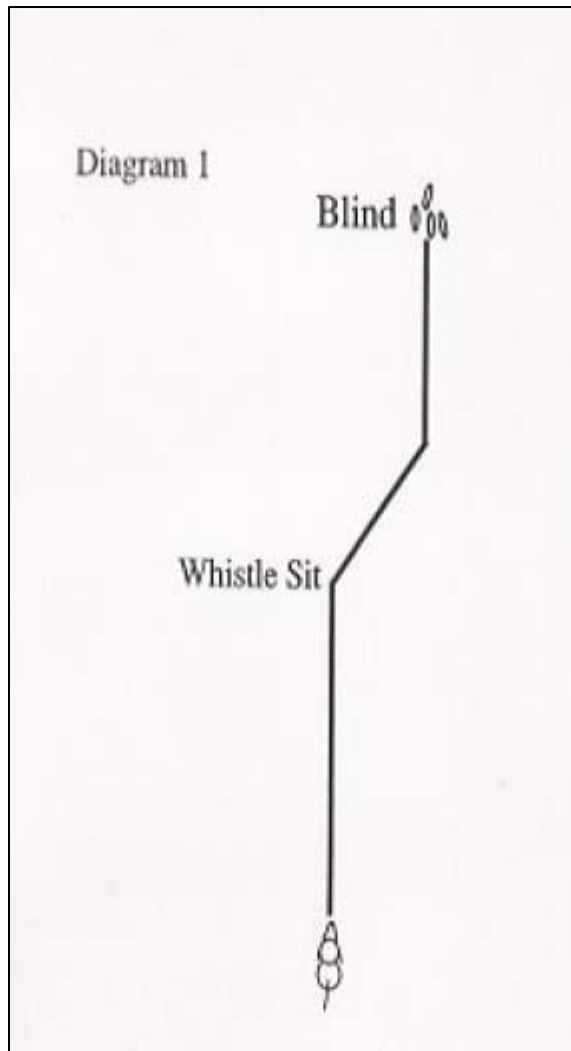


The Angle Back Cast

By Jim and Phyllis Dobbs



The angle back is usually defined as the dog turning and going back at a 45-degree angle from the shoulder instead of turning 90-degrees and going straight back. Ideally, what you really want when you give an angle back cast is for the dog to leave the line he is on, move over several degrees at an oblique angle and then go straight back. (See Diagram #1)

Why give an angle back instead of an over cast and then a straight back cast? With an over and then a back cast you must stop the dog twice in rapid succession. This control tends to slow the dog down. However, giving only one whistle sit and then an angle back doesn't tend to slow down the dog's momentum as much. This is important, as a dog with good momentum tends to carry the line straighter and further.

However, if your main concern when handling your dog is to have good control, and you are not concerned with how many whistle sit commands you use, then the over and straight back cast handling technique works well. Just be aware that it does slow the dog down and will reduce his momentum. The choice of handling styles is yours. If you choose to train your dog to take angle back casts, this article describes how we teach it.

Teaching the Angle Back Cast

To teach angle backs we use platforms or "place boards" as they give a visible target the dog understands. Therefore, to use this technique it is imperative that you have already taught the dog to cast to a platform. (See *The Retriever Journal*, "Training Your Dog to Cast" June/July 1996 or our video "Dogtra E-Collar Introduction")



Start with the dog sitting on a place board facing you. Give him an angle-back cast to another platform that is placed behind him and over at about a 45-degree angle.

Step 1. Teach left and right hand angle backs by casting to place boards as shown in the picture. When the dog takes the correct cast to the place board, throw him a bumper to retrieve.



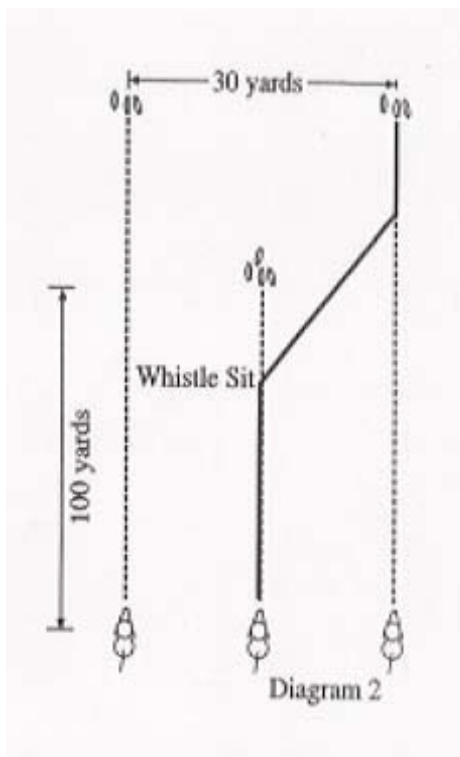
Increase the dog's understanding by starting him about 20 feet in front of one platform and casting him to another that is behind him at a 45-degree angle. With this setup, he must watch your hand signal and make the decision between going to the platform that is straight back, or at an angle-back.

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Step 2. Practice the same drill but add a diversion place board directly behind the dog. If he goes straight back instead of taking the angle back, tell him, "NO! HERE!" Move over a little toward to the intended board and try again.

The "Y" Drill

Step 3. Sight Blinds- set up three blinds as parallel lines with the middle one indented. This set-up is the same as we use on the Modified "T". (See *The Retriever Journal*, "Handling Patterns for Retrievers" Dec/Jan '96/ '97)



Place a pile of bumpers at each blind. Use flags at each pile so that the dog can see where he is going. When you run the middle blind and stop the dog part way to give an angle back, the pattern looks like a "Y". (See Diagram #2)

Send the dog "Back" to the center blind. Sometimes stop him short of the center flag with a whistle sit and give him either a left or right angle back cast. When the dog is proficient with this drill it is time to practice the same set up or "Y" drill to permanent blinds.

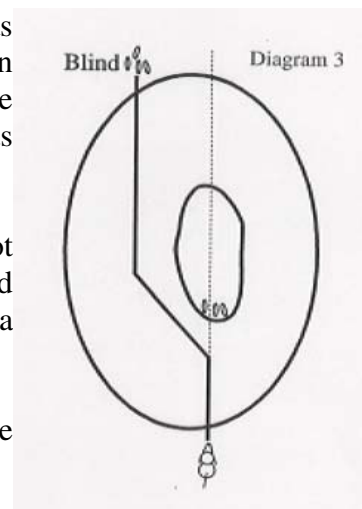
Step 4. Permanent Blinds-set up three blinds as parallel lines with the middle one indented. Run each blind separately, as shown in Diagram #2, so that the dog is familiar with the "permanent" location.

Next, run the drill as the "Y" drill, stopping the dog before the middle bumper pile and giving an angle back to either the left or right hand blind. The aid of going to a known location when being given an angle back cast will help teach the dog to take the correct angle and then continue back with confidence.

Step 5. Picture Blinds-use a picture the dog can understand, such as the set-up shown in Diagram #3, for teaching an angle back cast in water. Place one blind on an island or point of land and another one beyond the island as shown. Practice this set up until the dog accepts taking an angle back cast past the island or point of land.

When practicing the "Y" drill, keep the dog in balance. He should not think of the land as "poison" but go wherever you send him. He should go directly to retrieve from the pile on the island or stop short on a whistle sit and cast away from it.

To keep him in balance mix things up. Sometimes send him to the island or point and sometimes stop him and give an angle back past it.



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Step 6. Cold Blinds- set up cold blinds, blinds the dog has no prior knowledge of, in the configuration of the "Y" drill. Practice this set-up until the dog is proficient at taking angle back casts.

Review of the Learning Order

1. Teach the angle back concept by using the aid of "place boards".
2. Use flags as sight blinds to give the dog confidence.
3. Use permanent blinds to maintain the dog's confidence and cause him to become more proficient at taking angle back casts at a distance.
4. Provide the dog with a consistent picture so he will know to swim past an island or point when given an angle back cast away from the land.
5. Test the dog with cold blinds arranged in the "Y Drill" pattern so that you know he will take an angle back when given that cast.