

# Rules, Policies and Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges

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**AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®**

## **AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT**

The American Kennel Club is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

**Judging at AKC® shows should be enjoyable for the judge and beneficial to the sport of purebred dogs. In this publication, you will find Rules, Policies and suggested Guidelines. The Policies and Rules will be clearly designated as such.**

**The suggestions have been developed over the years based on the experience of many seasoned judges and the AKC staff. You will find them most helpful in learning the judging process.**

**Policies are adopted by the Board of Directors, and Rules are approved by the Delegate body. Compliance with these is mandatory.**

**As an AKC-approved judge, you are expected to be familiar with all of the material in this publication as well as all other AKC Rules.**

**Sections referencing Rules are identified by an [R].**

**Sections referencing Policies are identified by a [P].**

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# **CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP**

## **PREFACE:**

The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

## **THE CODE**

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

The Code of Sportsmanship is an affirmation of how registrants and participants should behave, and violations will be handled pursuant to the Charter and Bylaws and the Dealing with Misconduct at AKC Events booklet. Complaints will be handled by sending a copy to the subject of the complaint and giving him/her an opportunity to respond. If the number or seriousness of the complaints against a person rises to the level requiring formal discipline (i.e. conduct prejudicial to purebred dogs, AKC events or the AKC), AKC will consider preferring charges. Infractions of a lesser degree will be dealt with by an educational letter sent to the parties involved, affirming the Code of Sportsmanship and/or judging misconduct policy.

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## AN AKC APPROVED JUDGE

As a dog show judge, you are an essential part of the fancy and carry enormous responsibilities.

Without your dedication and expertise, dog shows simply cannot function properly. The American Kennel Club has a significant vested interest in its judges and has adopted the following **Conflict of Interest Policy** with respect to eligibility to judge:

**[P] No AKC judge may have a significant interest in a dog registry or dog event-giving organization deemed by the AKC Board to be in competition with the American Kennel Club. Significant interest would include, but not be limited to, ownership of, employment by, a directorship in, and holding office in.**

You should be thoroughly familiar with this guide, as well as all of **AKC's Rules** and **Policies** if you:

- are an approved or **permit** judge,
- have accepted match, sweepstakes or futurity judging assignments,
- are a visiting judge accepting assignments at AKC events
- plan to apply for **permit** judging approval.

Rules **[R]** and Policies **[P]** are identified throughout this publication.

This booklet cannot cover all situations, nor can it substitute for common sense.

Whenever you have a question about judging procedure or conduct, consult the AKC Executive Field Representative present at the show. There is an AKC Executive Field Representative at most all-breed shows. The Field Representative is the first person to whom you should turn to discuss questions having to do with your judging. **For a current list of Conformation AKC Executive Field Representative, please visit the website.** Also, please feel free to contact the Judging Operations Department at AKC.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A JUDGE

**Breed Knowledge** Through experience and ongoing study, you must demonstrate sound knowledge of the breeds you judge. As breed standards are revised, it is your responsibility to know and to judge by the current standard. Good judges continue to study even the breeds for which they are already approved.

**Procedure** You must demonstrate sound judging procedure, ring control, and a thorough knowledge of **AKC Rules** and **Policies**. Good procedure is essential to inspire the confidence of exhibitors and spectators.

**Impartiality** Your decisions should be based solely on the merits of the dogs being judged. It is essential that fanciers continue to have full faith in the impartiality of judges.

## **ETHICS: HONESTY AND COMMON SENSE**

The AKC assumes that a judge will judge on the merits of the dogs presented to him or her and will not allow other factors to affect his or her decisions. Past and current associations will not diminish that assumption unless it becomes apparent that favoritism has entered into a judge's deliberations.

AKC judges possess and project a commitment to **integrity** and **ethical behavior** that insures the reputation of AKC dog shows as fair and well judged. With common sense, judges can easily avoid situations which might raise ethical questions.

Judges are honest, competent and dedicated. Nevertheless, it is possible to find yourself in an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation. This publication **cannot address every situation**; however it can help you avoid improprieties perceived or otherwise.

### **Advertising and Soliciting Judging Assignments**

**[P]** The American Kennel Club's decision to remove the prohibition on advertising and solicitation by all AKC judges in conformation, companion and performance events is effective October 19, 2010. This change in policy is based on the tremendous growth in the amount and types of AKC events, together with the increasing numbers of available AKC-approved judges, and the fact that modern technology offers a way to connect available judges to event-giving clubs across the nation without regard to the traditional limitations of familiarity, communications, and geography. Therefore, based on these factors, and given that judges are not AKC employees, the AKC Board believes that judges should no longer be prohibited from advertising or soliciting assignments. The judge is responsible for ensuring that all information is factual and accurate, and that any advertising or solicitation is not fraudulent, deceptive, or misleading.

Obviously, some rules, policies and guidelines are clear. For example:

- Never accept any payments or presents for past or future placements. **[P]**
- Advise potential exhibitors not to enter under you when their presence or the presence of their dogs might give the impression of unfair advantage. **[P]**  
For example, if the exhibitor is:
  - ...your employer or an employee.
  - ...a relative.
  - ...a person with whom you currently or recently co-owned dogs.
  - ...a person with whom you travel to dog shows.

**No entry shall be made at any show under a judge of any dog which said judge or any member of his immediate household or immediate family has been known to have owned, handled in the ring more than twice, sold, held under lease or boarded within one year prior to the date of the show. [R]**



*The members of an immediate family are one's spouse, domestic partner, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, daughters-in-law, and sons-in-law; adopted, half, and step members are also included in immediate family (Rules, CH 11 Sect. 13).*

These are only examples. The key is to avoid all situations that are likely to give the impression of impropriety. You must do everything possible to keep your reputation above reproach.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**A conflict of interest exists when a judge is influenced by any relationship or factor other than the merit of the dogs.**

**[R]** A judge may order any person or dog from the ring. For the purpose of facilitating the judging, judges are required to exclude from the rings in which they are judging all persons except the steward or stewards and the show attendants assigned to the ring and those actually engaged in exhibiting.

*When a judge finds it necessary to excuse a person or dog from the ring under the provisions of this section, that judge shall mark the judge's book "excused" and briefly describe the reason for this action.*

**[R]** AKC recognizes you cannot control who enters under you. Consequently, situations may arise that require you to excuse an exhibitor for cause known only to you. The responsibility for entering dogs that are ineligible or that create a conflict of interest is with the exhibitor. Awards won may be cancelled, and exhibitors with repeat violations may receive reprimands or fines for repeat violations.

**[P]** It is also a conflict of interest for you to handle a dog not owned or co-owned by you or a member of your immediate family (*refer to "Handling" section*).

*It is the responsibility of the AKC to interpret its Rules, Regulations and Policies. Therefore, scenarios not specifically defined within this booklet may be determined to be a conflict of interest and potentially result in the cancellation of awards.*

## **GRAY AREAS**

**Judges are often singled out for critical observation by the fancy. Therefore, always keep in mind that perfectly innocent actions or statements can be misconstrued. This includes conduct in public forums and social media. Actions that bring embarrassment to the AKC could be subject to disciplinary action to affect one's judging privileges.**

**Attending Shows** If you attend shows in the area **before** events you are to judge, for the benefit of perception, you should not watch the breeds you are scheduled to judge.

**Breeding and Exhibiting** Judges start in the sport as breeders and exhibitors.

It is natural to want to continue these activities after becoming a judge.

Judges who exhibit are frequently a source of complaints, especially if they handle their own dogs. You should never transfer or lease a dog to someone for the sole purpose of permitting the dog to be exhibited at shows or companion shows where you are officiating, and you should never own or co-own a dog for the sole purpose of handling it.

**Exhibiting and Handling [P]** Conformation judges and household members (as defined in Chapter 11, Section 13 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*) **may not exhibit any breed and judge** on the day of, the three days before and the three days after an assignment within 200 miles of the assignment. Sweepstake/ Futurity judges may not exhibit on day(s) they judge. Sweepstake/Futurity judges will continue to be allowed to exhibit the day before and the day after the event they judge. A multi-day specialty is considered one event, and the restriction will apply for the duration of the event.

*The above policy is specific to conformation judges exhibiting at conformation events. Eligibility of conformation judges to compete in other sports the **days before and/or after they judge is determined by the rules, policies, and regulations that govern that sport, but judges may not compete in any sport the day they judge per AKC Rules.***

*Judges for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series Groups and/or Best in Show may not exhibit the same day that they judge.*

**For all exhibiting restrictions:** Exhibit refers to personally handling a dog or any dog owned or co-owned regardless of who handles the dog and where the dog resides. Exhibitor restrictions apply to all members of the same household.

This provision does not apply to the judge of the Four-to-Six Month Competition. Such judges may also exhibit on the day(s) they judge.

You can combine exhibiting and judging without a problem if you are prudent as to how and when you exhibit. If you choose to exhibit, you should **expect to be subject to scrutiny.**

**[P] Handling** Only handle dogs owned or co-owned by you or a member of your immediate family. It is not proper for a judge to own or co-own a dog solely for the purpose of handling the dog. This policy applies to all members of the judge's household.

**[P] Handling/Presentation Classes – No entry shall be made at any conformation show under a judge of any dog or owner for which said judge has provided handling and presentation instructions in either conformation or obedience training classes. This restriction will apply within one year prior to the date of the show.**

**[P]** If you use the services of an agent, instruct the agent that he/she, any member of the agent's household, or any handling associate of the agent may

not exhibit dogs under you or any member of your household while in your employ and for at least four months after working for you.

**In addition, you or a member of your household must not knowingly use the services of an agent, any member of the agent's household, or any handling associate of the agent to handle your dog(s) for at least four months after the agent has exhibited under you.** This policy applies to all levels of competition.

***A judge/agent conflict cannot be circumvented by having an otherwise eligible individual exhibit the dog in the class under the judge with whom the conflict exists.***

**Social Functions** It is proper to attend a function given by the host club. You have the option of attending club dinners and other social functions where exhibitors will be present. Take care to avoid even the appearance of impropriety with any fancier who might appear in your ring. You may occasionally find that you will have to tactfully change the subject or excuse yourself from a conversation that involves breeds or exhibitors whom you are likely to judge.

Junior Showmanship judges may not attend any club function if they are scheduled to judge Junior Showmanship classes and exhibit dogs on the same day.

### **Occupational and Household Eligibility Requirements**

**[R]** Persons involved in occupations referenced in Chapter 7, Section 1 of the **Rules** will not be approved to judge while engaged in such activities.

**[P]** The Conflict of Interest Policy (See An AKC Approved Judge, **page 1**) addresses the association with other registries and/or event giving organizations deemed to be in competition with AKC.

## **A HANDY RULE OF THUMB**

**There will always be "gray areas" that perplex judges.** When faced with such a dilemma, ask yourself whether the situation, however innocent, projects an outward appearance of impropriety. A good rule of thumb is: **If you have concerns about whether something is inappropriate, you probably should avoid the situation.**

## **ACCEPTING ASSIGNMENTS**

**[P]** Do not promote assignments where you are judging.

**[P]** Do not accept assignments for a breed prior to receipt of notification from the Judging Operations Department that application for such breed has been approved, and that you are now eligible to accept assignments.

**Invitations to Judge** Require all clubs to send you written invitations and contracts for assignments. All requests and contracts should clearly specify the breeds and/or groups you are being asked to judge

as well as financial details. Carry your copy of the original contract to the show. Promptly acknowledge all invitations in writing and keep accurate records of assignments you accept.

**Avoid Conflicts** You should make every effort to avoid judging conflicts. It is your responsibility to acknowledge judging invitations promptly. Careful record keeping and prompt written response to invitations helps eliminate unnecessary confusion and conflict for both judges and show-giving clubs.

**[P]** You will not be approved to judge the same breed, Group or Best in Show at events **within 30 days and 200 straight-line miles of each other**. This conflict **Policy** does not apply to special attractions.

Except in a hardship case, a judge will not be approved to judge a breed, the Variety Group that includes that breed, and Best in Show at the same show.

**[P] Effective April 1, 2017** Judges may not judge the same NOHS group or NOHS BIS at multiple events held within the same weekend, circuit or cluster; Judges may not be assigned to the regular and NOHS group/BIS at the same event; Judges will not be approved to judge a breed, the NOHS variety Group that includes that breed, and NOHS Best in Show at the same show; and the same person cannot judge all of the NOHS groups at an event.

**[P] Effective January 1, 2019**, Judges for multiple all-breed/limited breed shows in one day are restricted to no more than 100 entries in any one event and may not exceed 175 entries per day (**Rules**, CH 7 Sect. 13)

**[P] Effective April 1, 2019**, Judges assigned to the regular groups may not be assigned any special attraction groups (excluding NOHS).

**P] Judges** may not accept assignments for any conformation type competition where the potential exists to judge multiple entries of the same breed prior to an assignment to judge the regular classes in that breed at the same show, circuit, weekend, or cluster. This includes but it not limited to: Sweepstakes, Futurities, any "Special Attraction" that features multiple entries of a breed, multiple-entry non-regular classes, and Coonhound Bench Shows held prior to the regular classes. Judges may accept assignments for single entry Special Attraction Variety Groups (veteran, Puppy or BBE Group) and the 4-6-month Beginner Puppy Competition the days before or after having judged the regular classes for breed (s) competing in that competition.

**[P] Non-AKC Shows** Judges who accept assignments for their approved breeds in the United States at non-AKC shows, where championship titles are awarded, are required to notify the Event Plans Department at AKC in writing at least four months before the show date stating:

- The exact location of the show.
- The complete assignment being judged at the show.

Such assignments are subject to the 30-day, 200-mile conflict policy.

Any changes made to these assignments must be reported to the Event Plans Department within five days of the end of the event.

**Travel Between Assignments** You cannot do your best work if you are tired from travel. In consideration of the possibility of delays, you should not accept assignments on consecutive days where more than a few hours travel by ground transportation is involved.

**When you accept an invitation, you are committing yourself to the show-giving club for your entire assignment as scheduled.**

You should not travel to and from shows where you are judging or stay with anyone who is likely to be exhibiting or handling under you at these events.

**Expenses** When you accept an invitation, clearly inform club officials in your contract what your fee is and what your expenses will likely be, so they will not be surprised with a larger than anticipated bill. The more specifics you include in the contract, the less potential for misunderstanding there will be. When you sign a contract, you and the club are responsible for abiding by its conditions.

## **FITNESS TO JUDGE/ILLNESS**

**[P] Fitness to Judge:** It is essential that a dog show judge be physically capable of performing the functions necessary to properly judge dogs. You must have:

- The maneuverability to negotiate a ring both indoors and outdoors, with or without mechanical assistance, e.g., a wheelchair, crutches or a cane.
- The flexibility to examine all parts of a dog's anatomy where each breed is typically presented (i.e. on the ground, on a ramp or on a table).
- The capability of measuring or weighing a dog and examining a dog on the ground, table or ramp, where applicable.
- The dexterity to move at a sufficient speed to adhere to the schedule of the show-giving club and to AKC policy.
- The capability to remain focused on task and control the ring for the duration of the assignment.
- Normal vision (correctable by eyeglasses or contact lenses).
- The capability of doing all the necessary paperwork.

Any special needs you may have regarding transportation or inside the ring should be referenced in your contract.

**Illness** Judges are expected to be physically fit and capable of completing their contracted assignment. If you learn that you will not be able to fulfill an assignment because of illness or other serious occurrence, immediately notify the Show Secretary, Superintendent and the Show Chairperson by telephone, overnight letter, text, e-mail or fax.

Always travel with contact information. If you are delayed en route to a show, immediately make every effort to contact the Show Chairperson, Show Secretary and Superintendent.

**[P]** If you become ill while judging, and it becomes necessary to find a replacement, you will not be allowed to continue your assignment later in the day.

## **BEFORE ENTERING THE RING**

**Be on Time** Allow at least one half hour to report to the Superintendent or Show Secretary to check in, obtain your judge's badge and pick up your judge's book, if it is not delivered to the ring. The Superintendent will usually deliver the ribbons and other materials necessary to start judging.

**[P] Observations** Allow extra time to find the Field Representative **in attendance at the show regardless of your status in breeds**. You should always check-in to review any observations that may be required, discuss any recent updates or changes to policies and/or procedures, and/or discuss any special circumstances you may anticipate.

You remain a **permit** judge until you receive a letter from Judging Operations granting you regular status.

**Avoid Contacts** When judging at a cluster, do not visit the grooming or exercise areas on the days prior to or the days you are judging.

**[P]** Do not carry or examine a catalog reflecting the entry on the day(s) you are judging until you have completed your entire assignment for the show(s) or cluster.

Do not discuss the merits of the dogs you are judging or may judge; or talk at length with anyone who may be exhibiting under you.

**Do not** observe in any manner the breed judging of a breed you are scheduled to judge later that weekend or cluster. If you are judging a specialty, do not sit ringside during sweepstakes or futurity judging.

If you are asked to steward, do so only after you have completed your entire judging assignment for the weekend/cluster.

When you have completed all assignments for a show or set of shows, such contact with exhibitors is permissible, **but be prudent**.

**[P] Cell Phones** Judges may use electronic devices including cell phones to review written breed standards while at their judges' table. Such electronic devices when not in use must remain on the judge's table or in its vicinity in a bag or briefcase. Judge should not walk away from the table with an electronic device in hand while judging. Neither the judge, ring steward nor an exhibitor may initiate or receive any phone calls and/or text messages while in the ring and judging is in progress.

**Proper Attire** Gentlemen should wear coats and ties (weather permitting), and ladies should dress accordingly. Ties, scarves, hats, vests, jewelry or anything else that may dangle into the dogs' line of

vision should be secured away from proximity to the dogs. Above all, avoid inappropriate, conspicuous or outlandish dress. Women should not wear skirts that are too short or too cumbersome, and they should avoid noisy, dangling jewelry and hats.

**Smoking** is permissible only between classes, provided it does not delay judging. You must comply with non-smoking regulations.

## JUDGING THE DOGS

**[R] You Are in Charge** As the judge, you have full authority over all persons in the ring. See Chapter 7, Sections 15 and 16, of the **Rules** for a review of the judge's authority.

**[P]** With this authority comes the responsibility to be thoughtful and considerate as you judge each dog entered according to all AKC Rules, Policies and Guidelines. Be as systematic in your ring procedure from dog to dog and class to class **as conditions allow**; but do take the time to encourage apparent novices.

Avoid making inappropriate comments to exhibitors in or out of the ring. Be polite, but generally limit your conversation with exhibitors to instructions on positioning or gaiting the dogs.

**[P]** If the age of the dog is required, **ask the steward** to check **the birth date** in the catalog.

**Check the Ring** Before starting to judge, quickly inspect the ring you have been assigned. Determine how you intend to use the ring and look for unsafe conditions, whether it is a loose mat or a depression in the grass. Always double check the security of the legs on the examination table and its stability.

When outdoors, consider how to best take advantage of shade or shelter in order to provide the most comfort for the dogs and the exhibitors. **Do not direct dogs or exhibitors to stand in the elements for any longer than is absolutely necessary.**

If a condition can be corrected, it should be. Moving ring gates, etc., should be discussed with the Superintendent and Show Chairperson. Otherwise, you may have to adjust your procedure as needed to take best advantage of the circumstances.

**[R] Assembling the Class** Begin judging according to the time published in the official judging schedule. Rules prohibit judging a breed before the time listed in the Judging Program (**Rules** Ch. 7, Section 12).

A steward may tell you when the class is ready and what dogs are absent, but you are responsible for checking all armbands at the beginning of every class and marking all absentees. Classes are to be called by name, but individual dogs or exhibitors should not be paged.

Carefully check for the presence of each dog in every class. Compare the armband numbers indicated in the judge's book with the armband numbers of the exhibitors. It may be helpful to make a small check or dot next to the number in the judge's book for entries present to avoid confusion.

In marking dogs present or absent, always be certain that armbands are worn correctly and the numbers correspond to the entries in the class.

Note: It is also essential to verify armband numbers in the Winners and Reserve Winners classes, and all dogs in the Best of Breed (Variety) class including Winners Dog, Winners Bitch and winners of single entry non-regular classes, as well as all Champions in Best of Breed (Variety) judging. Mark absentees in each class.

**[P] It is not necessary to take attendance and record absentees when judging a Variety group.** However, the group judge must verify that the four placements in the group have the correct armband number as shown in the Group Judge's Book.

**[R] It is necessary to mark absentees when judging Best in Show. Rules Ch. 3, Section 16 require Group winners to exhibit in Best in Show.**

**[P] Disabled Exhibitors Policy** AKC complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act and wants to provide to all the opportunity to participate in its events. In the case of conformation judging, where decisions are based solely on the quality of the dogs, the judge may modify the regular judging procedure to reasonably accommodate a disabled exhibitor.

If a modification of normal judging procedure is required, you need only to determine that the accommodation would not inhibit the ability of other handlers in the ring to show their dogs. A disabled handler may compete using a cane, crutch, or electric-powered wheelchair. However, when gaiting the dogs as a group, you should ensure that a handler who cannot maintain a normal gait for the breed being exhibited be placed in line where it will not interfere with the ability of the other dogs to gait properly.

Visually impaired handlers may have a second person assist them in individual and group gaiting of the dogs. If the ring surface or terrain makes it difficult for the assisted handler to gait the dog at a normal speed, you may adjust where the dog is placed in line to give all handlers an equal opportunity to show their dogs. Visually impaired handlers may have the second person assist in placing table dogs onto tables and to verify weight and measurements that may be required under the breed standard. The primary function of exhibiting the dog is the responsibility of the handler and not the second person in the ring.

There are eligibility issues regarding handler assistance in the Amateur Owner-Handler and Bred by Exhibitor classes, individuals who assist presenting a dog in these classes must be eligible for that class. Any questions concerning eligibility should be referred to the Executive Field Representative in attendance.

If you have any questions, please call Judging Operations or the AKC Legal Department. Any exhibitor having a question, or who wants to request an accommodation should be directed to the AKC Field Representative or the AKC Legal Department. Individuals who require



the assistance of a second person to present their dog, or those who utilize a motorized scooter should have a letter of accommodation from the AKC.

Injured or ill exhibitors are not automatically categorized as disabled.

**[P] Change of Handlers** A single change of handler on a dog is permitted at the judge's discretion up until the time all dogs in the class have been individually examined and individually gaited. After that, no change of exhibitor is allowed.

**[R]** There are eligibility requirements regarding handler changes in the Amateur Owner-Handler and Bred by Exhibitor class. All persons handling or assisting in the actual presentation or moving of a dog in the Amateur Owner Handler and/or Bred by Exhibitor class must meet all applicable eligibility criteria (Chapter 3, Sections 7 & 8, **Rules**). Exhibitor questions should be referred to the Executive Field Staff.

**Late Arrivals** It is your decision whether to allow a late arrival into the ring. In contrast to a change of handler, a late arrival may be allowed to enter the ring until the judge's book has been marked. However, many judges establish the cut-off point when all dogs have been individually examined and gaited. If an entry from a class that was entirely absent arrives late, it is your decision whether or not to judge the dog providing it is judged before its Winners Class.

If an entry or entries from a breed that was absent in its entirety arrive late, it is your decision whether or not to judge the breed. Every effort should be made to judge previously absent breeds within the same block, preferably at the end. Judging of the breed outside of its originally scheduled time-block may impact other exhibitors and the event as a whole by causing breeds to be judged later than expected.

**Rules and Breed Standards** You are responsible to understand and judge according to AKC Rules, Policies, Guidelines and current Standards in effect on the day of your judging assignment. If your decision depends on exact wording, **do not hesitate to refer to the Rules, Guidelines or breed Standard** or discuss the matter with the AKC Executive Field Representative. You may also discuss **Rule** issues with the Superintendent.

**[R] Speed of Judging** Never delay your judging at the request of an exhibitor. A new breed judge is expected to judge a minimum of 20 dogs an hour, and experienced judges at least 25 dogs an hour (see **Rules** Ch. 7, Section 12). Junior Showmanship should be judged at a rate of 20 exhibitors per hour. Over time you will develop a consistent, methodical, efficient ring procedure that will help you maintain the proper pace.

Extraordinary conditions may cause judging to take longer. In these cases, take the time needed to properly judge each class. Any situation or condition that significantly delays judging should be briefly noted in your judge's book.

**[P] Acceptable Collars and Leashes at Conformation Events** All dogs must be presented on an acceptable collar and lead when competing at conformation dog shows. An acceptable collar and lead is defined as a single lead and collar combination utilized for the presentation of the dog. Special training devices and/or devices used to mask deficiencies in training, temperament or conformation are not acceptable and not permitted for use at conformation dog shows; this include the use of multiple acceptable collars or lead and collar combinations simultaneously. Judges who encounter unacceptable collars or leashes or multiple leads/collars being used simultaneously at one time, are to require the exhibitor to switch to a proper lead/collar or if not possible, to excuse the entry.

**[P] Double Handling** Evaluate each dog solely on its merit without regard to outside influences such as double handling. Double handling can usually be eliminated by announcing to exhibitors and ringside that you will not tolerate the practice. You may excuse any dog from competition if you believe someone or something is influencing its performance or showmanship other than the dog's handler in the ring. If there are unnecessary disturbances outside your ring, you may call for the Show Chairman or the AKC Field Representative.

**Large Entries, Small Rings** It may not always be safe or practical to keep an entire class in the ring. Divide the class into roughly equal groups keeping only as many dogs in the ring as can be conveniently and safely accommodated for individual examination and gaiting.

Wherever possible have all the dogs assembled in the ring so you can check armbands for absentees, then divide the class. Some judges find it convenient to call dogs into the ring in catalogue order for this procedure. When classes are so large that the entry must be divided to be checked in, an entry in any section is deemed to be "in the ring" for the sake of protests. Check every section in before starting to judge any section. Any handler in any section being checked in may protest any dog or bitch in any other section of the same class until the protesting handler's dog or the dog being protested is eliminated from competition.

When judging very large classes with many sections, **the judge** should record the armband numbers of the dogs to remain in competition from each section. Advise the exhibitors which are to return and let them all leave the ring. Each following section should be handled in the same manner until every section is examined and gaited.

If a class is divided, it is permissible, at the judge's discretion, for a handler to take an exhibit into more than one section of a class.

When judging divided classes, other than Best of Breed, the judge must select a minimum of five dogs from the first section and any number from each succeeding section. Never leave yourself with only four dogs.

**First Impressions** You should gait the dogs around the ring as a class, or individually, before examinations.

This will give you a general impression of the class and enable you to spot obvious lameness. Remember, the first time around gives the dogs and exhibitors a chance to loosen up and become accustomed to the ring. You cannot fully evaluate the dogs' gait when taking them around once, especially if it is a big class.

In a small ring or with a large breed, have the dogs in the ring gaited in more than one group. As a practical matter, when judging a single entry class in a table breed, it may go directly to the table.

Whenever possible, consider the spectators as well as exhibitors when you position the dogs for examination and movement. When the day is hot, examine them in the shade if possible and allow dogs not being examined to remain in the shade.

**[P] Individual Examination of Dogs** Judges are expected to examine and gait every dog in the same objective, breed-specific manner even if a poor specimen may clearly be out of the ribbons. This includes breeds that according to their breed standard traditionally have been cropped and/or docked and dogs entered which may have deviations from the breed standard. Approach dogs calmly. Examine each with a gentle but sure touch and no sudden, surprising moves.

Judges are permitted to address those entries that may be obviously lame or contain obvious standard disqualifications or conditions of class as provided in Chapter 14, Section 6 of the **Rules**. These Matters can be addressed in the manner in which the judge deems appropriate as long as it is in accordance with the Rules, Regulations and Policies of the American Kennel Club. Otherwise, awards cannot be withheld from an entry or an entry may not be excused from the ring for reasons of merit or not complying with a breed standard unless it has been individually examined and gaited first. Consideration must be given to the totality of the attributes and deviations of standard for each entry prior to passing judgment upon them. The only permissible variances are with obvious breed disqualifications, conditions of class and lameness.

A thorough and complete breed-specific examination does not include excessive touching beyond feeling for breed-specific characteristics and specific points of reference. Touch and examine only as much as is necessary to complete a thorough, breed-specific examination, but touch no more.

Always judge dogs solely **on the basis of their condition and as they are presented in the ring on the day of the show**. Give no consideration to what a dog's quality or condition could be at some future time. Avoid excessive rearranging of a dog's coat, whistling, gesturing or baiting. However, do not hesitate to feel for breed-specific traits or reference points to determine actual structure especially beneath a highly groomed coat.

When judging the Group or Best in Show, a cursory examination of dogs judged by you earlier in the day is acceptable. However, the Group or Best In Show

examination must include checking testicles and breed disqualifications, as well as moving the dogs individually.

**Evaluating a Dog's Mouth** Many exhibitors prefer to open their dog's mouth themselves for examination. It is recommended that all judges ask the exhibitor to display the bite/teeth/open the mouth as appropriate for that breed. However, you have the authority to personally open the dog's mouth.

*Study of the approved breed standard will define the proper oral exam for that breed. A component of the breed specific examination is to conduct the appropriate oral exam when evaluating the dog's mouth.*

Do not forget your personal safety. All dogs are not handled by experienced exhibitors.

- **Do not kneel in front of a dog.**
- **Do not hover over a dog.**
- **Do not bend over face to face with a dog.**
- **Do not bend over cheek to cheek with a dog.**
- **Do not take the lead from a handler.**

Practice performing as much of the examination as possible from the side without making your face vulnerable.

### **Use of Ramps: A Clarification**

Background The appropriate place to individually examine dogs during breed judging is designated by each parent club and AKC does not pre-empt their authority in this regard.

Table Breeds Designated table breeds must be examined on an examination table. If re-examination is necessary for a table breed, they must be placed back on the table. For re-examination, a maximum of two dogs may be placed on the table at the same time. Special care should be taken in the positioning of the table. If reverting from table to non-table breeds, ensure the table is moved out of the way.

Ramp Breeds A judge requesting the use of a ramp must give reasonable notice to the show superintendent/show secretary prior to judging. AKC approval is not required. Breed designated as ramp optional may be examined on the ground (table if applicable) or on a ramp during breed, group and Best in Show judging at the sole discretion of the judge, not the exhibitor. Examination for a breed must be consistent; therefore the entire entry in that breed is to be examined on the ground (table) or on a ramp.

**By board approved policy, Basset Hounds, Bulldogs, Chinese Shar-Pei, Chow Chows, and Sussex Spaniels must be judged on the ramp in all conformation competition associated with AKC conformation dog shows or at which AKC conformation titles may be earned. This policy extends to Junior Showmanship, the 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition, the AKC National Owner Handled Series (NOHS), and all other special attractions that offer Group and BIS competitions.**

**The list of Table and Ramp breeds can be found on the AKC Website.**

The requirement to place a table breed back on the table for re-examination does not apply to ramp breeds.

**Breeds not designated as either table, ramp, or optional, may only be examined on the ground.**

Emergencies In emergency situations, with the approval of the Show Chair, breeds customarily examined on the ground may be examined on a ramp, not on a table. An emergency is defined as a temporary condition that arose immediately prior to or at a dog show. Convalescence from a medical procedure, illness and recuperation from injuries are examples of conditions that are not emergencies. The emergency use of a ramp may be allowed on a day and may be extended to include a cluster as well as judging either a group and/or Best In Show.

*In an emergency situation, where use of a ramp is not indicated in the premium list, an exhibitor has the option of withdrawing their entry and receiving a refund. In all other emergency situations, the exhibitor has no recourse.*

**[P] Gaiting** In the first class in which a dog is judged, you must individually gait and observe the dog going away, returning and from the side. Thereafter, either in evaluating that class or in Winners, re-gaiting is optional.

Move all dogs in a breed in the same pattern from the same location. Depending on the ring, weather or other mitigating circumstances, you may have to vary the way in which the dogs are gaited. When mats are available, direct dogs to be gaited on the mats.

If necessary, only re-gait dogs you are considering, using the same pattern from the same location for each dog re-gaited.

Do not allow the dogs to be moved at excessive speeds. Tell exhibitors exactly how you want the dogs moved and controlled. Be sure your instructions to exhibitors are clear and understandable.

**Sparring** means bringing select dogs together, usually in the center of the ring, to stand naturally on their own and look at each other. It is important that sparring be a controlled demonstration of "Terrier attitude." It is suggested that only a safe number of dogs be brought out to spar at the same time. It is up to you to maintain ring control and not allow handlers to use other dogs as bait. The dogs should be very alert, up on their toes, looking for whatever is going on.

Sparring is not fighting. Rather it can be an excellent way to ascertain both desirable and faulty temperament in a Terrier. In evaluating dogs while sparring, ask yourself the following questions: Are the dogs feisty, congenial, tolerant, cowardly or aloof?

Certain breeds should never be sparred. Care must be taken to know which Parent Clubs do not want their breeds sparred.

With a clear understanding of its present-day process and controlled application, it will be apparent that sparring is a safe, humane, appropriate procedure in

the evaluation of Terrier breeds.

**Placing the Dogs** A good way to group dogs for your final decision is to rearrange them as they are examined and gaited. Once you have individually examined and gaited all of the dogs in a large class, it is best to **excuse those not under consideration for placement**. In a very large class, you may have to sort out dogs through two or three eliminations. (Refer to Large Entries, Small Breeds) However, never reduce the number of dogs under consideration in a class to less than five, as one of the finalists may become lame or be excused for some other reason.

**Designating Class Placements** Be especially careful in pointing to your placements. The best procedure is to align the class, putting the dogs to be placed in proper order at the front of the line. Do not make placements as the dogs are moving unless the dogs have been put in placement order.

Once you have decided on the placements, indicate them clearly to the exhibitors, and direct them to the proper markers. Look at each armband and mark your book accordingly before you hand out ribbons and prizes. Keep each dog at the proper place marker until you award its ribbon.

### **Best in Show**

**In judging Best in Show, you may mark the book before indicating the Winner.** If you use this procedure, do not move the dogs again after marking the book.

**[R] Reserve Best in Show** A Reserve Best in Show must also be offered by any club giving group classes. The Reserve Best in Show winner will be chosen by the same judge that has been assigned Best in Show. The second place from the group in which the Best in Show winner advanced from WILL NOT be called into the ring for the selection of Reserve Best in Show. The judges book should be marked indicating Best in Show and Reserve Best in Show at the same time.

*The Best in Show judge shall first announce Reserve Best in Show, followed by Best in Show.*

**[R] Double Entries** Once a dog has competed, it must continue to compete (CH 14, Sect. 1 of the **Rules**). Dogs may be absent from the first class and still compete in the second class. However, dogs may not be shown in the first class and then be marked absent in the second class. Once defeated in any class, a dog is not eligible for Winners class. A dog that is marked absent in a class after competing in a previous class is not eligible for winners.

*Multiple entries of a dog within a breed will have the same armband number and are designated by parenthesis (#).*

**[R] Grand Champion** Grand Championship points may be awarded to Best of Breed or Best of Variety of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed or Best of Variety of Breed, Select Dog and Select Bitch. Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, and non-regular class winners

that are not conformation Champions, are not eligible for Grand Championship points.

After Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed or Best of Variety of Breed has been awarded, the judge may choose Select Dog and Select Bitch. All entries eligible to compete for Best of Breed/Variety **excluding winners dog and winners bitch** may be awarded Select. **You may not inquire whether the winner of any non-regular classes has completed its championship.** Grand Champion points will not be awarded to first place winners from a non-regular class awarded Select who had not completed its championship.

**Awards of Merit** Many shows offer Awards of Merit. The club specifies the number of awards and how they are awarded. Awards of Merit are designated immediately after the selection of Best of Breed, Best of Winners, Best of Opposite Sex, Select Dog and Select Bitch. Depending upon specific club rules, Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, Best of Opposite Sex, and Selects may be eligible for Awards of Merit. **As an Award of Merit is a club award and the Select is an official award of the AKC, the Select is of GREATER precedence than the Award of Merit.**

**Winners and Reserve Winners Classes:** Re-gaiting in Winners and Reserve Winners classes should be kept to a minimum and limited to dogs in contention.

Winners and Reserve Winners are two separate classes. Unless the Winner comes from a class of one, the judge's book must be marked and the ribbon and trophies presented to the Winner before judging Reserve Winners.

**Best of Winners Competition** If either Winner's Dog or Winner's Bitch do not return to the ring for Best of Breed Competition, or if either is excused from competition prior to awarding Best of Winners, no Best of Winners is to be awarded.

**[R]** Dogs eligible for Winners and Reserve Winners must return to the ring to compete (CH 14, Sect. 1, **Rules**). If a dog fails to return for competition, select from those dogs assembled in the ring. Any dog that fails to return to the ring should be marked "FTR" or "Failed to Return," not as an absentee.

**[R] Withholding or Excusing (Rules, CH 7, Sect. 15)** authorizes judges to withhold any and all awards at any point in the judging process. You may award one placement in a class and no other placement, or you may withhold all awards. You may award class firsts and then withhold the Winners ribbon, and you may excuse any dog for lack of merit. **The decision is yours alone, based on the merits of the dogs.** When you withhold or excuse, you must note the reason in the judge's book and initial your comments. Clearly and diplomatically explain your decision to the exhibitor(s) involved.

In Winners competition, if you feel none of the dogs are of championship quality, you should withhold the

Winners ribbon. This also applies to Reserve Winners. It is not appropriate to withhold Winners and award Reserve. Nor is it appropriate to award Winners or Reserve simply because it is the best specimen available in the class on the day.

In addition, while judges may “*withhold at any point in the judging process...*”, **there are times where it is not proper to withhold, for example:**

- Withholding Best of Winners with eligible Winners Dog and Winners Bitch in the ring
- Withholding Best of Breed after awarding Winners Dog and/or Winners Bitch
- Withholding Best of Opposite Sex when Winners (Dog or Bitch) was awarded to an entry of the opposite sex as Best of Breed.

**Impact of Withholding or Excusing** You should not be concerned about the negative impact resulting from your responsibility to withhold ribbons or excuse dogs.

**[R] Non-Regular Competitive Classes (Rules CH 3, Section 13)** Non-regular classes involving single dog entries such as Veterans or Field Trial classes are judged before Best of Breed. The show-giving club has the option of awarding ribbons and prizes for first place only or for all four places. The option selected must be indicated in the premium list.

The winner of the class, if otherwise undefeated, is eligible to compete for Best of Breed. A champion may occasionally be entered both in a single dog entry non-regular class and Best of Breed. In such cases, if the dog is defeated in the non-regular class, it may not compete for Best of Breed or for Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed. If there is a special attraction for Puppies, Veterans, Stud Dog, Brood Bitch, Brace, or Team Class, it is the responsibility of the show-giving club to advise the judge of the correct judging procedure prior to the start of judging.

**Junior Showmanship** Make yourself thoroughly familiar with the current **Regulations and Guidelines for Judging Junior Showmanship** and review them periodically for changes.

Effective ring control is essential in the Junior Showmanship ring. The welfare and safety of the dogs and the exhibitors is the judge’s primary responsibility. It is appropriate to tactfully excuse any Junior who does not appear to be capable of controlling his or her dog. Junior Showmanship judges should maintain a pace of 20 entries per hour.

**[P] Stud Dog and Brood Bitch** Non-regular classes involving multiple entries, such as Stud Dog and Brood Bitch, may be judged before or after Best of Breed. In the Stud Dog and Brood Bitch classes, the merits of the Stud Dog and Brood Bitch are not considered in the placement of the entry. It is the quality of the get that forms the basis for the judge’s decision. Therefore, the winners of these classes are not eligible to compete for Best of Breed or for Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed. All get must be examined and gaited. The



Stud Dog and Brood Bitch must also be examined to determine if there is a condition that would require disqualification or excusal under the **Rules**, AKC policy or the breed standard.

**[P]** Each entry is allowed two get unless otherwise specified by the show-giving club. All get must be entered in a regular class in order to be eligible to compete in the Stud Dog and Brood Bitch Classes.

Handlers of the Stud Dog or Brood Bitch, and all get being exhibited, must wear armbands.

**Brace and Team Competition** The quality of the dogs, their similarity and their ability to be shown together are of primary consideration. An examination of each dog is necessary to determine quality, similarity, and if there is a condition that would require disqualification or excusal under the **Rules**, AKC policy or the breed standard.

All braces and teams must be moved to determine their ability to show together. Although dogs need not be identical, the final determination should be based on their overall similarity and uniformity standing and moving.

## THE JUDGE'S Book

**The Judge's Book** You alone are responsible for the judge's book **at all times**. When you break for lunch, take your book with you or return it to the Superintendent. When you finish your assignment:

- make sure you have marked every class.
- sign your book(s).
- answer the questions on the cover.
- initial all changes and notations.
- personally return the completed judge's book to the Superintendent.
- always check with the Superintendent before leaving the show.

**Marking the Judge's Book** Always be thorough, neat and careful in marking your book. All markings in your book including placements and notes must be made in pen. If awards are not correctly marked, the entire purpose of the show is defeated. In all regular classes, mark your placements as first (1), second (2), third (3), fourth (4), and indicate all absentees opposite the armband numbers in the judge's book.

For Winners and Reserve Winners, as well as Best of Breed, Best of Winners, Best of Opposite Sex, Select Dog and Select Bitch, you must record the actual armband numbers of the winning dogs on the appropriate lines.

**[R]** Once the book is marked, the class is over. **Do not re-judge a class** (Chapter 7, Section 15, **Rules**).

When a dog is entered in more than one class, the number will appear in parentheses in the second class.

**Following is a sample page from a  
typical judge's book:**

Name of Kennel Club \_\_\_\_\_

Event Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**BREED OR VARIETY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BITCHES**

Catalog Number	Award	Catalog Number	Award	Catalog Number	Award	Catalog Number	Award	Catalog Number	Award	Catalog Number	Award
Puppy Bitches		12-18 Month Bitches		Novice or Amateur-Owner-Handler Bitches		Bred-By-Exhibitor Bitches		American Bred Bitches		Open Bitches	

Please enter catalog number if awarded. I certify that in my opinion the WINNER and RESERVE are deserving of Championship points on this day.

WINNER \_\_\_\_\_ RESERVE \_\_\_\_\_

If withholding Winners or Reserve Winners it must be noted on the appropriate line.

**Best of Breed Competition**


Best of Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Best of Winners \_\_\_\_\_ Best of Opposite Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Select Dog \_\_\_\_\_ Select Bitch \_\_\_\_\_

If withholding Grand Championship points from Best of Breed or Best of Opposite Sex please note GCH points withheld by the appropriate number.

The full responsibility for the accuracy of your judge's book rests with you. **Never rely on the ring steward to advise you of the armband numbers of your placements.**

Any marks other than those referenced above and any changes in the judge's book must be initialed by the judge.

**[R]** Only the judge, Show Secretary or Superintendent may make changes or notations in the judge's book. Only the Superintendent or Show Secretary may move a dog from one class to another (Chapter 11, Section 6, **Rules**).

**Double-Checking the Book** Review your book at the end of an assignment to be sure that:

- all placements being awarded are marked correctly.
- all absentees are marked.
- Reserve Winners Dog and Bitch are correctly indicated.
- Best of Winners is either the Winners Dog or Winners Bitch.
- Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex are of different sexes.
- you have indicated the awarding of Grand Champion Points for the BOB/BOV, BOS, Select Dog and Select Bitch where applicable.
- you have marked accordingly with a "NA" if you have chosen to withhold GC points where eligible entries were available.
- withheld placements, excusals and disqualifications, with the reasons for them, are noted and initialed.

**Take the time to double-check all markings in your book. Some errors, if not caught on the spot, can never be satisfactorily resolved. Always check back with the Superintendent regarding the accuracy and completeness of your judge's book before leaving the show grounds.**

## **EXCUSALS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS**

**[R] Excusals and Disqualifications** Be thoroughly familiar with the current breed standards and the **Rules**, Chapter 11, **Section 8a, 8b and 8c**. Dogs may be dismissed from the ring under the authority of the **Rules** or as prescribed by individual breed Standards. In either case they may be excused or disqualified according to the Rule of the Standard. Disqualifications may ultimately end up with permanent ineligibility to compete, and excusals generally do not permanently affect eligibility. Therefore it is very important to understand the distinctions and apply them appropriately.

When you excuse or disqualify a dog, you must mark your book "excused" or "disqualified," as the case may be. Briefly state the condition requiring your action, and always initial the notation.

## **RULES DISMISSALS**

**[R] Lameness, Excusal: It is the judge's sole responsibility to determine lameness. It is not subject to protest. The judge shall excuse a lame dog from the ring, withhold awards from that dog**

**and mark the judge's book "excused, lame." (Rules, Chapter 11, Section 8b)**

**[R]** A male which **does not have** two normal testicles normally located in the scrotum, may not compete at any show and is to be disqualified; with exception to a castrated male may be entered as Stud Dog in the Stud Dog Class and a spayed bitch may be entered as Brood Bitch in the Brood Bitch Class. Neutered dogs and spayed bitches **may be allowed** to compete in Veterans Classes only at independent specialties and/or those all-breed shows which do not offer any competitive classes beyond Best of Breed; eligibility for altered veterans to compete **must be stated in the premium list.** (**Rules**, Chapter 11, Section 8)

**[R] Change in Appearance, Disqualifications** A dog which has been changed in appearance by artificial means, except as specified in the standard for its breed, may not compete at any show and is to be disqualified. (**Rules**, Chapter 11, Section 8)

A dog is considered changed in appearance by artificial means if it has been subjected to any type of procedure that has the effect of obscuring, disguising or eliminating any congenital or hereditary abnormality or any undesirable characteristic, or anything that improves a dog's natural appearance, temperament, bite or gait.

In addition, the insertion of any type of apparatus in the mouth of a dog disqualifies that dog from competition in dog shows and subjects anyone who exhibits, or causes to be exhibited, such dog to disciplinary action.

**[R]** When disqualifying, stop judging and fill out the form "Disqualification for Change In Appearance" which may be obtained from the Superintendent, Show Secretary or Field Representative (**Rules**, Chapter 11, Section 8). When completed, return the form to the Superintendent or Show Secretary. Mark your book "Disqualified for Change In Appearance." Clearly communicate your decision to the exhibitor of the dog. Use the word "disqualified."

**[R] Color** You have the clear authority under Chapter 11, Section 8C, of the **Rules** to withhold awards from any dog which, in your opinion, has had its natural color or markings changed. "The handler or the owner, or both, of any dog or dogs from which any award has been withheld for violation of this section of the rules, or any judge who shall fail to perform his duties under this section, shall be subject to disciplinary action."

**[R] Poorly Trained, Shy and Vicious Dogs** Excuse any dog that will not stand for examination; mark the judge's book "Excused, unable to examine;" and initial the notation.

Excuse any dog that in your opinion:

- Menaces
- Threatens
- Exhibits any sign that it may not be safely approached or examined in the normal manner.

Signs may include growling, showing or snapping its teeth, and rolling its eyes. Any dog that displays such demeanor is a threat to you and every judge that follows you.

**[R]** When you **excuse** the dog, mark your judge's book "Excused, menacing" or "Excused, threatening" and initial it. A dog so excused shall not be counted as having competed. A dog recorded as "Excused for threatening or menacing" by judges on three occasions will be administratively disqualified by the American Kennel Club (**Rules**, Chapter 11, Section 8A).

**[R] Disqualify** any dog that, in your opinion, attacks any person in the ring (**Rules**, Chapter 11, Section 8A). An attack is defined as a bite or an attempt to bite anyone, including its own handler, without valid extenuating circumstances, for example accidentally biting the hand that is baiting a dog.

**[P]** Whenever possible, keep the exhibitor and the dog in the ring. Call for the Superintendent and the Executive Field Representative immediately and fill out the "Disqualification for Attacking" form. As a practical matter, you should carry the form which is available from the Superintendent or the Field Representative.

Be certain to clearly communicate your decision to the exhibitor of the dog using the word "disqualified," and explain that the dog may not be shown again until it is officially reinstated by The American Kennel Club. As the judge you have little latitude regarding your responsibility to disqualify or not. Refer all questions to the Field Representative.

Mark your book "Disqualified, attacked," give the exhibitor of the dog a copy of the disqualification form and deliver the original to the superintendent. You may be contacted by the Events Department at a later date for additional information.

Disqualifications for attacking are very serious and different from other disqualifications. The failure to appropriately address a potentially dangerous dog compounds the vulnerability of future judges. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to use the word "disqualified" or "excused", as appropriate, when dismissing an exhibitor whose dog is vicious or shy.

**[R]** Dog on dog aggression in the ring may, in the opinion of the judge, necessitate the excusal of one or more dogs involved. Such an incident that results in contact with injury to either dog or person is to be reported to the Show Chairman and Executive Field Representative immediately, as it must be addressed by the show committee.

## **STANDARDS DISMISSALS**

**[R] Disqualifying Faults** Each dog must be examined for disqualifying faults as specified in the breed standard, as well as for disqualifications referenced in

Chapter 11, Section 8, of the **Rules**. **This applies to judging at all levels** regardless of how many times you or other judges have examined the dog that day.

*Judges of sweepstakes, futurity, and special attractions may only disqualify a dog under the provisions of Chapter 11, Section 8-A (DQ for Attack). In all other cases (Rules or standard disqualifications) the dog should be excused.*

**[R] Weighing (Rules Chapter 14, Section 4)** In breeds with weight disqualifications, or in any class or division that includes a weight specification, you are responsible for weighing a dog if you suspect it is not within limits or if another exhibitor in the ring with it calls for a weighing.

Call the Superintendent for delivery of the scale and continue to judge the other dogs in the class until the scale arrives. Sometimes it is more practical to take the dog(s) to the Superintendent's office to be weighed. The Superintendent will set up the scale, and you must verify its calibration with a test weight. **The judge and exhibitor are to be on opposite sides of the table during the weighing. The exhibitor is to be given the option of placing the dog on the scale with the lead on or off.** Its weight is to be determined without being touched and if applicable, the lead being held loosely.

If a dog is weighed and found to be "ineligible" for its class or division, you must **excuse** the dog. Mark the judge's book: "excused, ineligible, weighed out." If the dog's weight is within the weight specification, mark the judge's book "weighed in."

**You cannot disqualify a dog because of weight unless there is a weight disqualification under the breed standard.** If you weigh a dog "out" under the breed standard's weight disqualification, mark the judge's book "**disqualified—weighed out.**"

**[R]** A dog can only be weighed one time at an event, and therefore it is essential that you mark the judge's book "weighed in" when you have weighed a dog in.

**[R] Measurement Rules (Rules, Chapter 14, Section 3)** If you are approved for breeds with height disqualifications, you must have expertise with the wicket.

You are responsible for making a height determination whenever you suspect a dog is not within proper limits as specified in the standard or in the specification of the class, or if an exhibitor in the ring at the same time protests a dog's size.

**No dog may be measured if the standard does not include a height disqualification, or that is not competing in a class or division with a height specification.** When you call for the wicket, tell the Superintendent what breed you are going to measure, so they will send the correct wicket. Whenever possible, continue judging the class until the wicket arrives.

**Measuring Procedure** You are responsible for setting the wicket. The wicket has legs of adjustable height marked in half-inch increments. After setting the wicket, verify the height with a metal tape measure (which you should always carry when judging measurable breeds) and show the measurement to the exhibitor. Once verified by the judge and the exhibitor, the wicket should not be checked again unless it is reset. Under no circumstances is the ring steward to set or verify the setting of a wicket.

Dogs normally examined on a table must be measured on a table. Dogs normally examined on the ground must be measured on the ground. You should extend to the exhibitor the choice of where a dog is measured if it is an optional breed (table, ground and/or ramp). At outdoor shows the Superintendent will provide a board for measuring breeds not examined on a table. If not available, an exhibit may be measured on a flat, level surface outside the ring.

The handler is to set the dog to the judge's specification. **At no time should you try to set the dog or hold the dog's head.** Feel for the measuring point (the highest point of the withers or shoulder blades) only, and do not otherwise touch the dog. Slide the wicket forward from the rear of the dog to your fingers marking the measuring point and place the wicket "down."

*"From the rear" is not be interpreted that the hips of the dog must pass between the legs of the wicket. Its intent is "not from the front" as it is appropriate to pass the wicket from the rear, up and over the hips, and then lower to the measuring point to account for breeds with wider hindquarters and/or happy tails.*

If both legs on the wicket touch the floor or table at the same time without touching the dog, the dog measures under the height set. If one or both of the legs of the wicket do not touch the floor or table, the dog measures over the height set. If both of the legs of the wicket touch the table or floor and the measuring point on the dog, the dog measures at the height set.

If you measure a dog "out," you should clearly and concisely communicate this to the exhibitor. If the dog's height is not in accord with the conditions of the class, the judge should declare the dog ineligible for the class and mark the judge's book "Measured out: ineligible." If the dog "measures out" under the breed standard's height disqualification, mark the judge's book "**disqualified—measured out—undersize (or oversize)**," depending on height disqualification. If the dog "measures in" under the breed standard's height disqualification or conditions of the class, mark the judge's book "measured in."

**[R]** A dog can only be measured one time at an event, therefore it is essential that you mark the judge's book "measured in" when you have measured a dog in.

**Dogs that Resist Measurement** There is a presumption that dogs of measurable breeds are trained to be

measured. Make only one attempt to measure a dog. Any dog you are unable to measure must be excused. You should always mark your book, explaining the reason for the excusal.

**[R] Verbal Protests** Any person who is handling a competing dog in the ring in any conformation competition may then verbally protest to the judge before every dog in the class has been individually examined and individually gaited. (Chapter 15, Sections 2, **Rules**)

Protests may be made alleging a dog being shown in the competition has a condition which makes it ineligible to compete (Chapter 11, Section 8, or Chapter 11, Section 8-C, **Rules**), a condition requiring disqualification under the standard for the breed or excusal for condition of class. (Chapter 14, Sections 3, 4 or 6, **Rules**)

When a verbal protest is made, examine the dog. If, in your opinion the dog does not possess the disqualifying fault, advise the exhibitor who made the protest and mark your judge's book, "**Verbal protest, (stating the reason for protest), not sustained.**" If the dog has the disqualifying condition, disqualify the dog and mark your book "**Verbal protest, (stating the reason for the protest), disqualified.**" **Protests regarding conditions of class are to be marked "Verbal protest, (reason for protest), not sustained" or "Verbal protest, (reason for protest), excused."**

**[R]** Chapter 15, Section 2, regarding verbal protests, applies only to conditions requiring disqualification under the **Rules** or breed standard.



## MISCELLANEOUS

**Misconduct** Be thoroughly familiar with AKC's booklet "Dealing with Misconduct" and be prepared to act accordingly. Conduct by any individual that may be viewed as prejudicial to the sport or AKC is subject to investigation and/or a hearing. Call the AKC Representative and the Show Chairman to your ring immediately.

**Photographs** Try to accommodate exhibitors who would like photographs taken, however, do not delay judging to take a picture. Delay all picture taking until judging within a scheduled time period has been completed.

There is no need for pictures to actually be taken in the ring. Pictures may be taken in an appropriate area of the show grounds at a time mutually convenient for judges and exhibitors.

**[P] Videotaping/Televising Dog Events** To assist clubs in planning for media events, the following AKC Policy was passed. Judges are expected to report any infractions that may affect the dogs or compromise the integrity or convenience of the judging process.

- A notice of the video/televising must be printed in the Club's premium list.
- A letter will be required from the Club Secretary to AKC's Event Plans notifying them of their intention to participate in a media event.
- The Club has the responsibility to correct all situations that might interfere with the normal operation of the event.
- No camera person or equipment will be allowed to be in a position to block the ring entrance or the aisles leading to the ring.
- No lights or other equipment that are distracting or would affect the performance, health or welfare of the dogs, exhibitors and/or the judges will be allowed.
- Any remote cameras placed inside the ring must not interfere with normal judging procedures.
- Normal judging schedules may not be delayed to accommodate the videotaping.
- Judges are required to exclude from the rings in which they are judging all persons except the steward or stewards and the show attendants assigned to the ring and those actually engaged in exhibiting. (Chapter 7, Section 16 of the **Rules**.)

The Executive Field Representative's responsibility is to advise the Show Chairman and Show Committee of AKC **Rules**, policies and procedures. Any deviation from the **Rules**, policies and procedures should be reported to the Show Chairman.

## **JUDGE'S CHECKLIST**

Arrive at least one-half hour prior to your judging assignment.

- If you are assigned to judge permit breeds, you should expect to be observed and should check in with the Field Representative and request an observation (Policy).
- Mark all absentees in each class in the book, including dogs entered for Best of Breed/Variety Competition.
- Take the exhibits as a class, or individually, around the ring.
- Examine each dog in approximately the same systematic manner. Know and utilize the breed Standard effective on the date of judging.
- Always make an individual examination of each dog for lameness (Rule).
- Be systematic in your ring procedure, but do not be afraid to make adjustments when conditions warrant it.
- Make all your instructions to exhibitors absolutely clear.
- Line up the dogs first, second, third, and fourth in front of the markers before marking the judge's book or handing out the ribbons.
- As a judge, only you may mark your judge's book and hand out ribbons and prizes.
- Ribbons and prizes must be presented only in the ring. If an exhibitor leaves the ring before ribbons are presented, have the steward call the exhibitor back into the ring. Make a note in the judge's book pertaining to the incident if the exhibitor does not return.
- In judging Winners, always double-check armbands. After Winners ribbon has been awarded, call into the ring the dog that placed second to the dog awarded Winners, and judge Reserve as a separate class.
- In the Best of Breed/Variety competition, award Best of Breed, Best of Winners (if appropriate), Best of Opposite Sex, Select Dog and Select Bitch.
- Do not forget to sign the cover of the judge's book to certify that judging has been completed in accordance with the requirements. Initial all notations you made in the book.
- All judges may be observed for procedure. If you have procedural questions, feel free to ask the AKC Field Representative (Policy).

## **JUDGING OPERATIONS**

Tim Thomas

Vice-President, Dog Show Judges (919) 816-3639

Ines Maldonado

Senior Manager (919) 816-3570

## **SHOW EVENTS**

Weekday

(919) 816-3579

Weekends

(919) 816-3955

## **LEGAL**

Weekdays

(212) 696-8310

Complete text of booklet available at:  
**[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)**

To order booklet(s), contact AKC at:  
The American Kennel Club Order Desk  
E-mail: **[orderdesk@akc.org](mailto:orderdesk@akc.org)**  
Tel: (919) 233-9767

**American Kennel Club**  
**8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100**  
**Raleigh, NC 27617-3390**  
Telephone: 919-816-3570  
Facsimile: 919-816-4225  
Email: [judgingops@akc.org](mailto:judgingops@akc.org)  
Website: [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)