

SO YOU'RE NEW TO NAVHDA

Southern Minnesota Chapter

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What is the Southern Minnesota NAVHDA all about and what's in it for me?

We are a training and testing organization sanctioned under the *North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association* (NAVHDA). The Southern Minnesota chapter is one of many chapters scattered throughout the USA and Canada. Our primary goals are to facilitate the training and testing of the versatile pointing dog through chapter sponsored training days and chapter sanctioned Natural Ability, Utility Preparatory, and Utility tests. We concentrate our training and testing efforts on the versatile pointing breeds only (also known as *continental* breeds).

As a new member what should I expect from our chapter?

Chapter members are invited and encouraged to attend chapter events including training days, social functions, planning meetings, and chapter tests. As a member you may train your dog at a training dates. You will be given a list of sources for training birds. You will have access to training equipment. You will receive assistance in obtaining your dog training permit. You will be in the company of other pointing dog training enthusiasts and may train together to assist one another.

What should the chapter expect from me?

We are an entirely voluntary organization at the chapter level and, therefore, entirely dependant on the chapter membership to conduct all chapter activities. You should be willing to share your time and talents with other chapter members. You should volunteer to help with chapter activities such as becoming a chapter officer, volunteering to help with the chapter tests, volunteering to help with training days, helping to procure training birds, helping to procure training sites and permitting and volunteering as Newsletter editor and Webmaster.

Why do I have to be a member of both the local chapter and the international?

Local chapter dues are used to offset costs of sponsoring tests and training activities and to pay our annual insurance premium. International dues are required of every NAVHDA member so that you are insured while at chapter activities.

Okay, I've decided that Southern Minnesota NAVHDA is for me. How do I get started?

First, pay your dues to both the international and chapter. International dues are due annually from the date you first join. Chapter dues are due in January and are for the calendar year. There is no pro-rating for dues paid after January. Then plan to attend what training days and events that work into your schedule.

What will I need as far as training equipment?

There are many different training aids available and this list is not exhaustive nor is every item on this list absolutely necessary, but many people find the following equipment helpful when they attend a training day:

- 6-foot leash
- Check cord
- Dog stakeout with chain
- Dog crate
- Water bowl
- Water bottles
- Bird cage for holding your training birds
- Bird bag for transporting birds out to the field
- Retrieving dummies
- Surveyor's marking tape for marking planted birds
- Blaze orange hat or vest (everyone must wear at least one article of blaze orange clothing)
- Break-action shotgun
- Shot shells, both lead and non-toxic, please replace shells used by training partners
- Poppers
- Rubber knee boots, waders

Other items that are helpful but not used by everybody, some of these items are available by the chapter:

- E-collar
- Bark collar
- Remote release or manual release bird launcher
- Backing dog
- Canoe
- Portable training table

I'm new to a chapter training day. What should I expect?

There will be other members with their dogs, all with varying experience levels and training goals. Introductions are made and chapter members discuss what goals they may have for the days training. Chapter members with similar training goals are usually matched up and work together for the day. The members are there to help each other achieve their goals. While some members are quite experienced and have helpful advice, very few are professional trainers and you will most likely be training your own dogs with the assistance of other members.

Some common courtesies are:

- Pick up and pay for all birds you ordered. Assist whomever brought your birds with distribution.
- Any birds accidentally released are your responsibility
- Keep your dog leashed until it is your turn in the field
- Do not rely on a rope attached to the bumper or trailer hitch as a dog stakeout, use a short chain stakeout or crate your dog when you are unable to be with it
- Clean up after your dog around the vehicles
- Leash your dog up as you return from the field
- Assist others when planting birds, gunning, transportation of equipment, etc.
- Offer your advice only when asked, there is usually more than one way to accomplish a training goal
- Dispose of your own dead birds and garbage
- Don't wait until others have paid for and planted birds to go out and hunt "scratch" birds without their permission
- Whenever your schedule allows, plan to stay until all members have had their chance to train their dog before leaving unless they do not need your assistance
- Do not tag along with other members dogs in the field unless you ask first or are invited to walk along. Most members will gladly have you tag along with them but there are times they may want less confusion for their dog
- Do not let your dog escape from you and work other member's birds. If it happens, offer to pay for the birds

All of the above courtesies have been found to help everyone have a successful and fun training day.

I don't know what goals I should have?

While there are many different approaches to training a versatile pointing dog, many incorporate the training techniques described in the following resources:

NAVHDA “Green Book”, NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules

Because NAVHDA is a testing organization, you can set training goals by following the sequence of testing described in the NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules booklet. It describes the test rules and most members find that if they enter a test, they are compelled to set training goals to prepare for that particular test. If you stick with NAVHDA and train your dog to the level of Utility Test qualification, you will have an outstanding hunting dog anyone would be proud to own. If you pass the NAVHDA Invitational, you will have as well-trained and useful hunting dog as anyone in the country.