

# JUDGING GUIDELINES



Pima County 4H Dog Project  
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# **Judging 4-H Showmanship**

## **Definition and Purpose:**

Showmanship classes are judged solely on the ability and skill of 4-H members in handling their dogs. The purpose of Showmanship Competition is twofold: to introduce and encourage 4-H members to participate in the sport of dogs; and to provide 4-H members with a meaningful competition in which they can learn, practice, and improve in all areas of handling skill and sportsmanship.

The prime objective for the handler is to demonstrate the ability to show a dog to its best advantage. The exercises include gaiting the dogs together around the ring, posing the dog for examination, gaiting the dogs individually at the correct pace, and knowledge of dog body parts and health. The dog should be properly groomed and gaited according to the type of dog being exhibited.

## **Judge Prerequisites:**

Judges are expected to have a genuine interest in 4-H members and in Showmanship Competition. It is important that judges of Showmanship Competition understand the definition and purpose of these classes and take seriously their role in guiding the future guardians of the sport. Judges shall conduct their ring in a consistent, businesslike and safe manner that will instill confidence in exhibitors and spectators.

## **Responsibilities:**

It is important for judges to be teachers by example. They should be prompt, courteous, patient and properly attired. Judges must be impartial and totally separate the handling ability of the 4-H members they judge from any other consideration. From the exhibitor's point of view, impartiality extends to eliminating from the judging process bias for or against the breed handled, any thought of past or future assignments, friendships, external knowledge of a 4-H members record of competition, or prior knowledge or assumption of the dog's training or preparation. If asked by a show-giving club to judge, acceptance should be based on whether or not they feel capable of judging 4-H members.

## **Safety:**

4-H members with varying degrees of experience and dogs with great difference in size, temperament and training need safe ring conditions. Judges must make every effort to ensure the safety of the exhibitors and their dogs during competition. Judges may arrange or rearrange competitors in order of gaiting speed or size of dog to avoid crowding and instruct 4-H members to leave space for judging between themselves and the 4-H members in front of or behind them.

Moving two dogs together (side by side) *is allowed* as is any pattern which places any dog in close proximity to other dogs when lead control is at a minimum, i.e., on a loose lead, etc.

Never hesitate to divide any class for any reason where the safety of the individuals or the dogs is involved. Likewise, do not hesitate to excuse any dog from the ring which is out of control, lame or which is otherwise ineligible to compete. Any dog showing signs of viciousness should be excused immediately.

## **Standard of Perfection:**

The judge must carry a mental picture of the theoretically perfect performance in each exercise and score each dog and handler against this visualized standard, which shall combine the utmost in willingness, gentleness, enjoyment and precision on the part of the dog, and naturalness, gentleness, and smoothness on the part of the handler. Judges need to keep in mind that the dog has been trained by a child and is probably a family pet with no other formal training.

## **Interference and Double Handling:**

A judge who is aware of any assistance, interference, or attempts to control a dog from outside the ring must act promptly to stop such double handling or interference, and shall penalize the dog substantially. If, in the judge's opinion, the circumstances warrant, the dog shall be given a score of zero for the exercise during which the aid was received or the dog shall be disqualified and no ribbon awarded.

## **Re-judging:**

If a dog has failed in a particular part of an exercise, it shall not ordinarily be re-judged or given a second chance, but if in the **extreme** cases, in the **judge's opinion**, the dog's performance was prejudiced by peculiar and unusual conditions, the judge may re-judge the dog on the entire exercise. Should the judge find it necessary to re-judge a dog(s) from the group exercises, the dog(s) shall be re-judged immediately following the group or as soon as possible. Should only one dog be re-judged, that dog must do the exercise alone.

## **Ties:**

In case of a tie for any prize in any class, each dog/handler shall be tested again individually by performing the pattern that was originally requested. If, after this exercise, a tie still exists, the judge may pick another pattern, ask additional questions as appropriate for that level, or any reasonable request as chosen by that judge. The original score shall not change. A plus or minus may be added to the score to indicate who won the tie.

## **Judging Routine:**

The actual routine of judging will vary according to the judge, the number of 4-H members, size of the ring, conditions, weather and time of day. However, judges should strive to evaluate competitors in an appropriate and consistent manner. Judges should explain all procedures in a straightforward manner. It is very important that only those procedures and patterns of gaiting commonly used in regular dog show classes be used. Approved gaiting patterns are: O Pattern "Circle"; I pattern - "Down & back"; Triangle; L Pattern; T Pattern; Down & Back Side by Side. (Please refer to the Showmanship Pattern guide for visualization of these patterns)

The judge should be aware of the different breeds he will see in the ring and the particular ways in which these breeds are normally handled. Examining tables shall be used only for small dogs & breeds that are normally examined on a table. Although the procedure for completing the examination of the dogs should closely resemble that of breed judging, examination of the dogs for Showmanship can be done rapidly because the conformation of the dog is of no concern. Judges should be consistent in the initial examination of each 4-H member using the same gaiting patterns, the same procedural requests and allow each 4-H member approximately the same amount of time. However, judges may change the examining routine when making a further appraisal of competitors (for example in ties).

In 4-H showmanship, the judge should not confuse the ability of a 4-H member to take directions with the 4-H member's ability to handle the dog. Some freedom of expression and expertise should be allowed. To have all exhibitors handle as if by rote defeats the basic premise of showmanship. In

addition, judges need to keep in mind that the dog has been trained by a child and is probably a family pet with no other formal training.

Judges should consider how their own movements in the ring might precipitate awkward and unusual handling results. For example, when examining the class as a whole in motion, the judge should be inside the circle; and when examining a class of standing or posed dogs the judge should not move from one side of the line to the other excessively, creating unnecessary handling movements.

### **Knowledge Evaluation:**

Four to five questions should be used as a means of testing a 4-H member's knowledge. The question phase of judging is usually done after an exhibitor performs their individual gaiting pattern. Questions generally involve dog anatomy, breed specific questions, showing and/or ring procedure, general dog care and dog knowledge. The question phase of judging can be precarious. Insure that complete knowledge of answers posed to the 4-H member is done before asking the questions. Re-evaluation of answers may be required for clarification and is suggested, especially if a 4-H member provides an answer that is unexpected. The show committee will provide a selection of questions and answers for each show.

### **Judge's Examination and Evaluation:**

The judge should examine and evaluate the class of 4-H members in four basic areas: proper presentation, skill in the individual dog's presentation, knowledge of ring procedures, and appearance & conduct. The general rule in evaluating a handler's capabilities is *economy of motion*. Handlers who use exaggerated motions and gestures in any phase of their presentation of the dog should be faulted. In essence, the judge should hardly be aware of the capable handler's presence while completing the dog's examination. In many respects a Showmanship judge's principal consideration should be to find those 4-H members who possess a hand for dogs. Those handlers having this attribute neither over- nor under-handle their dogs. They present their dogs in a quiet, efficient manner. They are able to keep their dog's attention without dramatic or unnatural movements. They are able to gait their dogs in a collected trot, never distracting or interfering with the judge's vision of the dog.

### **Presentation:**

While the judge must consider all areas important in evaluating the overall capabilities of 4H members, it is doubly important that the 4H member present his dog in the proper manner for the breed being handled and that the judge is cognizant of the proper presentation for that breed. In the individual presentation of the dog, the 4H member should demonstrate the ability to handle the dog as it is handled in the breed ring, showing the dog to its best advantage in pose and in motion. During all phases of handling, the 4H member's concentration should be on the dog and not on the judge; but not to the extent that he/she is unaware of what is taking place in the ring. Remember, you are judging the handler, but time should be spent looking at the dog to gain insight as to how well it is being handled.

1. Is the dog responsive to the handler? Do they work as a team?
2. Does the dog appear posed or interested at all times?
3. Is the dog under control?
4. Is the dog moved correctly to the best of its ability?
5. Are the dog's main faults being minimized?
6. Do both the dog and handler appear relaxed?
7. Is the dog presented with an apparent minimum of effort?

## **Knowledge of Ring Procedure:**

The judge shall evaluate the ability of the 4-H member to follow directions, use space wisely, and execute the requested gaiting patterns. 4-H members should appear ring wise, alert to the judging progression and be prepared for changes in the judging routine.

## **Appearance and Conduct:**

The judge should be aware of the appearance of both the handler and the dog. The 4-H member should be suitably dressed for the occasion, wearing the appropriate 4-H uniform as described in the show rules. The dog should be groomed and trimmed in the manner associated with the breed. The judge should evaluate the dress of the handler and the grooming of the dog, acknowledging the degree of effort that has been made. Excessive grooming of the dog in the ring to gain the judge's attention is inappropriate and should be faulted accordingly.

The judge shall evaluate the general conduct of 4-H members in the ring. 4-H members should appear prepared, confident, businesslike and attentive. They should be courteous to both the judge and their fellow exhibitors. 4-H members are expected to handle their dogs without distracting the dogs of other competitors. A 4-H member who crowds or disturbs other dogs should be faulted.

The principle of Showmanship is to afford the opportunity to learn the spirit of competition. Winning is important but is secondary to development of sportsmanship in competition. Judges who reward un-sportsmanlike conduct or actions, regardless of a handler's other capabilities, compromise the very premise of Showmanship. 4-H members should be alert to the needs of their dogs, realizing the welfare of their dog is important. They are responsible for the control of their dogs at all times. However, 4-H members who exhibit impatience or heavy-handedness with their dogs should be penalized.

## **Stewards:**

The judge is in sole charge of the ring until the assignment is completed. Stewards are provided for assistance, but may act only on the judge's instructions. Stewards shall not give information or instructions to the owners except as specifically instructed by the judge, and then only by making it clear the instructions are those of the judge.

Ring stewards **may** be asked to assist in the showmanship ring. Stewards may be used to watch for sportsmanship and appropriate handling. The steward will report directly to the judge and the judge will consider information from the steward as appropriate. The judge shall be in control of the ring at all times and the judge's decisions are final. Prior to actual judging please confer with your ring steward if you would like his or her assistance. If you, as the judge, will use assistance from the steward this **must** be announced at the beginning of the class.

Stewards **may** be asked to watch for the following:

- Proper use of bait (no dropping/leaving in ring, no deliberate misuse or flaunting of bait near other competitors, etc.)
- Sportsmanship of handlers (no crowding of other competitors, no running up on dogs, no passing of other handlers, no deliberate attempts to distract other dogs, no social talking to other competitors, etc.)
- Coaching or help from the sidelines or audience.
- Other items as a judge may request.

# Judging 4-H Obedience

## **Purpose:**

Obedience work in 4-H, as in other obedience trials, is a sport and all participants should be guided by the principles of good sportsmanship both inside and outside of the ring. The purpose of obedience trials is to demonstrate the usefulness of the dog as a companion of mankind, not merely the dog's ability to follow specified routines in the obedience ring. While all contestants in a class are required to perform the same exercises in substantially the same way so that the relative quality of the various performances may be compared and scored, the basic objective of obedience trials is to produce dogs that have been trained and conditioned to behave in the home, in public places, and in the presence of other dogs that will reflect credit on the handler and 4-H. The performances of dog and handler in the ring must be accurate and correct and must conform to the outlined requirements. However, it is also essential that the dog demonstrate willingness and enjoyment of its work, and that smoothness and naturalness on the part of the handler be given precedence over a performance based on military precision and peremptory commands. It is hoped that the dog and handler also demonstrate team work.

## **Your Responsibilities as a Judge:**

As an obedience judge, you are an essential part of the 4-H dog project. While you are judging the 4-H members and their dogs remember there are many levels to 4-H obedience based both on experience of the handler and of the dog. This booklet and these specific guidelines cannot cover all situations, nor can it substitute for common sense.

Each exhibitor has worked hard toward this competition. Judges are expected to be friendly and courteous to all who enter the ring. You are an example to the children that you are judging.

After a judge completes an assignment it is appropriate for the judge to discuss an individual dog's performance with the handler, if the handler requests this information. A judge should never continue a conversation with an angry or aggressive person. This includes family members and/or 4-H leaders.

Judges must never ignore or condone any type of abuse of a dog at any time. All judges are expected to take appropriate action when witnessing such conduct. Either ask the child to stop or ask for the Show Chairperson to help with the situation.

## **Obedience Regulations:**

The 4-H Obedience Guidelines and Class descriptions are the basic guide to judging, but do not contain explicit directions for every possible situation, only listing the more common and serious faults. The Obedience Regulations (4-H and AKC) clearly define the exercises, their order and the standards by which they are to be judged. The guidelines set the standard of perfection by which the performance of each dog is scored. The Obedience guidelines give the judge little choice in deciding how an exercise is to be performed. They require that the judge fulfill his or her responsibility by making competent decisions based on a mental picture of the perfect performance within the framework of the regulations.

Judges are given full discretionary authority within the framework of the Obedience Regulations. Judges must exercise this authority impartially. A judge is required to make his or her own decisions and to accept the responsibility this implies. A judge may not discard, modify or require anything not specified in the regulations.

A qualifying score in obedience is intended to evoke admiration. To be worthy of this admiration, the title must be based on performances that fully meet the requirements of the regulations. Scores for each exercise

must be amply justified by the performance of dog and handler. The owner of any dog that receives a deserved score of 190 points has reason to be very proud of the dog. A score of 170 points should indicate a very creditable performance and fully justify the awarding of a title.

A score of 200 points is possible, but it is extremely rare when the requirements of the regulations are followed. It is a normal occurrence for a dog and handler to earn a perfect score on one or two of the exercises, but it is very rare for a judge to have the privilege of observing and scoring a dog and handler who perform perfectly all of the exercises in a class.

### **Preparation Prior To Judging:**

**Avoid Contacts.** Do not discuss the merits of the dogs to be judged, or talk at length with anyone who may be exhibiting under you.

**Check the Ring.** Prior to the scheduled time for judging, the judge inspects the ring. If there are ring or equipment deficiencies, the judge shall bring them to the attention of the show chairperson so that they may be corrected.

**Stewards.** The judge shall review with the stewards their duties and the manner in which they are to be performed. Stewards are to be instructed that they are in the ring only to assist the judge. Any request from an exhibitor for special consideration must be directed to the judge.

### **Procedures in the Ring:**

**Judging the Dogs.** The judge has absolute control and unquestioned authority over all persons and dogs in the ring. With this authority comes the responsibility to be courteous and considerate. Be as systematic in your ring procedure from dog to dog as conditions permit.

A judge's comments, other than orders to the handler of a dog, shall be limited to a brief greeting, instructions on positioning the dog and instructions covering the group exercises. A judge will never ask a handler about project affiliations, his or her opinion or about the past performances of the dog.

The actual judging procedure may vary from judge to judge, but performance requirements must remain the same. Position is important for two reasons; first, to establish consistency of judging in the minds of exhibitors and spectators and second, to properly evaluate the dog and handler.

Being in the right position to observe a dog's performance is essential. There is no perfect position, but this does not mean that some positions are not better than others. All dogs shall be viewed from the same relative position. When viewing the dog and handler from the side, try to observe from the dog's side without the handler in between. Handlers should expect and train for a reasonable amount of movement by the judge while the dog is working. Judges must not move quickly toward a dog as it is moving, stand closely behind a dog or follow a heeling dog too closely. The judge shall always be in a position to see both the dog and handler at the same time without having to turn his or her head.

Judges shall stand with their attention on the dogs and handlers during group exercises. During the Open group exercises, Judges shall be in a position to see both the dogs and the handlers as they leave and enter the ring. Fronts and finishes are to be judged from a position in front of the handler.

The judging of an exercise normally begins when the judge gives the first order.

Corrections, loud repeated directions, a harsh tone of voice toward the dog to get it into position and handling the dog at any time in the ring between exercises, other than gently guiding a dog by the collar in the Novice classes, is to be substantially penalized under Miscellaneous Penalties.

**Natural Manner.** The Obedience Regulations place emphasis on naturalness in handling. The Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise specifically states that the hands must be in a natural position but do not require that they be at the handler's side while heeling on leash. It is up to each judge to decide when, and to what extent, the performance of any particular handler is lacking in naturalness, and when the hands of the handler are not in a natural position. A judge is expected to penalize a handler if, in the judge's opinion, the handler's manner or handling is unnatural. On the other hand, no judge should consider that a handler is unnatural just because he or she does not perform with the hands and arms in the same position for each exercise. Nor should the judge require that the hands hang at the handler's sides except when the dog is coming in and until it sits in front of the handler. The Obedience Regulations do not require this. Any motion that the judge considers to aid the dog's performance should be penalized.

**Collars.** Dogs in the obedience ring must wear a properly fitted collar. No special training collars, such as electronic collars or prong collars will be permitted. Nothing may be hanging from the collars.

No dog may enter the ring, either for judging or for awards, with unacceptable equipment. Handlers are not permitted to wear such things as waist packs/pouches or any item that, in the judge's opinion, appears to be a training device or aid.

**Disqualification and Excusal.** A dog may be excused if it attacks or attempts to attack a person in the ring. A dog may also be disqualified if it attacks another dog in the ring.

A dog which is lame or displaying other signs of pain in the ring may not compete in that class and shall not be judged.

The judge must excuse from the class as "unfit to compete" any dog that demonstrates sickness, such as vomiting, in the ring.

"A qualifying score must never be awarded to a dog that relieves itself at any time while in the ring for judging." In some cases, judges have allowed a handler to leave the ring temporarily when it appeared that the dog might foul the ring. A judge may permit this to prevent soiling the ring. However, the judge must consider that had such permission not been given, the ring probably would have been fouled. Therefore, the dog shall be considered as having relieved itself in the ring and may be given a non-qualifying score. The dog is allowed to complete all parts of the class but still not qualify.

If a judge determines that a female dog in heat is so attractive to males as to be a disturbing element, the female dog may be excused.

**Misbehavior.** A dog which demonstrates uncontrolled behavior must be penalized according to the seriousness of the misbehavior. There is no reference in the Obedience Guidelines to leaving the ring, nor is it mandatory to award a non-qualifying (NQ) score to a dog which leaves the ring. If a dog is working smartly and continuously but goes outside of a ring boundary while completing an exercise, (as opposed to a dog which bolts out of the ring or leaves the ring between exercises) the penalty, if any, is left to the discretion of the judge.

**Heeling Pattern.** Having set up the ring, the judge must determine the exact heeling pattern to be used and the pattern should be shown to the first handler in the class. The same pattern should be maintained as far as practicable for each competing dog. This is a foundation exercise and it determines the standards for all exercises in which the dog is heeling. In scoring this exercise, the judge shall accompany the handler at a discreet distance, so that he or she can observe any signals or commands given by the handler to the dog. The judge must do so without interfering with either dog or handler. The judge should attempt to be in position during the course of the exercise so that the dog and the handler may be



observed from the rear, front and side. The minimum heeling requirements for any class are normal heeling, a fast, a slow, a left turn, a right turn, an about-turn, a halt, and a sit. The judge must determine whether the dog should receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for heeling, based on the overall performance of the dog and handler during the entire exercise.

The heeling patterns should not be in the area of the table and/or gate and have only one element of an exercise on a leg. (For example, there shall not be a halt and a slow on the same leg of an exercise.) A fast should always be on a long dimension of the ring; slow may be either on the short or long dimension of the ring. The fast and slow shall be of significant length, not just several steps. No pattern shall have more than one fast and one slow. If possible, have one leg of the heeling pattern with no element on it.

**Heel Free.** This is to be judged using the same standards and procedures as the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, except that it is off leash. Except, the guidelines do require a substantial deduction if the hands and arms are not carried in one of the following positions:

- "When the handler is in motion, the arms and hands must move naturally at the side."
- "The right hand and arm must move naturally at the side, while the left hand must be held against the front of the body, centered in the area of the waist, with the left forearm carried against the body."

In either of the above situations, the hands and arms may be adjusted during the fast portion of an exercise, in order to maintain balance.

**Stand for Examination.** Regulations state that the handler will leave the dog and walk straight forward about six feet, turn and face the dog. The judge must be alert to keep handlers from going more or less than about six feet and must penalize even to the point of non-qualifying, the dog whose handler backs away when leaving.

The examination shall consist of touching only the dog's head, body and hindquarters with the fingers and palm of one hand and must not include running the hand down the dog's back. The judge should also note in scoring, that the exercise does not start until the handler has given the command and/or signal to stay, except for such things as rough treatment of the dog by its handler or active resistance by the dog to its handler's attempts to make it stand, which must be penalized substantially. In positioning the dog for this exercise, a handler may stand the dog on command and may then also pose it as in the breed ring, or he or she may simply stand the dog and not pose it. The option is left to the handler, and the judge may not penalize a handler for both standing and posing the dog. The dog need not be sitting at the start of this exercise. The Obedience Regulations require different penalties for faults which occur before and after the examination is complete. The examination is complete when the judge lifts his or her fingers and palm from the dog's hindquarters and steps back.

Judges should not expose themselves needlessly to the danger of being bitten. Should a dog in the ring give warning that it may bite you if you proceed with the examination, you should excuse the dog from the ring. If a dog attempts to attack or bites any person in the ring, the judge must disqualify the dog.

**Recall Exercises.** To have both dog and handler under constant observation in these exercises, a judge should take a position in line and slightly to the rear of the dog, facing the handler but at an adequate distance to one side.

This is a foundation exercise and governs the faults and behavior of a dog in all exercises where the dog is moving toward the handler. The dog is required to move at a brisk trot or gallop and must be penalized for failure to do so.

The handler's hands and arms should hang naturally at his or her sides while the dog is coming in and until the dog has sat in front. A substantial deduction is required for failure to do so. This requirement applies only while the dog is coming in and sits in front of the handler. It does not apply to the moving stand and examination, as the dog does not sit in front.

Finishes are required to be executed promptly, smartly and straight. Further, this applies to faults in all exercises where the dog sits in front, and finishes.

The finish is not a principal part of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying score for any exercise.

**Drop on Recall.** Faults and penalties in judging this exercise are the same as the Novice Recall, except for the drop.

A perfect drop has three characteristics:

- The dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal to drop;
- No delay or slowness to down;
- The dog must drop completely to a down position. The dog should be considered as having met the requirement if, in the judge's opinion, a similar down position would be acceptable for the long down group exercise.

**All exercises beyond the Grad Novice level are performed as described in the AKC Obedience Regulations. Please refer to the AKC Judges Guidelines for general guidance for judging these classes.**

### **Group exercises.**

In the Long Down exercise, the dog should lie down on command and/or signal without being touched excessively. In the down position the dog should be lying straight beside the handler, facing the opposite side of the ring. Should the dog lie down facing the dog on either side or in a manner that could interfere with an adjacent competing dog, the handler should be instructed to straighten or reposition the dog and a substantial penalty applied.

When positioning dogs in the ring for the group exercises in the Open classes, judges should make certain that such positioning of the dogs will permit the competing dogs to keep the handlers in their direct line of vision, when the handlers leave and return to the ring.

In Open classes, when signaling the steward to bring the handlers back to the ring, do not use a signal (like the waving of an arm) which might cause the dogs in the ring to react.

If a dog gets up and starts to roam or follows its handler and disturbs the other dogs, or if a dog moves so as to interfere with another dog, the judge should promptly instruct the handler or one of the stewards to take the dog out of the ring or to keep it away from the other dogs. If a dog exhibits evidence of disturbing another dog or of being out of control during the long sit, the judge in all fairness to the other exhibitors, must excuse the dog before the Long Down and so mark the judge's book.

Any handler who physically corrects his or her dog before or after any group exercise or while leaving the ring must be penalized under Miscellaneous Penalty.