

High Flyers Group Training

In an effort to achieve the most advancement for all High Flyer Club members we are going to begin breaking our monthly training into two smaller groups. These groups will be labeled “**Beginner**” and “**Advanced**” retriever training. By dividing the class into two groups we will be able to address the concerns and skills needed for each group to achieve their goals.

Due to the poor weather associated with the first few months of the year we will only be able to work indoors where space may be limited for each class. With this in mind, separating into these smaller groups should allow more repetitions for each handler and dog team. I have listed below the retriever skills that shall be practiced and developed at the beginner level. These skills must be solidly in place to advance positively into the more advanced group. During the monthly training secession our intent is to place retrievers of the same skill set together while each group continues to advance in their respective training program.

During these training lessons the equipment that will be necessary are as follows:

1. A 6’ flat leash with a swivel snap.
2. A training collar (either a chain or gentle leader type)
3. Possibly training treats depending on the experience of the dog.

Listed below are the skills that will be practiced and developed at the “**Beginner Level**”.

Basic Beginner “Obedience” Commands:

1. **Sit** Command (both with voice as well as using a whistle)
2. **Stay** Command (with or without a place board device along with distractions)
3. **Recall** Command (“Here” or “Come” command also with distractions)
4. **Heel** Command (walking in the proper position with various turns and stops)
5. **Down** Command (resting command)

Basic Beginner “Retrieving” Abilities:

1. **Holding Blind Control** (the ability to remain in a holding blind without handler aid)
2. **Steady at the line** (the ability to remain steady while watching the thrown birds)
3. **Willingness to retrieve** (the ability to retrieve both a thrown bumper or a dead bird)
4. **Delivery to hand** (the ability to hold the retrieved bird and properly deliver it to hand)

The “Advanced” level skills will begin with a firm understanding of those skill sets listed above. More distractions, and advanced drills will be practiced at the Advanced level. Those drills will include but are not limited to:

Blind Development Drills

1. Push-Pull / One Step Drill
2. 4-8 Bumper Lining Drills
3. Modified “T” Pattern
4. Obstacle Training

Marking Drills

1. Multiple marks (both simple and technical)
2. Proper Alignment and selection
3. Honor and Diversion skills
4. Swinging with the gun

Only your regular participation and practice at home will be the determining factor in your retriever's advancement. We aim to do everything possible to help you in that advancement with your dog. We strongly encourage Beginners to enroll and regularly attend Puppy or Basic Group Obedience classes at one of the many dog training facilities in and around the area. Older dogs can benefit too by being in a group setting with all of the distractions and activity going on around them. Remember: Training, conditioning and reinforcement are ongoing activities throughout the lifetime of your retriever. A dog's trained behavior will eventually fade if it is not regularly practiced and reinforced. Besides, working with your dog is fun!

Since this training program is something totally new that we are trying there naturally will be a period of trial-and-error. We may need to go back to the drawing board and tweak some things here and there.

Your participation, patience and practice are appreciated and we look forward to seeing you and your retriever at the club's training days!