

The Working Flatcoated Retriever Development Programme - Introducing your Flatcoat to Game

In April 2024 the FCRS launched a new training programme on dummies, the Working Flatcoated Retriever Development Programme. The Field Trial Subcommittee has developed a parallel programme to offer guidance and opportunities to those flatcoat handlers who would like to train their dogs to work as picking up dogs on a shoot, those who might like to achieve the Kennel Club Working Gundog Certificate on Game, the Kennel Club Show Gundog Working Certificate or the FCRS Shooting Dog Certificate and those who wish to progress to Field Trialling.

Foundation Level and Levels 1, 2B and 3B of the WFRDP are described in a separate article and all involve training on canvass dummies.

Levels 2A, 3A and 4 cover the introduction to game and live game training. Each level has a checklist of the skills, behaviours and experiences expected at that level. These checklists may be downloaded from the FCRS website. The checklists for 2A, 3A and 4 may be signed off as achieved by an independent gundog trainer, by another gundog club, by a trainer on a FCRS training day, by a game keeper or by a FCRS approved mentor. It is not necessary to have a checklist signed off all in one go, or all by one trainer or club. The idea is that the checklists are portable. The FCRS hopes to offer training days, experience days and courses aimed at helping you achieve each of the different levels. These will be advertised on the FCRS website and via social media.

Levels 2A covers the introduction of game via Cold Game Training and is suitable for those wishing to work their dog or to progress to trialing. If you have access to cold game or freshly shot game, this level could be signed off by an independent gundog trainer or by a FCRS approved mentor. The Society intends to offer Cold Game training days to enable those who do not have access to cold or freshly shot game to introduce their dogs to working with game.

Level 3A encompasses Shoot Day experience (for those with no previous experience of game shooting) and Live Game training. It is suitable for those wishing to work their dogs picking up on a shoot and for those wishing to take the KC WGC on Game, KC SGWC and/or the Shooting Dog Certificate. It could be achieved via a local shoot and signed off by an independent gundog trainer, by a game keeper, by a FCRS approved mentor or by a trainer on a FCRS Live Game Training day. If you feel this is the appropriate level of training for you and your dog, and you do not have access to a shoot please contact Andrew Sweeney (sweeneyrx@gmail.com) who will discuss with you the criteria and work with you to hopefully find a suitable mentor.

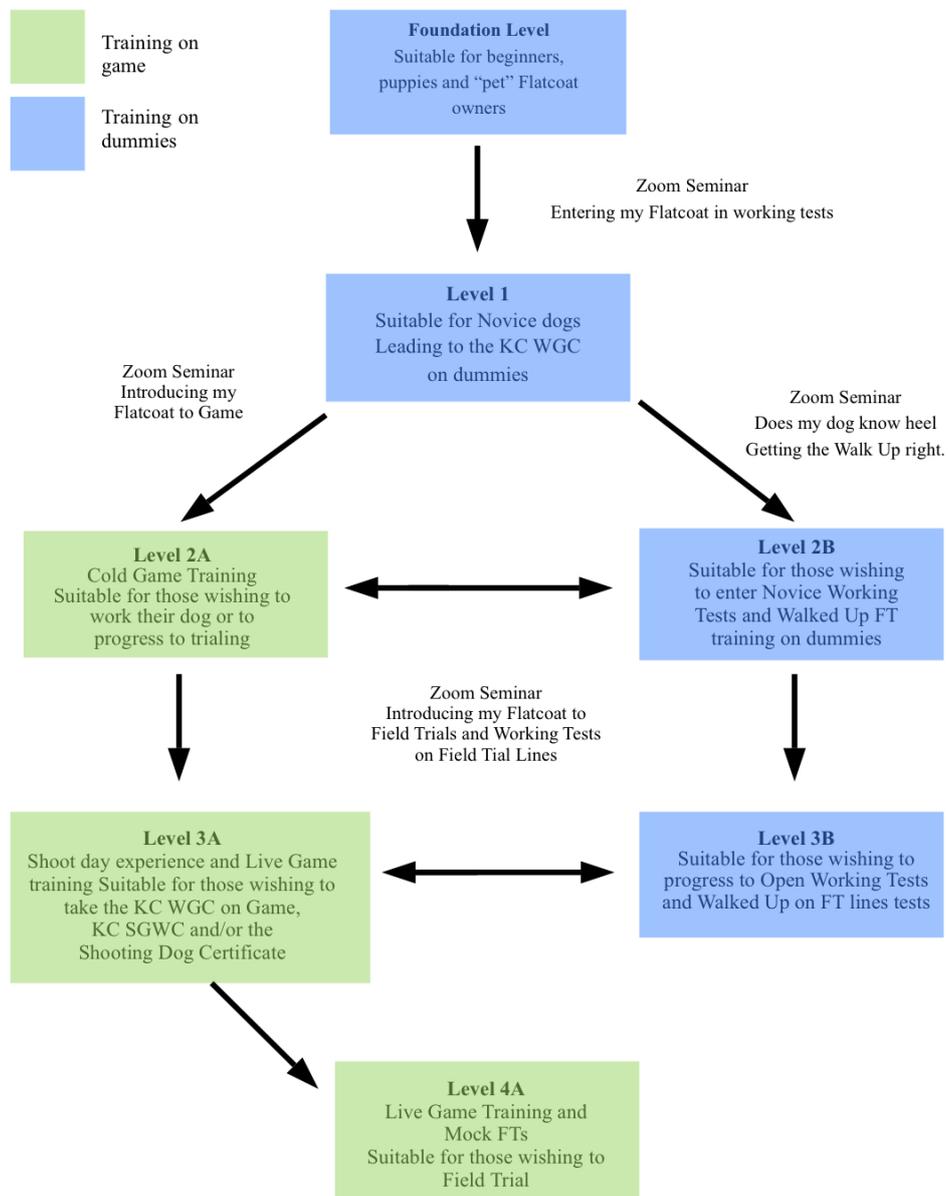
Level 4 is suitable for those wishing to field trial. Live Game Training and Mock Field Trials will be offered to those whose dogs have previous experience of picking freshly shot game and wounded game and delivering tenderly to hand, who are steady and quiet to shot, falling game and other dogs working.

A live game training subsidy will apply to any training that involves live game whether or not organised by the Society. The subsidy available is 50% of the total cost or £50*, whichever is lower, and is limited to a maximum of two claims per member in any one season. Please contact the FCRS treasurer, Heather Harley (hanharley@aol.com) for an application form which must be signed on the day as proof of attendance at the training day and proof of payment made. *For the 2024-25 season the subsidy is set at £50.

Handlers and dogs achieving each of the levels on game and submitting a signed and completed checklist may, if wished, receive a certificate and rosette from the Society, to say that they have completed that level of training. There is a small fee for these, currently £5 (£7.50 for non members of the society). Please forward a copy of your completed checklist to Andrew Sweeney (sweeneyrx@gmail.com) who will arrange for you to receive your certificate (and a rosette if you would like one). The certificate will also indicate any areas needing further development and practice and will suggest what your next steps might be.

The Programme may, from time to time, be supported by online interactive seminars. Again these will be advertised on the FCRS website and via social media.

The whole WFRDP pathway looks like this (there is no one correct route):



FCRS WFRDP devised by
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April 2024
 (Updated September 2024)