responsibility to increase sportsmanship.

If you have ideas, please reach out to a board member.

Finally, we must all remember that it is the hunting season and that's why we participate in a sport to take our dogs out and hunt waterfowl and upland birds and enjoy the outside with our companions. Good luck, let the birds fly into your pattern, and point the dog straight.

Looking Forward,

Jace Tramontin

Region 4 Director - David Markham

In one week, I will leave for the Master Nationals in Kevil, Kentucky. The distance is 2,107 miles from my home in Bend, Oregon. This will be my fourth MN, and this year is special as it will be my older dog's last hunting test. For the two of us it's about cherishing the trip and time together. I also have a young dog and love the bond her and I are building.

There are more than 1,100 dogs entered in MN and approximately 20 percent are handled by amateurs. It can be somewhat intimidating running with the pros, but it presents an excellent opportunity to watch and learn from the best handlers across the country.

Running at MN is exciting and fun, but nothing matches the comradery, thrill, and challenge of the Master Amateur Invitational. Maybe it's the smaller number of entries at the MAI as compared to MN, or that we are all amateurs trying to our best given the training challenges and limitations we face (as amateurs).

Some think I am crazy driving the miles that I do to compete with my dogs but next June I will also make the 3,200-mile trip from Bend to Waterville, Maine for the 2025 MAI. Nothing gets me more excited than the pursuit of the coveted plate that symbolizes the hard work, commitment, dedication and connection between my dogs and me. I hope you will make it a goal to join me in Waterville, Maine next June.

I will be following the progress of the amateur handlers at MN and while my hope is for everyone to come home with a plate, I am a little biased toward the amateurs.

Enjoy every moment with your dogs because they leave us too soon.

Region 1 Director – John Dawber

Hi all, we have been busy all summer. Everyone is getting their dogs qualified for the upcoming MAI to be held in Waterville, Maine in June of 2025. We visited the properties in July, and they all look to be in great shape. The handlers in Maine are excited and looking forward to having us visit their little slice of heaven. There has been a lot of inquiries about this event, so we are expecting a large turnout. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone who qualifies and attends the event.

There have been some questions about qualifying for the event.

1. You must be a member of the Master Amateur Retriever Club when you qualify your dog at EACH hunt test.
2. You will need 4 qualifying passes at hunt tests between the qualifying period of March 1st 2024 through February 28th 2025.
3. Your dog must be a Master Hunter. The passes you receive while getting your Master Hunter Title count as qualifying passes so long as you received them during the qualifying period.

John Dawber Eastern Region Director Master Amateur Retriever Club

Mark Frederick Eastern Region Vice President Master Amateur Retriever Club.

What does the AKC rule book say.

You are marshalling your home club Master and you see on the marshal sheet a dog is listed as an "(A name of owner). However, you notice a professional is walking into the holding blind and about to run the dog. What do you do?

AKC rule book page 7 says:

"If a dog is entered under the amateur set aside provision and the amateur handler is not able to attend the event, the dog may participate provided it is handled by another amateur. Any handler/owner misusing the amateur set aside provision will forfeit the ability to enter in this manner and may be subject to a fine from AKC."

It would be in the best interest of event clubs and/or event secretary to list on the official marshal's sheet which dog(s) were entered in the Amateur Set Aside.

This is a confusing area as the official marshal sheet does not verify this information so club event secretaries should add this to the official marshal sheet to eliminate confusion and potential issues.



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

Work on non-verbal communication skills. I attended a Pat Burns seminar this past summer and Pat had numerous training tips to share with the group but one tip I took particular note of was “non-verbal communication skills”.

Broadcasting the 2024 MAI in Carnation, WA I was able to watch all the dogs and handlers run the event. You could clearly see how the dogs and handlers worked as a team but some dogs were sloppy with line mechanics when marks began to go off in the field.

Working and subtle non-verbal movements to push and pull the dog to give them the best view of all the marks is vital in your weekend events and especially at a national event.

It begins with the dog in proper heel position (neutral position) with your knee at the dog’s shoulder. With a dog on the left side of a handler and in the proper heel position, a subtle step back or movement rear of the neutral position should be a non-verbal cue to the dog to rotate closer to the handler or to pull to the right, a subtle step forward of the neutral position should push the dog to turn away from the handler or push the dog to the left. You can teach this in training with marks or a wagon wheel drill. Here is a link to the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/a8yryLVRf0I?si=KCqf8LqTEz9P2jzN>

2024 Master National from Amateur Viewpoint

Written By John Dawber

The 2024 Master National was held in Paducah, KY this year at the Western Kentucky WMA in Kevil. This was a special year for me as my wife was going to join me on the trip for the first time as she had recently retired. We started our trip from Massachusetts to Kentucky on the 14th of September and would arrive in Paducah on the 15th.

We were meeting up with a small training group with 8 handlers (7 of which were amateurs) and 16 dogs in Kentucky for pre-National training. The group had leased a small property with land and water to train on along with a couple of other pieces of land to help change things up.

I had two dogs in contention at the 2024 Master National, Beantown's Harvard Scholar (Ivy) an 8-year-old female that had been to the National before and qualified and Beantown's Irish Gangsta (Whitey) a 3-year-old male that attended his first Master National, both are amateur trained so it was going to be a challenge.

Pre-National training week started on Monday with a unique piece of water. The landowner had shaped the pond to look like the Playboy Bunny logo. We mostly worked on keeping the dogs focused and getting them accustomed to the high heat (90° plus) and humidity. We did a lot of singles! As the week went on, the dogs in the training group started to look better and better.

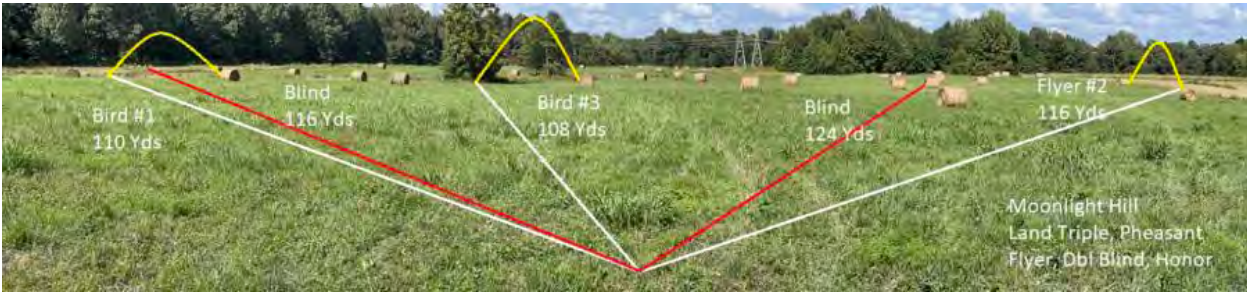


Some of our Pre-National Training group (L-R Mickey Novak Amateur with Tilly, Myself John Dawber Amateur with Ivy, Dan Heard Pro with Weezie and Shawn Kimberly Amateur with Lucie).

We checked in at registration on Saturday, September 21 and received our handlers' bags full of swag and met up with old friends which is part of what makes the MNRC Hunt Test so much fun.

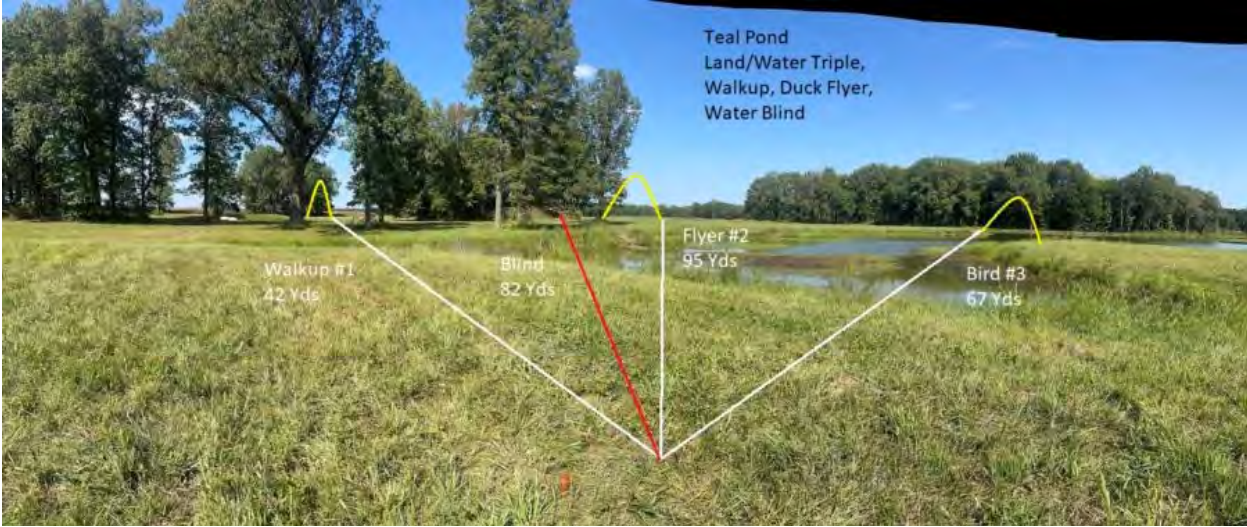
On Sunday evening, September 22, at the banquet, we were introduced to our judges, found out who was going to be the starting dog, and what location we would start our first series at. Flight C drew two great judges, Linda Johnson from the state of Washington and Rod Somers from Texas.

Flight C would start the 1st series at Moonlight Hill --a Land Triple with a pheasant flyer, double blind and an honor. Flight C started with 147 dogs with 5 scratches. The starting dog for all the flights was dog #144.



Our first series took us 3 days to run all the dogs through. The dogs had a tough time finding pheasants, as a result we lost 24 dogs this first series.

Series 2 was going to be another tough series. Teal Pond was a Land/Water Triple with a walkup, duck flyer, and single water blind.



We started the second series with 118 dogs being carried from the first series, dog #29 was going to start us off for the second series. As we ran this series the dog work started to improve, and more and more dogs started to mark the birds better. I ran early in the first series with dog numbers 7 & 13, I would have to wait till close to the end of this series to run. Fortunately, when we did get to run the second series, we did well enough to be carried to the third series.

So, now we are moving into the third series and the nerves are starting to build. The dogs that were making mistakes were starting to be cut. The remaining dogs needed to show some of the skills that got them here.

Series 3 went to Turkey Pond- a Water Triple with all dead ducks, a water blind and a diversion shot.



We started the third series with a one-day rain delay because of Hurricane Helene. The water in this series had risen and the series that was supposed to be running water was now mostly swimming water. This was going to take a lot longer to run all the dogs through than what was originally planned. We were now carrying 106 dogs, starting with dog number 57. As the flight members brought their dogs to the line you could start to see the dogs really shine.

Series 4 saw 80 dogs in our flight going to the line, starting with dog number 85.



This test was a Land Triple with a pheasant flyer, double blind and honor. This series was located up high off a dike. It was very muddy that day, with birds landing in standing water in the field. You mix that with pheasants, and you know the dogs are going to have a rough day.

After all that, Flight C had 57 dogs going to the fifth and final series, with two of them being mine.

The 5th series was at PRTA Field. It was a Land/Water Triple with a walkup, duck flyer, and single water blind.



The dogs in Flight C stepped up in the 5th series. As a group, most dogs running this series were completing the test without too much trouble. When all the dust had settled, Flight C had 53 dogs that Qualified, with a good number of them being handled by amateurs.

Of the dogs at the Master National 80-85% are handled by pros, but this should not deter anyone from trying to run at this event. The amateurs I watched who ran dogs stepped up and handled their dogs as well as anyone. I am very proud to be considered as part of that group.



SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

I am truly amazed of the generous support from our sponsors and to see some of our sponsors running in the event.

Please thank and support our sponsors: Purina, Avery, Garmin, Dogta, Kent Cartridge, Zinger Winer, Gerbino & Associates, Up Close Photo, EntryExpress, and Retriever News.



The image is a vertical collage with a blue border. At the top, the text "Thank you!" is written in a large, blue, cursive font, with "... to our generous Sponsors!" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it. The background is a photo of a golden retriever splashing in water. Various sponsor logos are arranged on the right side and bottom. The logos include: Purina Pro Plan (black box with gold text), ASD Avery Sporting Dog (blue and black), Garmin (blue triangle), dogtra (black and white), Up Close Photo Ducks + Dogs (blue and yellow), Kent Cartridge (black and white), Gerbino & Associates, Inc. (green circle), Zinger Winger (green and black), Retriever News (black silhouette of a dog and blue text), and EntryExpress (blue and black). At the bottom, a line of text reads "MARC sincerely thanks you for all your contributions and support!".

Thank you!
... to our generous Sponsors!

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MARC sincerely thanks you for all your **contributions** and **support!**

Submitted by

Mike Heard

Communication Director