



## GENERAL JUDGING GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR FAIR DOG SHOWS

### **The Ohio 4-H Dog Program Philosophy**

The Ohio 4-H dog program provides positive learning experiences and opportunities for diverse youth, encouraging them to reach their potential through year-round active involvement in dog projects and activities. Dog projects provide the catalyst for youth to experience and practice life skills until they are mastered and used in everyday activities, helping them develop as competent, capable, caring, and contributing citizens.

4-H volunteer advisors are caring adults who teach youth how to socialize, manner, and train their dogs. They give their support and expertise on a year-round basis, as the commitment of youth to their dogs is yearlong. Advisors teach youth skills needed to safely handle and train their dogs. Providing an emotionally and physically safe environment for members allows them to focus on learning the cognitive and physical skills needed to be successful with their dog projects.

4-H members are engaged in, practice, and demonstrate proficiencies with their dogs at various levels of obedience, grooming and handling (showmanship), dog care, and agility. They are engaged in hands-on learning opportunities through dog skillathons, knowledge bowl games, and county and state fair evaluations. 4-H members express creativity through educational dog poster displays and contests, and designing obedience and style patterns for dog drill team demonstrations and competitions.

The bond that develops between youth and dogs provides a stimulus for them to help others in their community. 4-H members and their dogs, as 4-H PetPALS, visit senior adults in nursing homes or assisted living facilities. They visit youth and adults with physical or cognitive disabilities. 4-H'ers and their dogs participate in walk-a-thons and other community service projects. Youth participate with their dogs in 4-H project awareness opportunities in schools and throughout the community.

Youth learn critical thinking skills through training opportunities in dog care, agility, obedience, grooming and handling (showmanship), and assistance dogs. They are prepared for the unexpected when working with dogs. 4-H members learn how to be flexible, as well as how to think clearly and rationally, when confronted with situations during handling, socializing, and training their dogs.

4-H members practice setting short and long-term goals for their projects and 4-H careers. Youth have opportunities to explore careers related to dogs and the dog industry. Dog projects may serve as the stepping-stone to future involvement with dogs and dog-related organizations, such as kennel and breed clubs, dog rescues or humane societies.

To access Ohio 4-H dog information use the following website address:

<http://southcenters.osu.edu/4h/dog>

## General Judging Guidelines

Keeping in mind the philosophy of the Ohio 4-H dog program, rules and guidelines are developed to bring consistency to competitive statewide dog events. The Ohio State Fair Junior Fair Dog Show Rules are designed by adapting the applicable American Kennel Club (AKC) rules to exemplify the Ohio 4-H philosophy, and to promote and encourage participation by 4-H and FFA youth. The Ohio 4-H Dog Advisory Committee has compiled these *General Judging Guidelines for Junior Fair Dog Shows* to aid judges in the evaluation and scoring of youth entered in county and state shows, trials, and fun matches, as well as an awareness tool for 4-H volunteers and youth. These suggestions should help bring clarity and consistency to the individuals judging these events.

1. First and foremost, always remember that you are working with young people. Belonging to 4-H or FFA and participating in the Junior Fair are learning experiences, and every attempt must be made for the experiences to be positive.
2. When you agree to judge at county fairs, the Senior Fair Board usually hires you through their show committee, or from a recommendation by the county 4-H Dog Committee or Extension personnel. You are working for them and should follow their directions and guidelines. When a fair board or committee representative asks you to judge, it is important to discuss your philosophies, as well as understand their philosophies, prior to being hired. If you do not agree with their judging procedures and cannot reach an agreement, do not accept the judging assignment. If you do accept, do not expect to change the committee's way of conducting the show. Do not accept a junior fair judging assignment if you do not agree with the Ohio 4-H dog program philosophy.

Some things to ask the person contacting you include: 1) How many youth and dogs do they expect? 2) What are the experience levels of the youth? 3) What are the types of classes you will be judging? 4) What is the condition of the show ring or area in which you will be judging (grass, sawdust, concrete, etc.)? 5) What show equipment (mats, jumps, etc.) is provided and its condition? 6) Will there be people to steward? (Or let them know you want to bring your own.)

The show officials are responsible for providing the correct class score sheets, armbands, stopwatches, jumps, and other necessary show items. Review these items with them, making sure they will provide what is needed for the classes you will be judging. (It never hurts to come prepared with class and group exercises score sheets, and a stopwatch.)

Also make sure the hiring committee understands your total fee. Indicate whether it is a flat fee or if mileage and any other expenses must be added. Many fair boards prefer paying a flat fee. Ask them for a contract, and when you should expect it.

3. Consistency in judging is very important. Meet with other judges of the day and show officials before the show begins to bring uniformity and consistency in judging the show. Some things to discuss include: your expectations; stewards' duties; score sheets; ring conditions; and deductions for behaviors, such as fouling the ring. It is very important to follow the same ring procedure for all participants in each class.
4. Junior Fair Dog Shows are not sanctioned shows. The exhibitor may be showing a family dog versus having a choice of dogs. This should not be an excuse for poor performance; however, keep in mind that the majority of these youth and dogs show only at the county level.

Any breed or mix of breeds can be shown in 4-H. Also, dogs with disabilities can be shown provided they can willingly perform the expected exercises without the activity being a health or safety threat to the dogs.

5. Make the judging experience positive and educational for each youth. If you have the time during the classes and shows you are judging...teach! There will be teachable moments throughout the show. Take advantage of these opportunities to educate youth and the audience in a positive way. Enlighten and engage the audience when possible by mentioning positive attributes about the classes.
6. Speak loudly and clearly for the exhibitors to hear.
7. Write comments on the score sheets. Make them positive and legible. Use constructive criticism when making suggestions for improvement.
8. **At the county level:** Some county show committees are not as experienced as others. If you are in a judging situation where the show committee, and/or exhibitors need and want help in show structure and understanding the exercises, take the time to help. You may need to conduct a "mini-clinic" during the dog show. The exhibitors and you will reap the rewards.
9. If possible, stay for the awards presentations if they are given at the end of judging. Many youth like to have their pictures taken with their judge. *At the state level*, judges are asked to stay to hand out awards and have their pictures taken with the winners or others desiring their pictures with their judge. *At the county level*, judges may want to give pointers to youth who have qualified for state fair, or help youth who have qualified in both obedience and grooming and handling decide which class they would be better suited showing.
10. The exhibitors are nervous. They probably will not remember everything you say, but they will remember your attitude.

11. Grooming and condition of the dog:
  - a. The dog is expected to be well groomed. Show clips are neither required nor recommended.
  - b. The judge should ask the age of the dog, especially if the dog's apparent condition warrants questioning.
  - c. Some teeth staining is acceptable for the mature dog.
  - d. If, at the time of judging, a dog is being medicated for a skin ailment, ear infection, diet, etc., and the exhibitor makes the judge aware that:
    - (1) a medical problem exists;
    - (2) a veterinarian has been consulted; and
    - (3) medical advice/treatment is being followed;the judge should take these factors into consideration when scoring. (The exhibitor should bring a health certificate from the veterinarian verifying the condition and treatment to registration.)
12. Do not try to trick the exhibitor. For example, questions asked during the Grooming and Handling (Showmanship) interview should be concise and clear. The purpose is to see what the exhibitor knows, not to try to cause him or her to answer incorrectly. Follow the exercises as listed on the score sheets and the patterns listed in the 4-H books and addenda. The project books are being updated and all counties will be made aware of these changes as they affect judging.
13. Questions asked during the Grooming and Handling interview must come from the Grooming and Handling 4-H project book (No. 204) and the Dog Care 4-H project book (No. 200). For youth showing in Intermediate B and Senior B classes, questions will also come from the following sections of the Dog Learning Laboratory Kit (used in skillathons) for judging at the Ohio State Fair: Anatomy: Parts of the Dog (External); Conformation: Bites, Ears and Eyes; Feet, Pasterns and Stifles; Front and Rear Legs; Tails; and Backlines; and Dog Care and Grooming Equipment: 32 pictures of types of equipment and a description for each picture.

When writing the questions, include the source and page number in case the answer needs to be checked. Give the exhibitors every opportunity to answer the questions within the time period allotted. Remember they are nervous.

- a. It is suggested that a minimum of six (6) questions be asked of each exhibitor, with each question worth ten (10) points.
- b. Partial point credit should be given if the exhibitor answers part(s) of a question correctly.
- c. Questions should reflect a variety of subject matter areas found in the books. For example, health, breeds/groups, responsibility, anatomy, terms, etc.
- d. A judge should conduct the interview instead of a steward, 4-H advisor, etc. The interviewer can be an additional judge or the same judge used for handling.

14. Judges must select from either pattern that is in the Grooming and Handling project book, or from two additional patterns. Those in the book include the “Triangle” and “L” patterns. The two additional patterns are the “Down and Back” and “T” patterns.

### **Down and Back pattern**

The Down and Back pattern is just that. Gait your dog away from the judge. When you reach the end of the ring you have the option of doing an about turn, or turning and changing hands. Choose whichever one your dog does the best. The objective is to perform the turn smoothly, and to make sure your dog is lined up with the judge, both leaving and returning. The Down and Back may be performed on the diagonal, so pay attention to the directions the judge gives you. This pattern is done in the breed ring with two dogs so that the judge can compare the dogs. They are gaited Down and Back with the dogs in the middle, both going and returning. For safety reasons, the Down and Back pattern is NOT done with two dogs in 4-H.

### **The “T” Pattern**

This pattern is really a modified “L” pattern. Perform the basic “L” by going away from the judge, make the left turn, go across, change hands, and return continuing on to the opposite side of the ring. There, let the dog go past you, change hands, do an about turn and continue back to the center. Make a left turn and continue back to the judge.

After you have finished your individual pattern, the judge will send you to the end of the line. Do an about turn, with the dog on your left and the outside of the turn, and go back around the ring to the end of the line. Continue to move up, and restack your dog as each dog completes its pattern.

15. When judging, stand in the proper positions in the ring for each exercise. In Grooming and Handling, maintain that position while the exhibitor is completing the pattern.
16. For Grooming and Handling classes, in the individual exam the handlers should be attentive to the judge by keeping the dog between themselves and the judge. The judge must realize that this is not possible or desirable 100% of the time. For brief moments, such as during the proper execution of the courtesy turn, the handler may be blocking the judge’s view. This brief blocking of the judge’s view is appropriate and should not be penalized.
17. For Grooming and Handling classes, in the group exam stewards should line the dogs up in order from fastest gait to slowest gait. The current project book says, “If the dog in front of you is slow, you may pass it on the outside of the ring.” *This will be changed in the new books to having the handler pause and then continue when there is enough space to gait the dog at the proper speed. At this time, either procedure should be accepted.* The handler should show consideration for others by not crowding the dog in front of them. Also, when the judge asks the group to take their dogs around the ring, the first exhibitor in line

- should make sure everyone is ready before stepping off. A general announcement such as, “Are you ready?” is acceptable.
18. For “*A Level*” Obedience and Grooming and Handling classes, judges will not give zeros. For all exercises except the long sit and down, a minimum of ten (10) points must be given. For the long sit and long down, a minimum of five (5) points must be given.
  19. Using bait in Grooming and Handling classes is up to the discretion of the judge. The steward should check with the judge prior to the start of classes and have the announcer inform the exhibitors as to the use of bait. **At the state level:** Bait is permitted in the holding ring on the show floor in addition to the show ring (if judge permits). No bait, food or toys are permitted on the arena floor during the obedience show times.
  20. For “*B Level*” Obedience and Grooming and Handling classes, zeros can be given if the handler and dog completely blow an exercise. **Whenever a zero is given, the comments section for that exercise must be completed with comments given in a constructive manner.**
  21. A deduction must be given if a dog fouls the ring; however, the exhibitor and his or her dog are not to be excused from the ring. Judging is to continue once the area is properly cleaned.
  22. A judge may dismiss from the ring any dog exhibiting unsafe or threatening behavior, or any exhibitor abusing a dog. Make sure the county hiring committee understands this.
  23. Only the exhibitor's dog, exhibitor, and show officials are permitted in the ring while any class is being judged. Make sure the county hiring committee understands this.
  24. The 4-H and FFA professionals and show officials in charge will have the right and responsibility to order the removal from the grounds any dog displaying unsafe or threatening behavior, or any exhibitor or other persons abusing a dog.
  25. The 4-H and FFA professionals and show officials in charge will have the right and responsibility to order the removal from the grounds any person abusive to, or disrespectful of, show personnel.
  26. Take the last three sections of the score sheets seriously. These are: (1) Exhibitor’s Appearance –10 points; (2) Dog’s Appearance –10 points; and (3) Sportsmanship –10 points. Sometimes in obedience classes judges tend to automatically award the exhibitor and dog these points in each area. Award the number of points accordingly. Judges may be asked to adjust a score for behaviors such as the following: leaving dogs unattended during show times, foul language,

abuse of rules, or disrespectful behavior. The judge will decide where to deduct the appropriate points.

27. Exhibitors should be neat, clean, and well groomed in appearance. They should wear clothing that is comfortable to handle in and appropriate for dog shows. Clothing should not distract, limit or hinder the judge's view of the dog. Inappropriate clothing includes T-shirts, jackets or other apparel with slogans, 4-H club, FFA chapter, or dog club names, etc., halter tops, tank tops, blue jeans and shorts, sandals, clogs, high-heeled shoes, and other similar footwear. For *Grooming and Handling classes* it is recommended that girls wear skirts, dresses, dress shorts, skorts, or similar attire, and boys wear dress shirts, ties, and dress slacks. For *Obedience classes* colored dress jeans and dress shorts are appropriate. **A judge's appearance should be the same or better than what is expected of the exhibitor.**
28. **At the state level ties will be broken as follows:**  
*Sub-Novice & Novice Obedience:* When two or more exhibitors have the same overall scores, the scores in the first exercise will be compared. The exhibitor with the highest score in the first exercise will receive the highest placing, and so forth. If all exhibitors have the same score in the first exercise, the scores in the second exercise will be compared, and so forth until ties are broken. If the scores are equal throughout all of the exercises, including the Exhibitor's Appearance, Dog's Appearance, and Sportsmanship, ties will be broken by the exhibitors and their dogs performing a heeling pattern specified by the judge.  
*Graduate Novice & above Levels of Obedience:* Ties will be broken by the exhibitors and their dogs performing an exercise specified by the judge.  
*Grooming & Handling:* When two or more exhibitors have the same overall scores, the scores achieved in the Interview section will first be compared. The exhibitor with the highest score will receive the highest placing, and so forth. If all exhibitors have the same Interview score, ties will be broken by the exhibitors and their dogs performing a handling exercise specified by the judge.