

Badger State
Hunting Retriever Club, INC.

Retriever Training
Handbook

Bill Kehoe

About the Author

Bill Kehoe

- I am an avid waterfowl and upland hunter.
- I have hunted in several different states and Canada.
- I have been training Hunting Retrievers since 1988 and been involved with HRC for fourteen years.
- I am the founding father of the Badger State HRC and past club President.
- I have owned and trained three Hunting Retriever Champions:
 - HRCH Kehoe's Duke of Troy MH - Yellow Male
 - HRCH Kehoe's Red Hot Chili Pepper - Black Female
 - HRCH Kehoe's Kiowa Warrior – Black Male

**I believe in the preservation of game by hunting with
a trained Hunting retriever.**

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- The Hunting Retriever
- Getting Started
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- Basic Retriever Skills
- Basic Blind Retrieves
- Advanced Retriever Skills
- Advanced Handling Drills
- Retriever Games

The Hunting Retriever

There is nothing more exciting than watching a trained hunting retriever do it's job.

A trained hunting retriever adds quality to your hunts and preserves game.

The BSHRC is dedicated to helping you train your Hunting Retriever.

BSHRC web site

<http://www.ticon.net/~gunner/>

Getting Started

The ideal time to start training a hunting retriever is right from the day you bring it home.

Early socialization, introduction to birds and the sights and sounds of the field all create a foundation to creating a retrieving machine.

Don't worry if you didn't start early, you can teach an old dog, new tricks.

Just get started!

Basic Obedience

Obedience is the key to all retriever training.

The big three:

- Come
- Sit
- Stay

Other commands:

- Heel
- Lay down
- Kennel

Basic Retriever Skills

Marking and retrieving birds is the primary duty of your hunting retriever.

We use two types of commands when teaching marking:

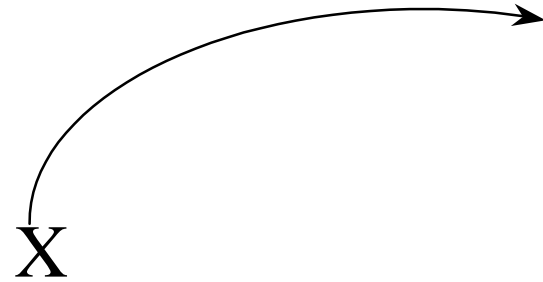
- Get ready command - “MARK”
- Release command - “BACK”, “FETCH” or the dogs name.

At first, don't worry about steadying your dog. Gradually teach the dog to stay until being released.

Single Marking Drills

Stationary Thrower Drill

- Thrower should keep throws in the same direction and dummies should fall in the same time.
- Handler/s should rotate 360 around the thrower.
- Wind direction, cover and terrain all add challenges to this drill.



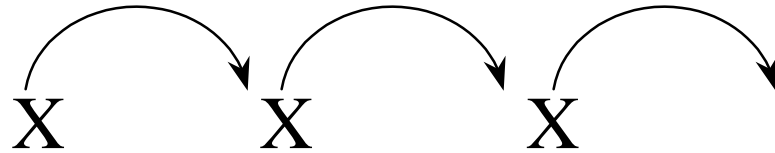
D/H

D/H = Dog/ Handler

Single Marking Drills

Moving Thrower Drill

- Thrower moves in a straight line perpendicular to the dog/handler after each mark.
- Handler stays stationary.
- As the thrower moves, the distance and the angle to the mark changes.



D/H

Basic Blind Retrieves

A blind retrieve is sending a dog to retrieve a bird that it didn't see fall. Handlers use whistle and hand/arm signals to send the dog to the bird.


Commands used in teaching blind retrieves.

- Get ready command: “DEAD BIRD”.
- Direction command: “LINE” plus hand direction towards bird.
- Release command: “BACK”.

Lining Drills

White Bucket Program

- Establish a line by using a 5 Gal. white bucket to give dog a visual reference.
- Start close (15 paces), move back 5 paces at a time if dog succeeds in running to the bucket.
- Gradually increase difficulty by increasing distance, inserting obstacles or incorporating changes in terrain and cover.

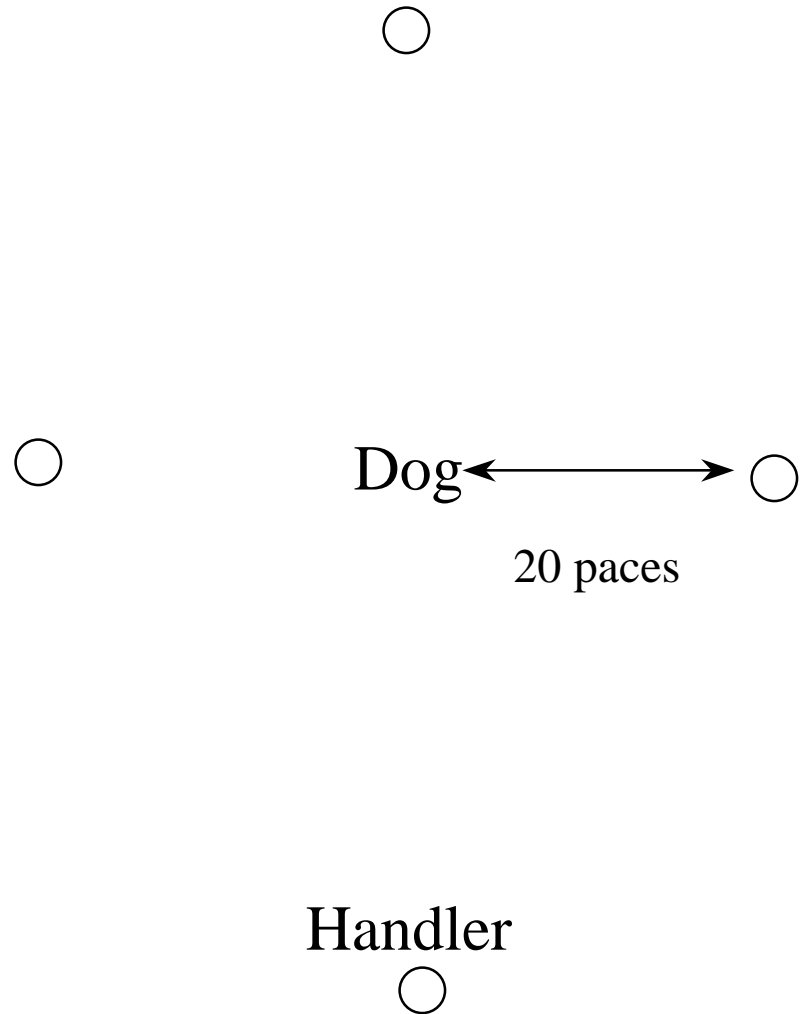
Pile of 
dummies
in front of
white
bucket

D/H

Baseball Drill

Step 1

- Set up buckets at homeplate and all three bases and place 3 dummies at each base.
- Place dog at the pitchers mound facing homeplate.
- Start at homeplate and cast dog to each base, repositioning dog at the pitchers mound each cast.
- Handler should rotate to each base and cast the dog.



Baseball Drill

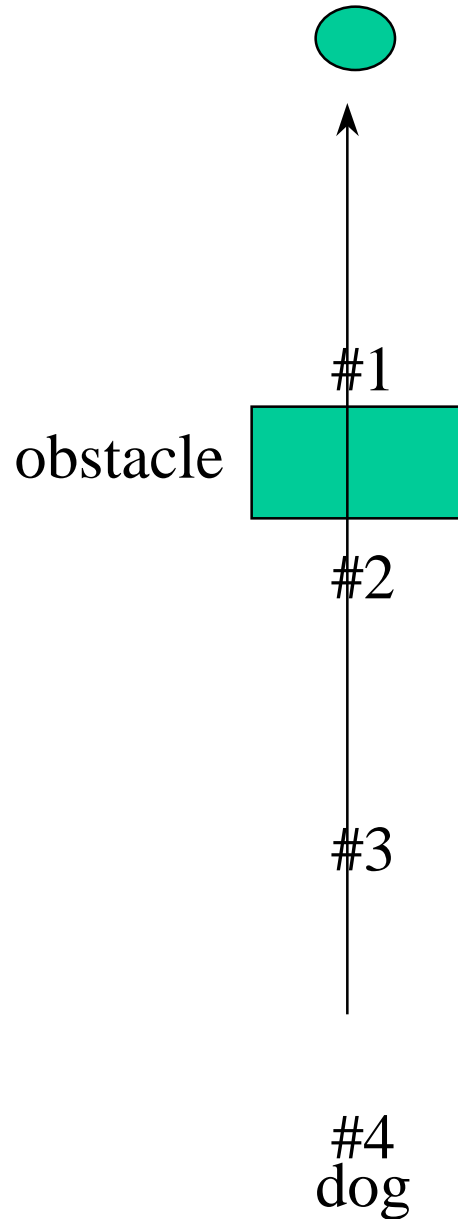
Step 2

- Gradually increase the distance between bases.
- Initially handle dog from homeplate.
- Send dog on a line to 2nd base.
- Send dog towards 2nd base, but stop dog at the pitcher's mound, then cast dog over to either 1st or 3rd base.
- Alternate sending dog to 2nd base and stopping dog at the pitcher's mound.
- Handler/dog should rotate to each base to ensure dummies remain at each base.



D/H





Lining drill through an obstacle (ditch, cover, etc).

Make sure dog runs through and not around obstacle.

Start out in front of obstacle(#1) and work your way back to #4.

If dog fails, correct, and move closer to bucket until she gets it right.

Advanced Retriever Skills

80% of all hunting situations include single marks. In those situations where you have a multiple hunter:dog ratio or experience good shooting you need to prepare your dog to mark multiple birds.

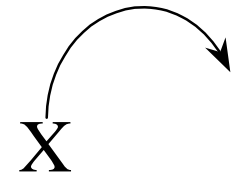
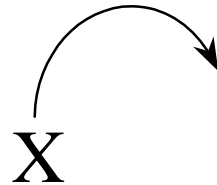
The same commands apply to multiple marks.

Concentrate on doubles, remember a tough double is better than an easy triple.

In-Line Double Marking Drill

Stationary Throwers Drill

- Throwers should keep throws in the same direction and dummies should fall in the same time.
- Handler/s should rotate 360° around the thrower.
- As dog/handler rotates the angle between the marks change.



D/H

Blinds with Diversions

Step 1

Establishing a
line utilizing
a White 5
gal. bucket

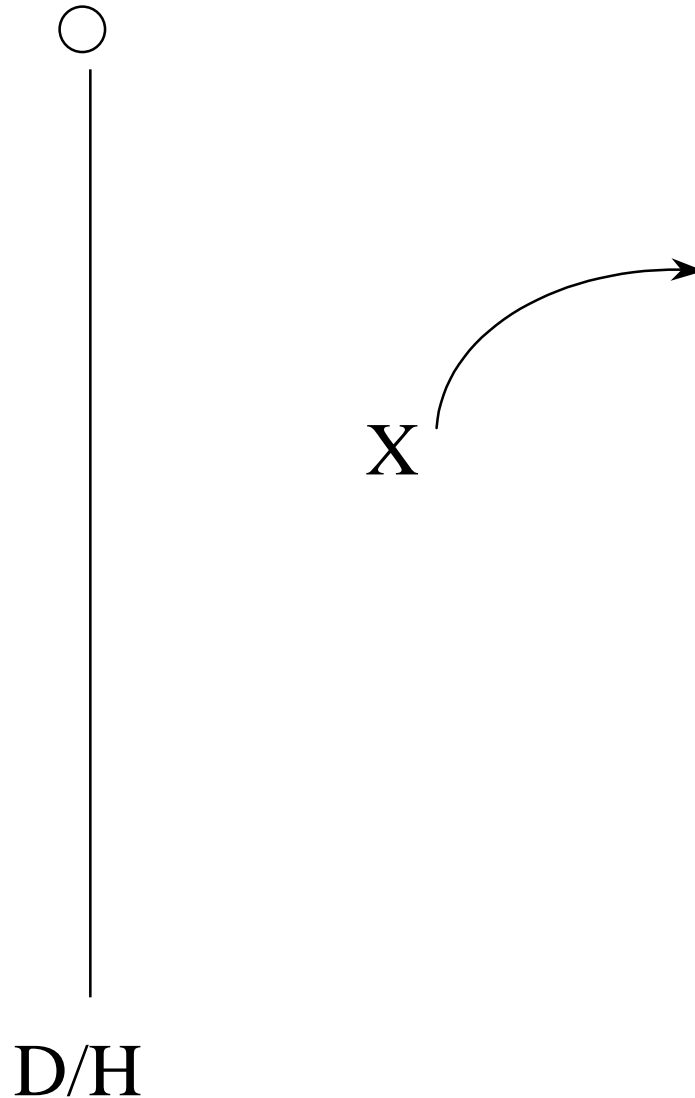


D/H

Blinds with Diversions

Step 2

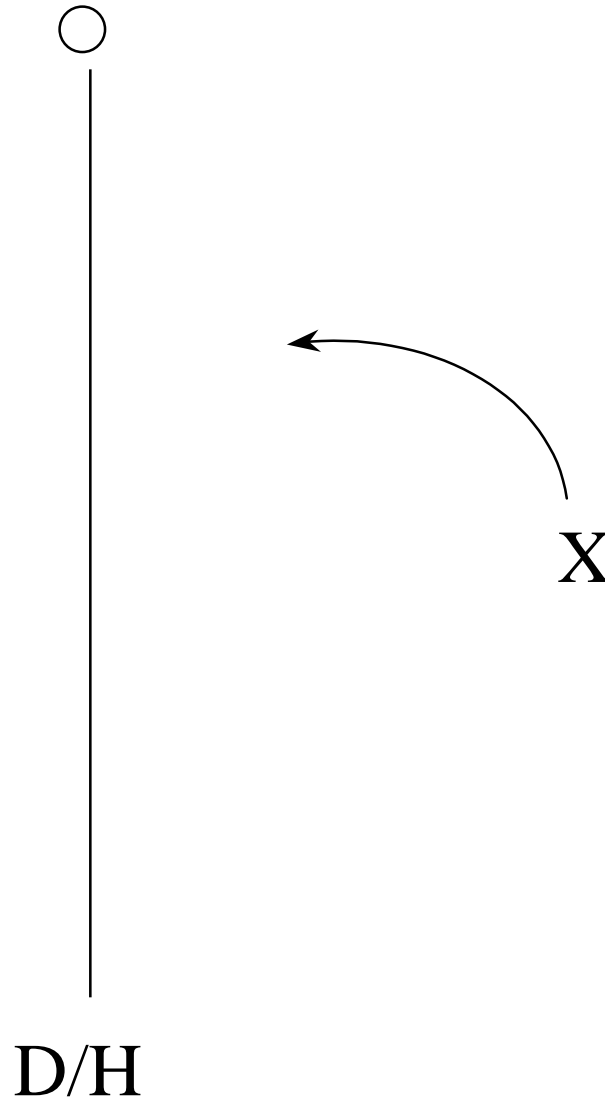
- Run mark thrown away from line.
- Run blind to bucket.



Blinds with Diversions

Step 3

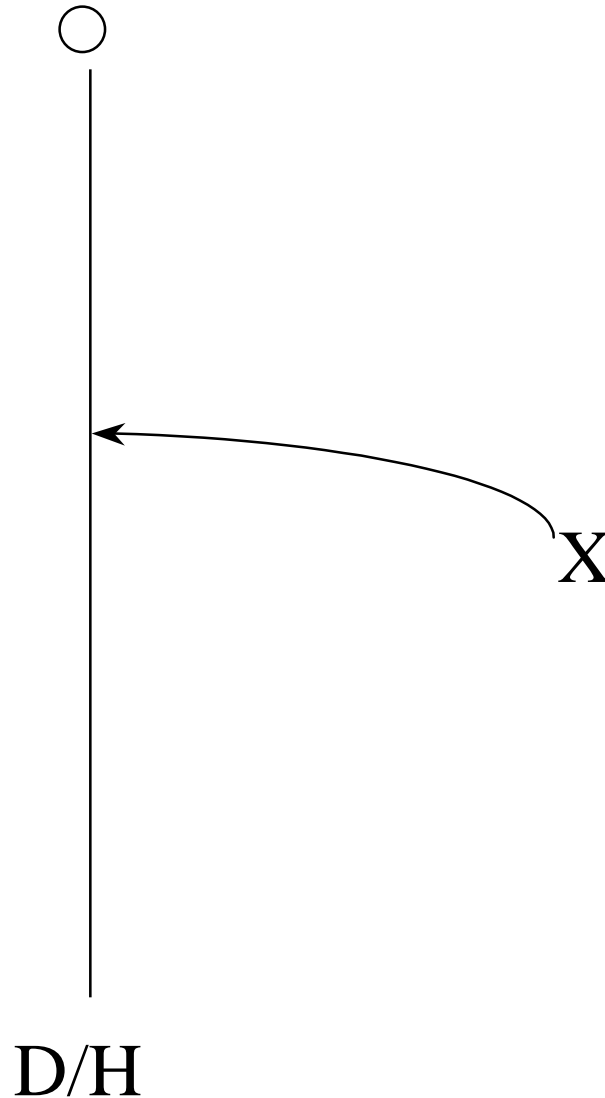
- Run mark thrown towards line.
- Run blind to bucket.



Blinds with Diversions

Step 4

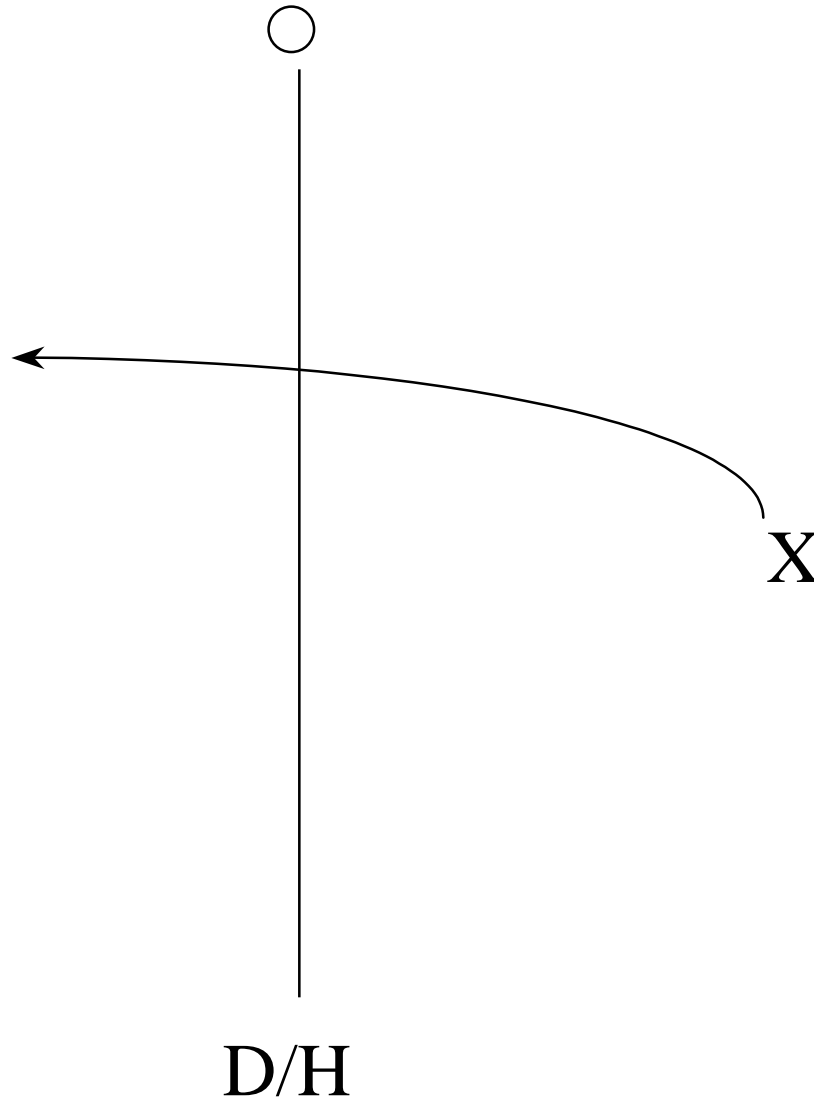
- Run mark thrown on the line.
- Run blind to bucket.



Blinds with Diversions

Step 5

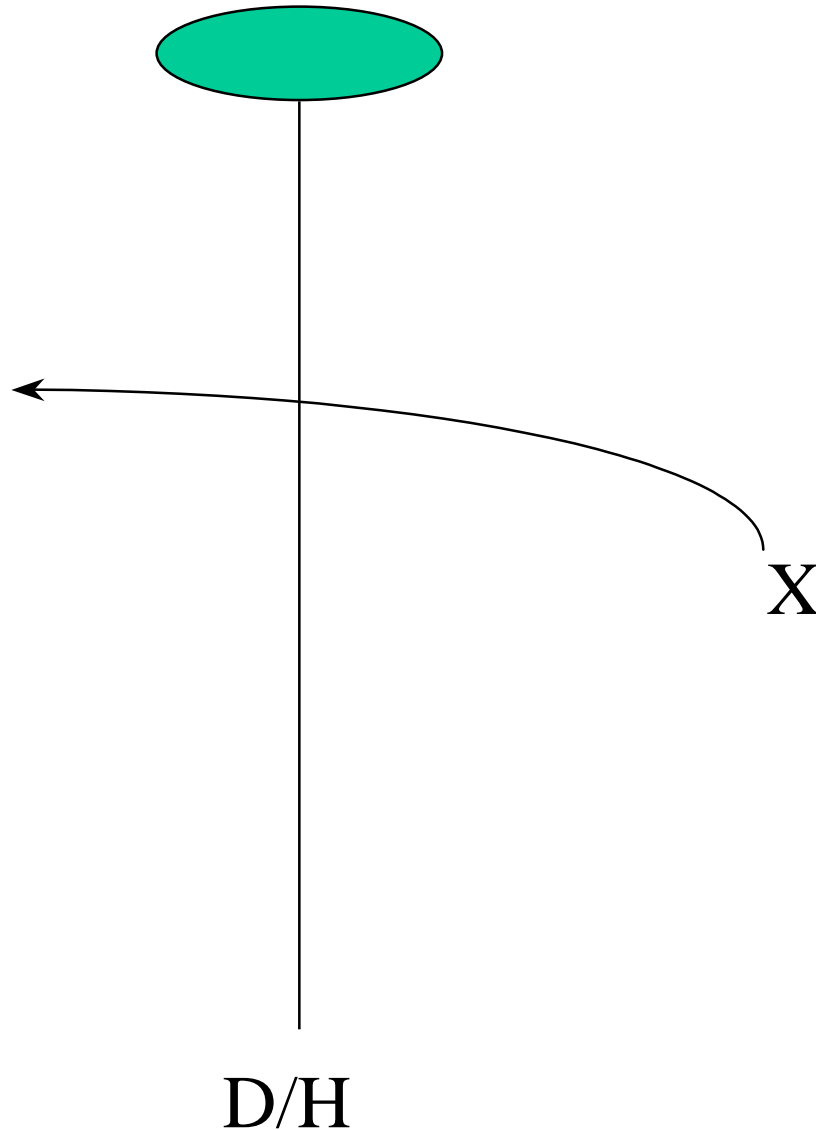
- Run mark thrown over the line.
- Run blind to bucket.



Blinds with Diversions

Step 6

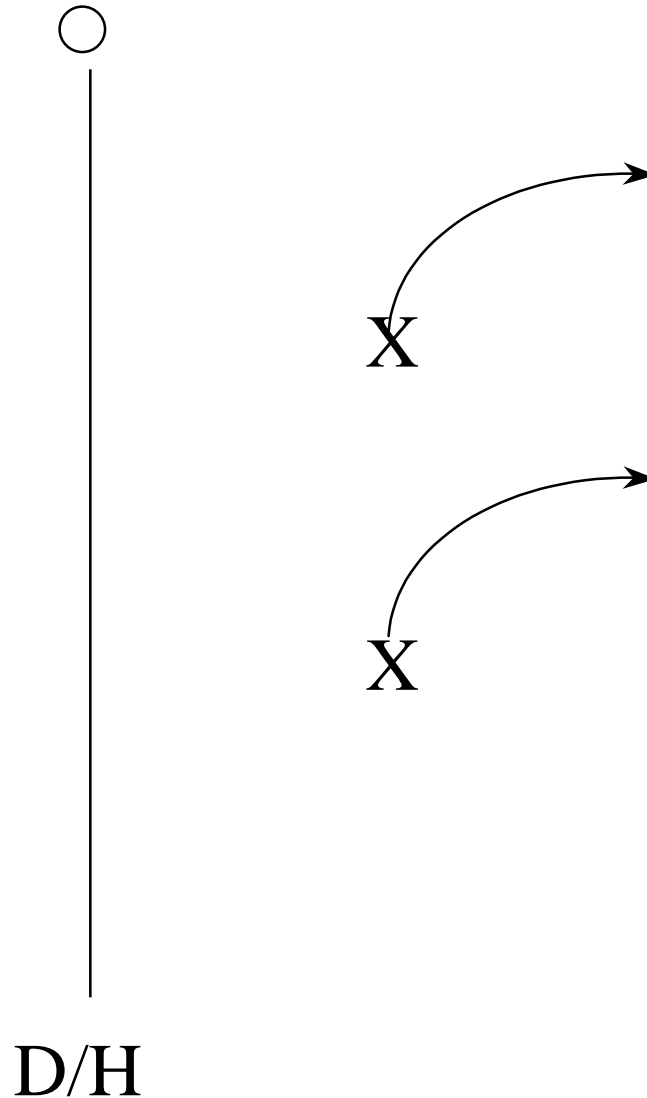
- Remove the bucket.
- Repeat all marks.
- Run blind to a pile of dummies.



Blinds with Diversions

Step 7

- Run double marks.
- Run blind to bucket.
- Remove bucket as dog becomes proficient.



Advanced Handling Drills

This is what separates the boys from the men, so to speak.

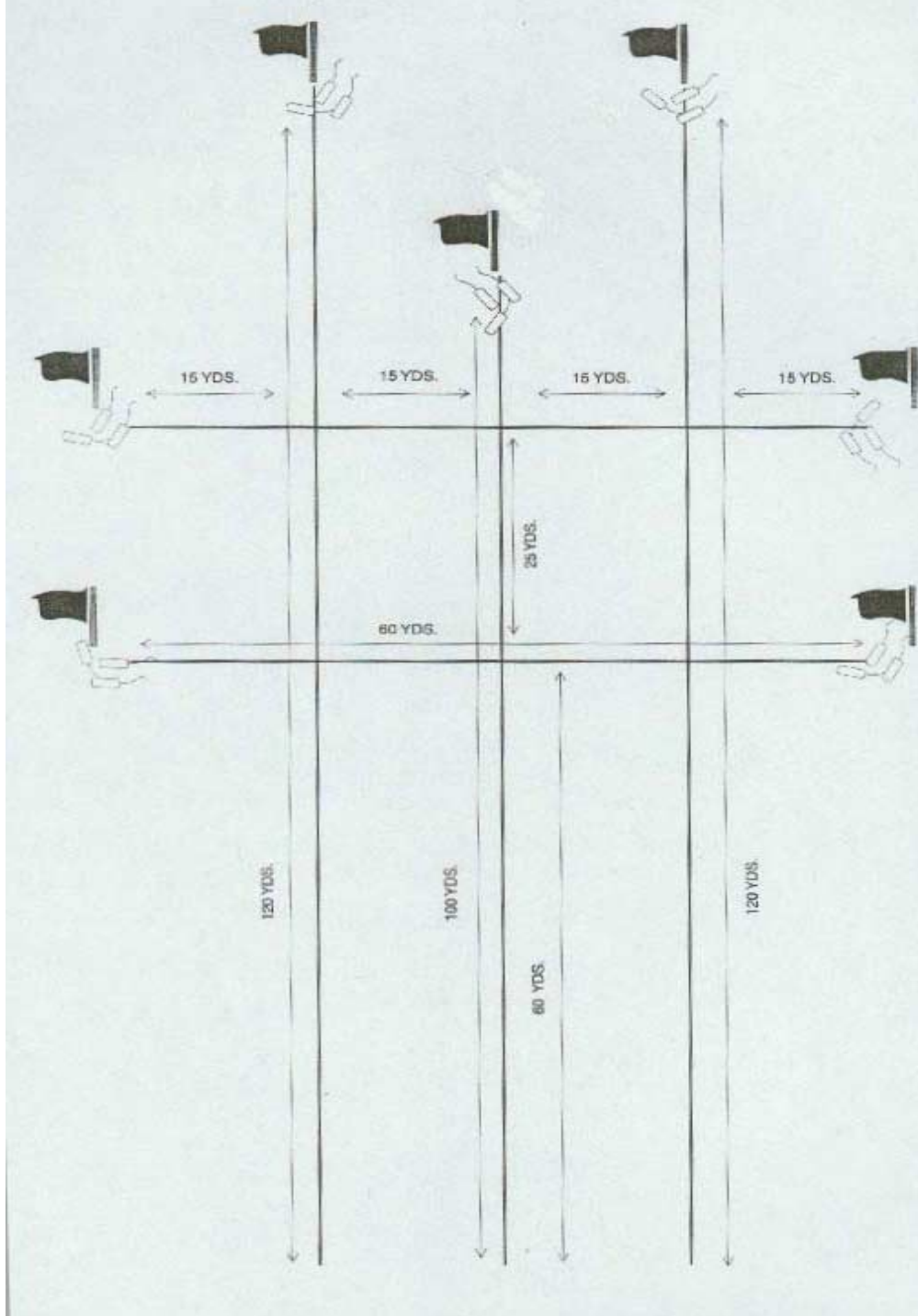
You must have a complete understanding of the blind retrieve and your dog must reliably take all casts and promptly sit on the whistle before you proceed to this level.

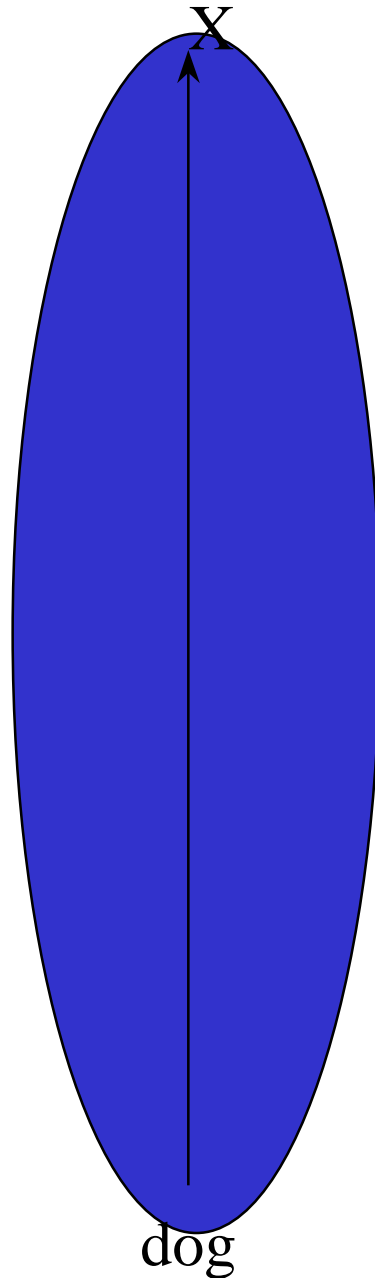
Modified Doubled T

This drill strengthens a dogs lining and casting skills.

How to implement the Modified Double T

- Find a suitable field & set-up as depicted using white buckets.
- Place 2-3 but, no more than 3 dummies at each bucket.
- Establish the 3 back lines 1st, then work the overs.
- Don't consecutively send the dog back to the same pile, alternate piles.



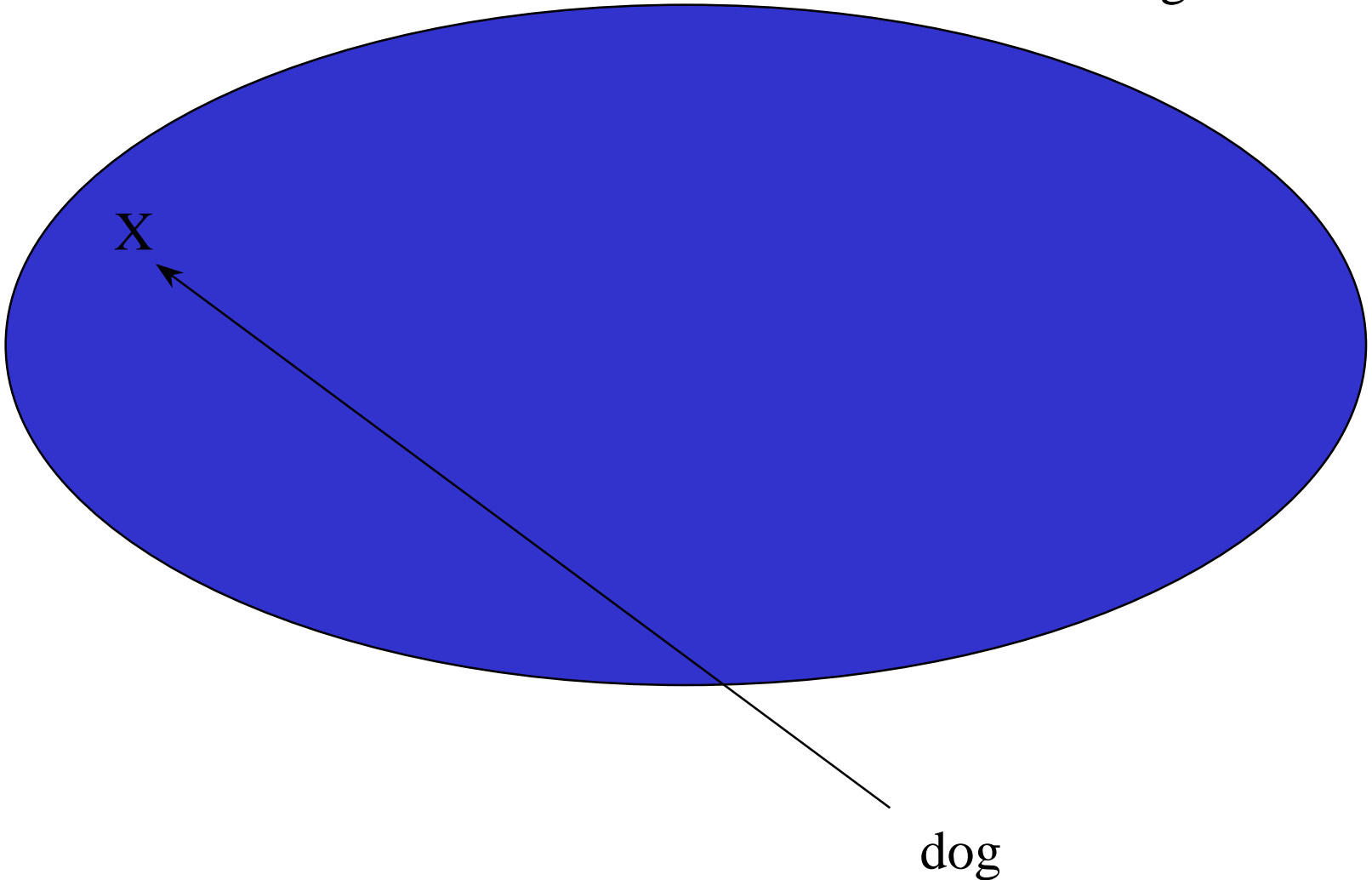


Channel Blinds:

Teach dog to swim a straight line in channel instead of running the bank.

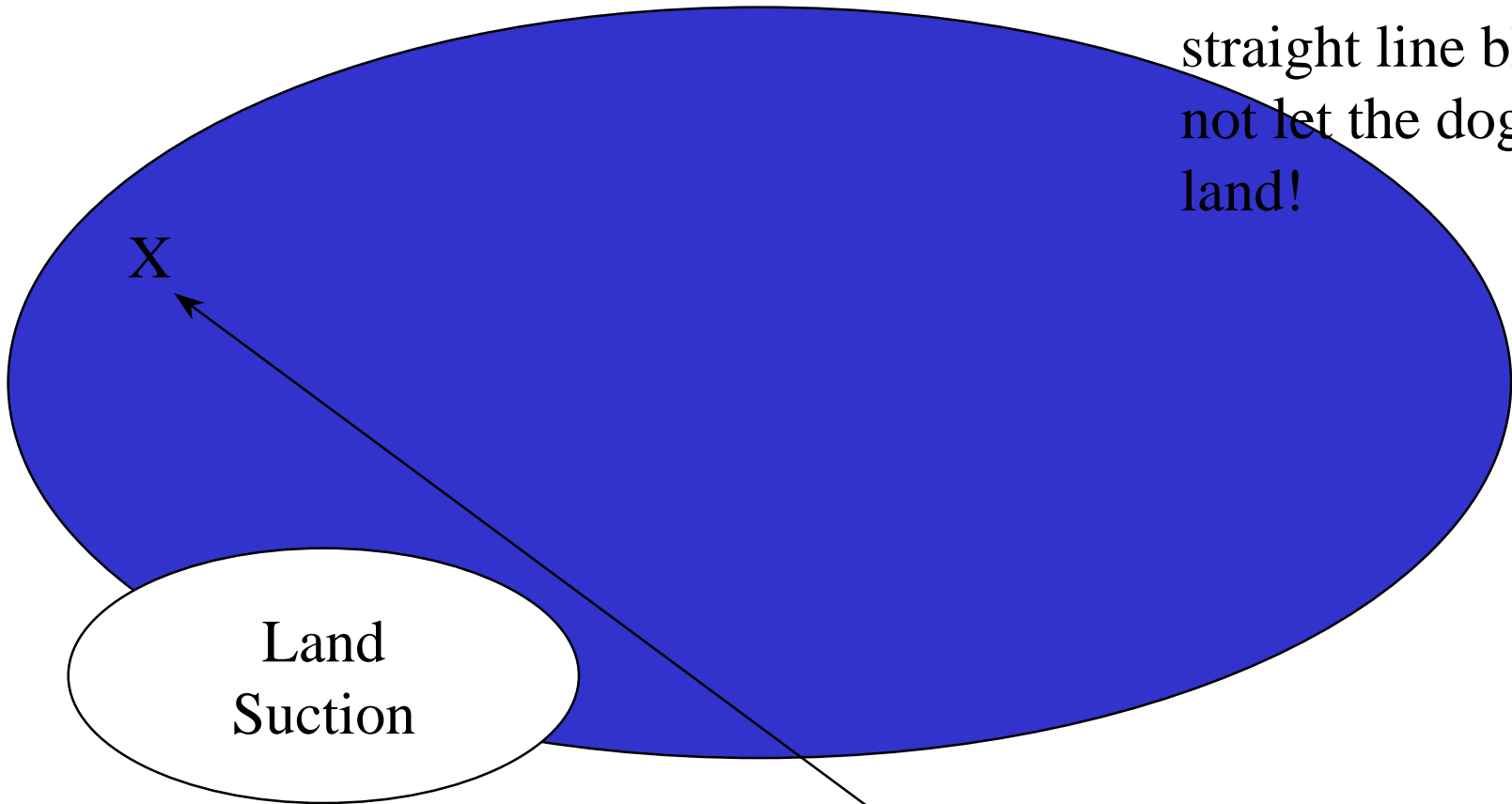
Teach this by back trailing blind. Sit dog by bucket, bumper in mouth, walk to start position, whistle dog “here”, make dog swim to you straight line, not on the bank. Start off with short distance, increase over time. Once dog back trails, send dog back. Prepare to go swimming/wading to teach this.

Angled entry blind.
Start at waters edge,
work back to 20-30M
over time. Ensure
straight line blind.



Angled entry blind
with suction.

Start at waters edge,
work back to 20-30M
over time. Ensure
straight line blind. Do
not let the dog touch
land!



Land
Suction

dog

X

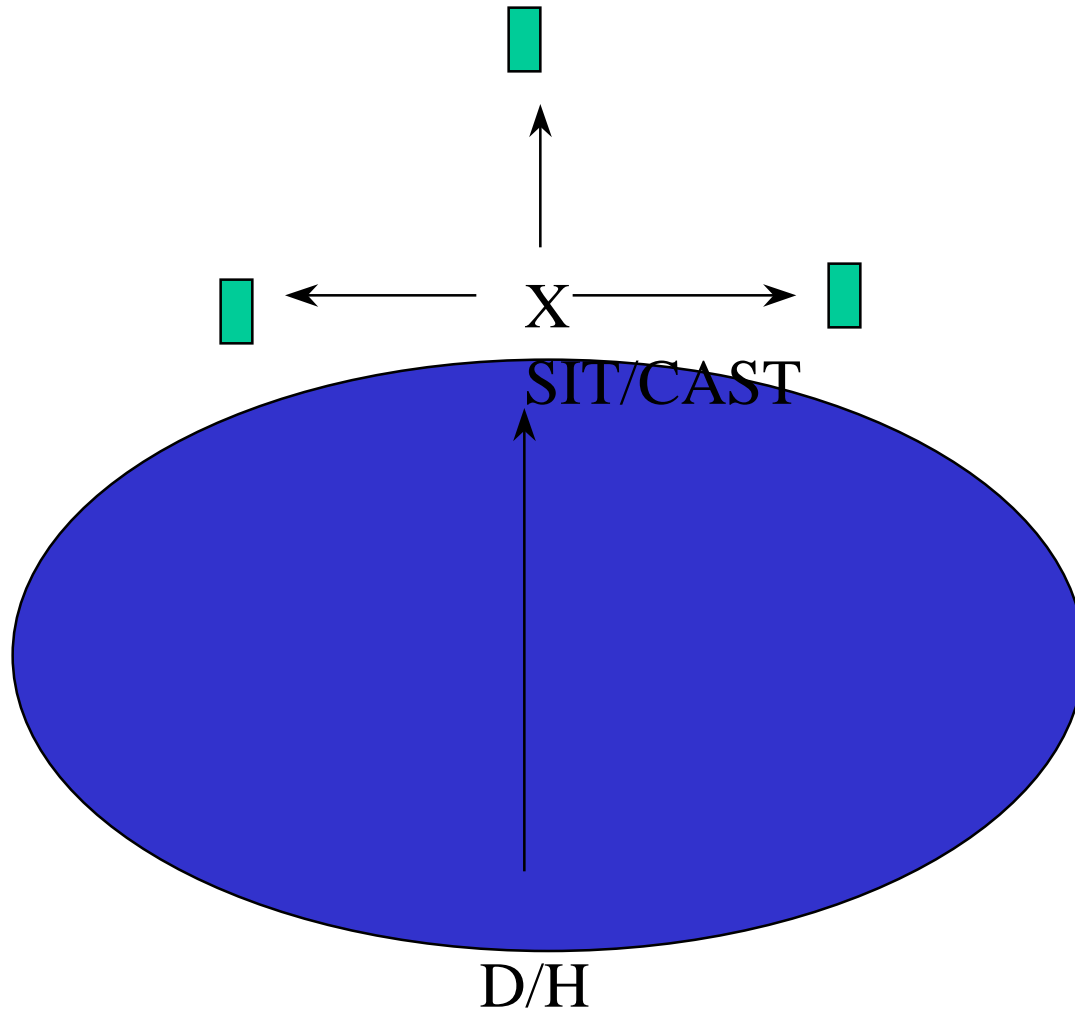
WATER/BANK HANDLING

- ESTABLISH LINE WITH DOG AND BUCKET (DRILLS 1-4)
- REINFORCE BACK COMMAND(DRILL 5)
- REINFORCE HANDLING ON PATTERN (DRILLS 6-7)
- REINFORCE LINE (DRILL 8)
- REINFORCE BACK IN WATER (DRILLS 9-11)
- REINFORCE HANDLING IN WATER (DRILLS 12-14)

- THIS IS BEST TAUGHT FIRST IN A SPLASH WATER ENVIRONMENT FOLLOWED BY A SWIMMING WATER ENVIRONMENT.
- WEAR SWIM TRUNKS OR WADERS AND BE PREPARED TO GET WET TO CORRECT DOG.
- ENSURE DOG IS PROFICIENT AT LINES AND HANDLING ON LAND BEFORE TRAINING THIS EXERCISE
- BE GENTLE AND COACH UNTIL LEARNS - WON'T TAKE LONG!
- ONCE RIGHT SIDE IS MASTERED, TRAIN LEFT SIDE.

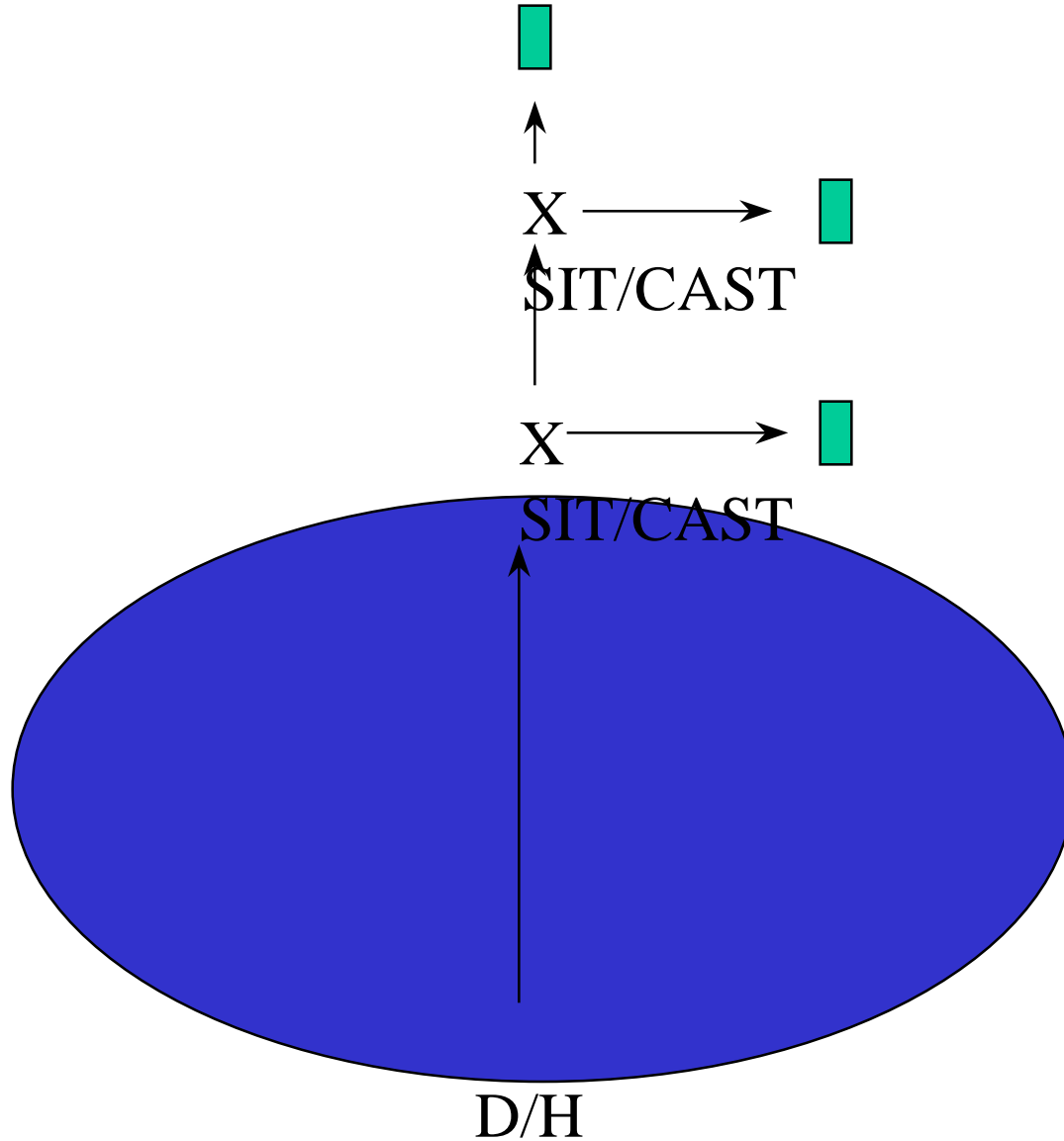
DRILL 6

PLAY BALL!

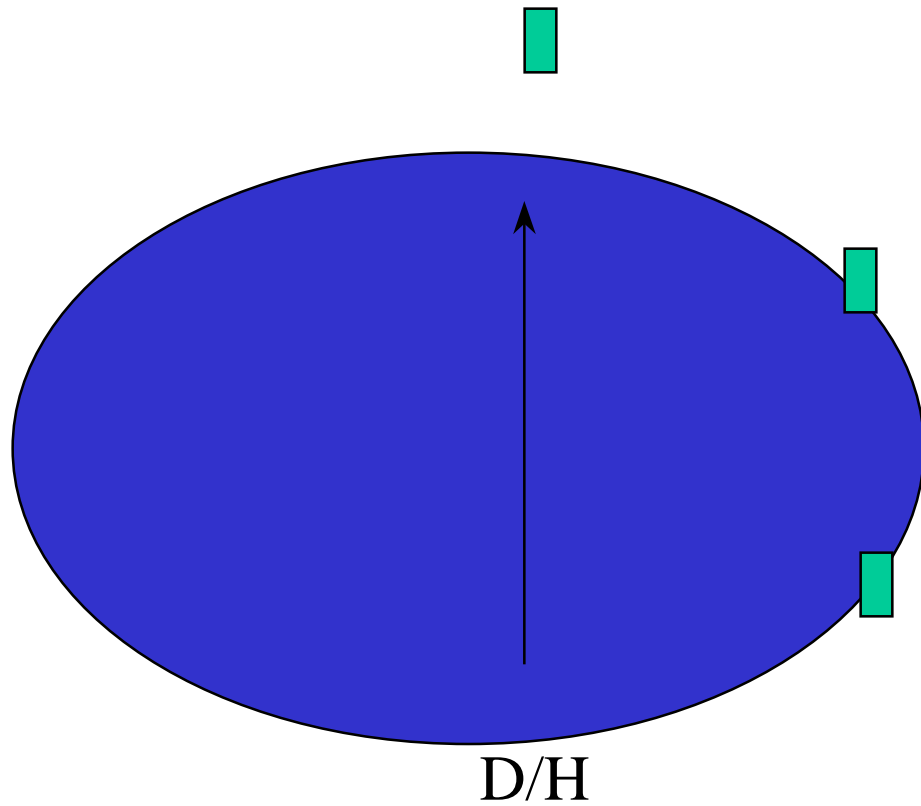


DRILL 7

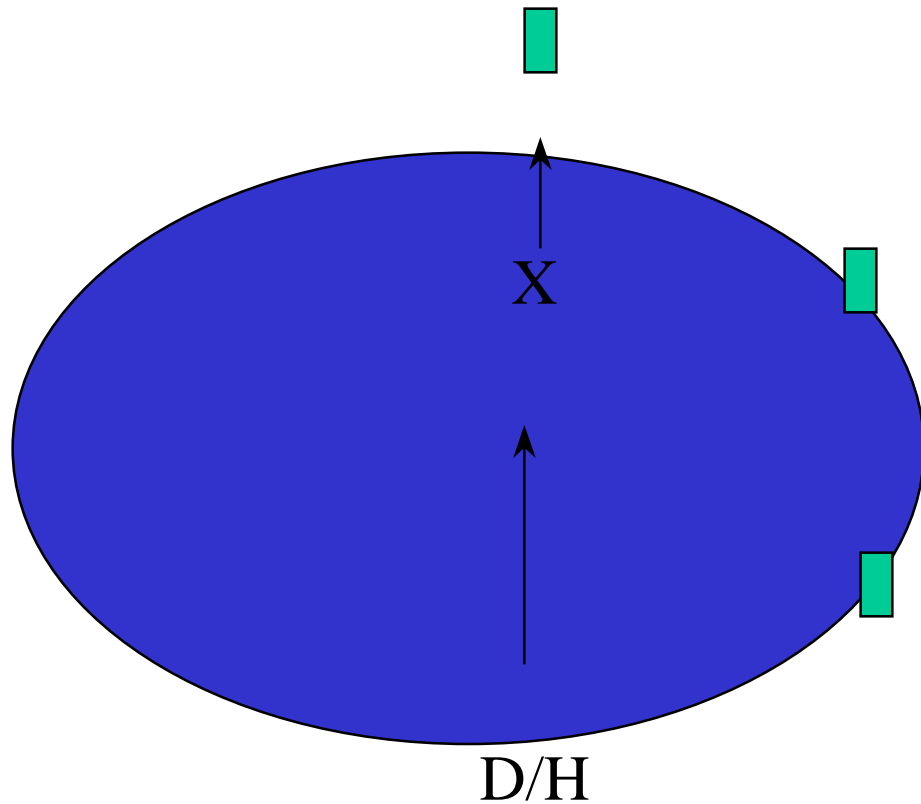
PLAY BALL!



DRILL 8 LINE

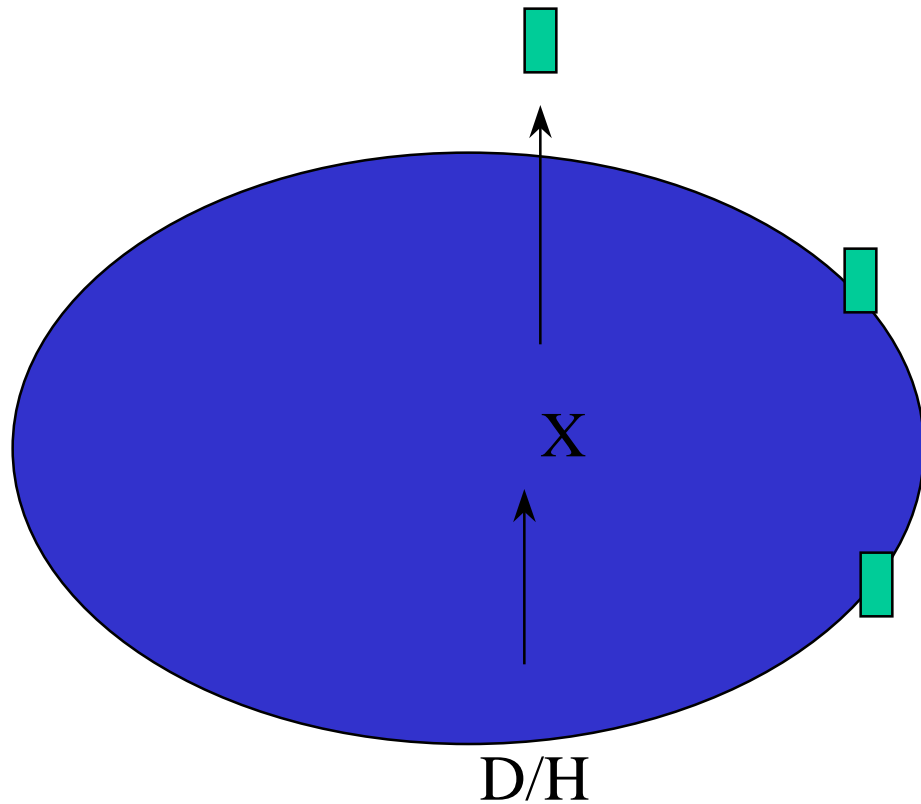


DRILL 9 BACKS



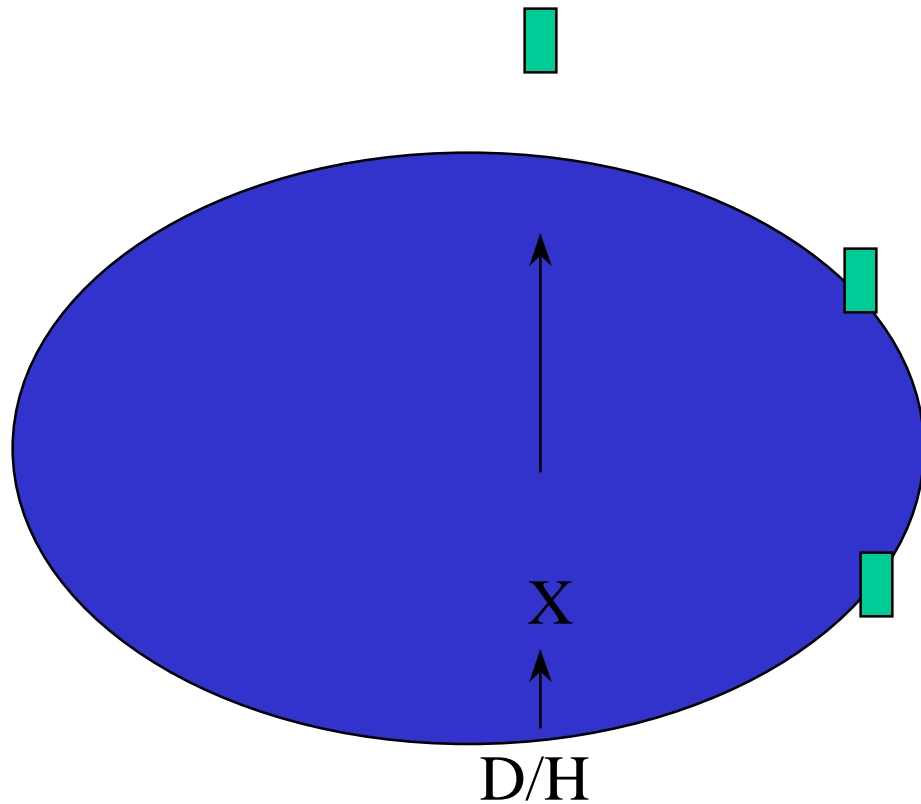
$X = \text{SIT/CAST}$

DRILL 10 BACKS



X=SIT/CAST

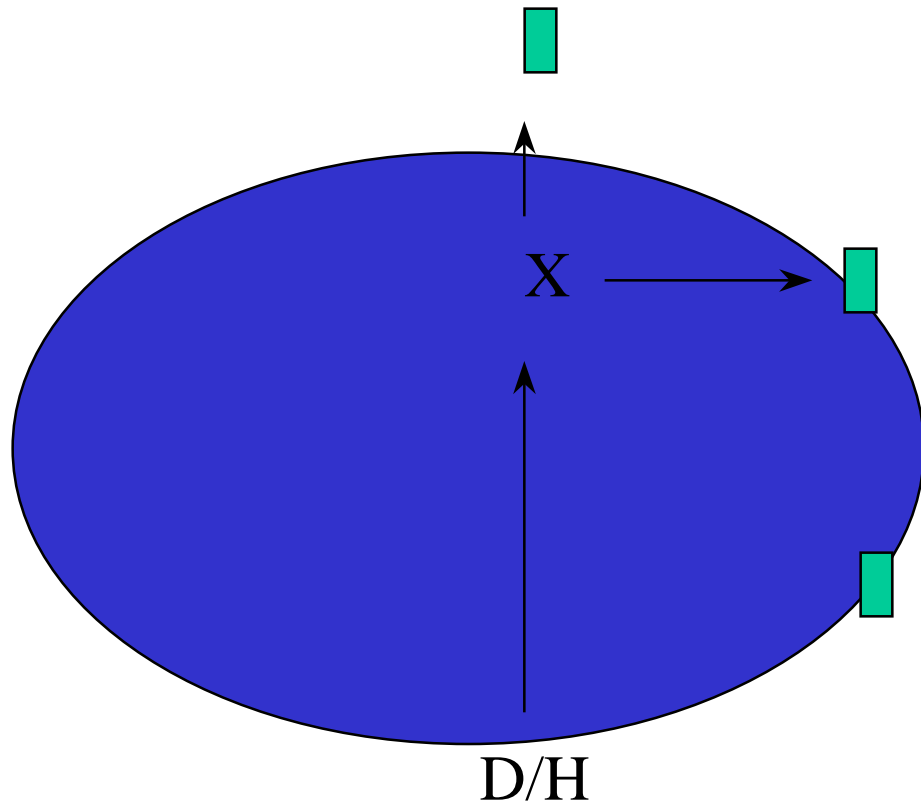
DRILL 11 BACKS



X=SIT/CAST

DRILL 12

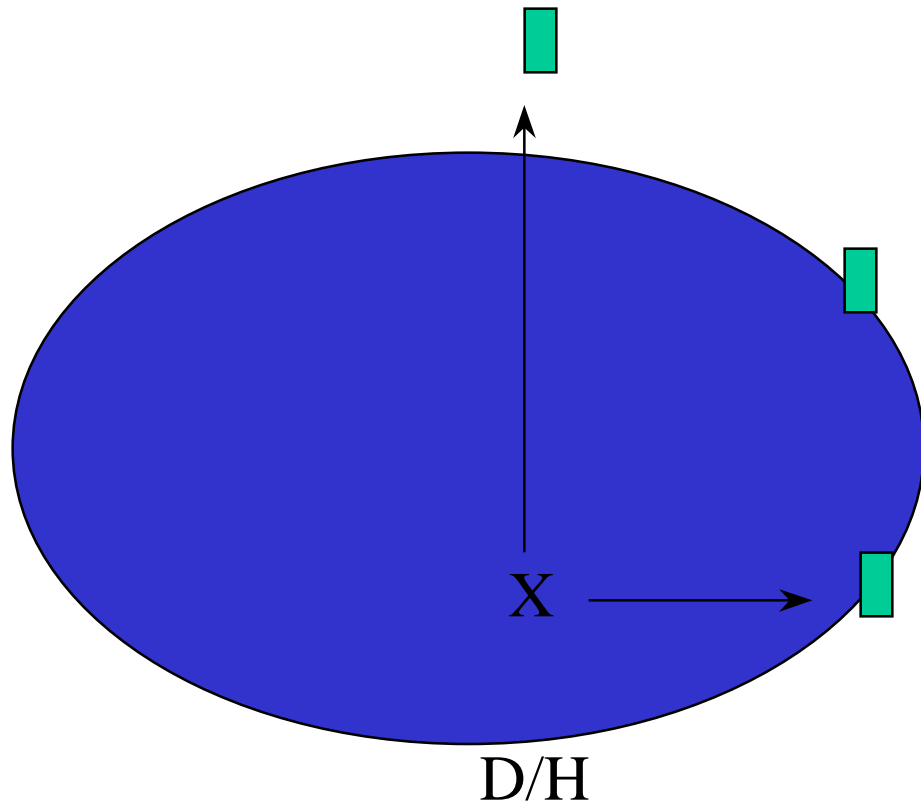
PLAY BALL!



$X = \text{SIT/CAST}$

DRILL 13

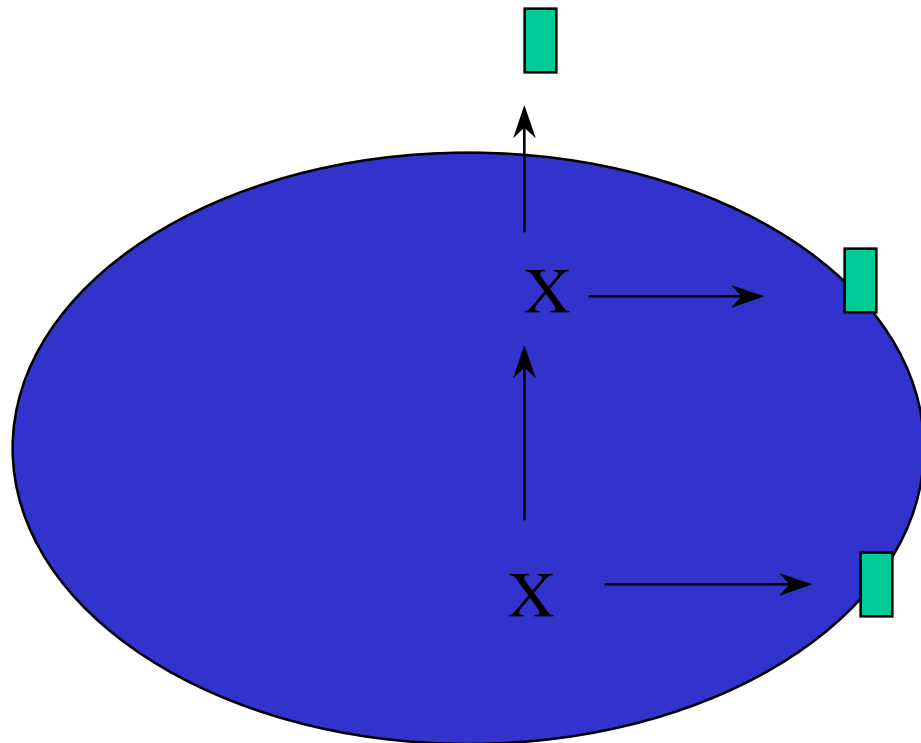
PLAY BALL!



X=SIT/CAST

DRILL 14

PLAY BALL!



D/H

X=SIT/CAST

Retriever Games

Most hunters regret the end of the season.

Well your retriever does too. The United Kennel Club/Hunting Retriever Club's testing program provides the hunter a way to extend the season. The program was designed by hunters, for hunters and provides a non-competitive pass/fail evaluation of you and your dogs performance

Hunt Test Program

- Started (5 points) 10 points max.
Two marked retrieves on water/land
- Seasoned (10 points) 40 points max
 - Double marked retrieves on water/land
 - Basic blind retrieve on water/land
 - Walk-up and diversion

Hunt Test Program

- Finished (15 points)
 - Multiple marked retrieves on water/land
 - Advanced blind retrieve on water/land
 - Diversion and honor
- Grand (40 points)
 - Multiple marked retrieves on water/land
 - Advanced blind retrieve on water/land
 - Diversion and honor
 - Upland and quartering test

Upland Hunt

10 Points

The Upland Hunt consist of :

- Simulated walk-up
- Quartering or tracking test

The Upland hunting dog must:

- Be steady to wing and shot
- Honor another hunting game dog
- Retrieve game as directed

Championship Titles

- Hunting Retriever (HR) Title - 40 points
- Hunting Retriever Champion (HRCH) 100 points
- Grand Hunting Retriever Champion (GRHRCH) 300 points
- Upland Hunter (UH) 40 points