Royal Kennel Club

GUIDE FOR FIELD TRIAL JUDGES

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Royal Kennel Club

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Introduction

This guide is intended as a useful reference for those embarking on a judging career in Field Trials and to assist established Judges to understand their obligations to Competitors, Field Trial Societies and the Royal Kennel Club.

It is important that the information enclosed is read in conjunction with The Royal Kennel Club Kennel Club Regulations, which are published in the Royal Kennel Club Year Book, particularly the following section:

Regulation J - The Royal Kennel Club Kennel Club FIELD TRIAL Regulations.

These Regulations apply to all Judges whether domiciled in this country or overseas who officiate at the Royal Kennel Club Kennel Club licensed Trials. The references refer to appropriate Royal Kennel Club Regulations or announcements in the Kennel Gazette.

It should be noted that this is intended as a guide to the relevant Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations.

Section 1. What is required of a Field Trial Judge

1. Absolute integrity is essential.

2. Do not rush into judging. Ideally you should have at least 5 years experience of competing before you judge for the first time.

3. Judges must have practical experience in both field trials and the shooting field.

4. Help as Steward, Game carrier or Number Board carrier wherever possible in order to gain experience.

5. Ensure that you have a good knowledge of Royal Kennel Club Regulations in general and the 'J' Regulations in particular.

6. Read, understand and thoroughly digest the Royal Kennel Club Guide to Field Trial Judges.

7. Study other Judges' procedures.

8. Attend as many Seminars/Judges' Workshops as possible.

9. Ensure that you are polite to Hosts, Guns, Officials and competitors at all times.

10. Be particularly aware of any extra help that is required when dealing with inexperienced competitors.

11. Always be sure that you can justify and explain your decisions.

Section 2. Code of Best Practice for Judges

Introduction

The overall and stated object of The Royal Kennel Club is to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs and this objective also applies to Judges.

The overall aim and objective of a Field Trial Judge at whatever level, is to provide value for the time, training, effort and money, which the competitor puts into competing with their dog. Moreover, the decisions of Field Trial Judges in particular will ultimately affect the future development of a particular breed and/or respective discipline concerned.

There is, therefore, an expectation that Judges will be competent and may be trusted. Judging is not a right but a privilege. Judges should be respected by the competitor. To that end the following Code sets out the relevant aspects that Judges should be capable of demonstrating

Integrity

2.1 Judges should act honestly and impartially when undertaking an appointment.

2.2 A dog should be placed on merit only according to Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations. Judges will not be expected to provide a critique of each dog but should be prepared to discuss their decisions relating to individual competitors confidentially with those competitors after the Trial should they seek an explanation.

2.3 Judges should conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the standing of a Judge at all times whilst at a trial and in any other capacity which might have bearing on the interests of the canine world.

2.4 Judges are referred to the factors set out below which may be said to affect their standing and may result in exclusion from Judging lists or future judging contracts or withdrawal of an agreed appointment.

2.4.1 Criminal Convictions

2.4.2 Threatening Behaviour

2.4.3 Misrepresenting or abusing authority

2.4.4 Not Judging in accordance with Royal Kennel Club Rules and 'J' Regulations

2.4.5 Breach of Royal Kennel Club Rules and Regulations

2.4.6 Using the name of The Royal Kennel Club in an unauthorised manner.

Health Guidelines

2.5 Judges are expected to decline, or to withdraw from, an appointment, which they cannot fulfil. The aim of the competition can only be fulfilled when the judging of dogs is carried out in a fully competent manner. If in doubt Judges should enquire about the nature of the ground on which the Trial is to be held from the Field Trial Secretary before accepting an appointment.

2.6 Ill health of various kinds can temporarily or permanently make it impossible for a person to complete a judging appointment according to the demands which are set forward in this Code of Best Practice. A Society or Club can if necessary, either temporarily or permanently withdraw the judging invitation or cancel the Judging contract should it become apparent that the Judge cannot appraise his/her own situation and can no longer fulfil the judging appointment.

2.7 Judges must be able to undertake the judging of the dogs with an obvious independence and in a confident and convincing manner. Judges must not at any time rely on others to assist with the main work of judging.

2.8 Judges must be capable of meeting the physical requirements of fulfilling the judging appointment.

2.7 Judges must be able to undertake the judging of the dogs with an obvious independence and in a confident and convincing manner. Judges must not at any time rely on others to assist with the main work of judging.

2.8 Judges must be capable of meeting the physical requirements of fulfilling the judging appointment.

2.9 From the above it follows that a person with definite lessening of capabilities, and who is dependent on assistance or the presence of various forms of technical help may need to consider if he or she is capable of fulfilling a judging appointment in an adequate and satisfactory manner.

2.10 The Field Trial Secretary should be satisfied that invited Judges are able to fulfil their appointments.

2.11 As far as reasonably possible the Committee of the Society organising the Field Trial are responsible for ensuring that the aims of the Trial are fulfilled and that the competitors receive the quality of judging that they deserve.

2.12 The Royal Kennel Club has an overriding responsibility and may in individual cases either temporarily defer or permanently withdraw approval when the Judge in question is considered not to have the necessary capabilities. That is not to say that any particular disability will preclude judging. A common sense approach needs to be adopted by both Field Trial Society and Judge.

Judging

Judges should observe the following formalities when judging:

2.13 Treat all competing dogs in a confident, careful and consistent manner. Judges must not unfairly penalise any dog.

2.14 Conduct themselves in a courteous manner at all times and concentrate fully on the dogs. It is inadvisable for judges to call any competitor by their name, initiate or engage in a conversation initiated by a competitor whilst judging is in progress. Judges should address competitors by number rather than name as this avoids confusion.

2.15 Dress in a conventional and acceptable fashion precluding them from being the centre of attention, or from causing any distress to the dog being exhibited or its owner.

2.16 Judges should not smoke/vape, consume alcoholic drinks or use or activate a mobile phone while judging.

2.17 Judges should be careful for the safety of competing dogs. Regulation J(A)3.h applies.

General

The following are general requirements for Judges:

2.18 Absolute integrity in order to judge honestly and impartially, and to place dogs solely on their merit.

2.19 A suitable temperament and sufficient stamina to cope with what can be a physically and mentally demanding task.

2.20 To judge in a customary fashion acceptable to the competitor and the breed of dog.

Minimum Requirements for a Field Trial Judge whether judging a Field Trial or a Gundog Working Test

2.21 A comprehensive knowledge of the activity to be judged and its regulations.

2.22 An understanding of Royal Kennel Club Regulation J(A)3.c.

2.23 Qualifications for persons to be added to the Panels, J Regulation paragraph J5.c. refers.

Summary

2.24 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of the breed(s) to be judged and the different styles of work of the individual breeds. It is the responsibility of the Judges to keep abreast and up to date with developments in such matters.

2.25 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of competition procedures and etiquette. It is the responsibility of the Judges to keep abreast and up to date with developments in such matters.

2.26 Judges should be familiar with Royal Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and the Guide for Judges as amended from time to time and to keep up to date with all relevant Regulations governing Field Trials and judging.

2.27 Judges should seek to enhance the value of competitive work and of Field Trials and must act at all times with honesty, integrity and impartiality.

Section 3. Invitation To Judge

The soliciting of judging appointments is, in the opinion of The Royal Kennel Club, unacceptable.

Formal written judging contracts are not compulsory in Field Trials, but with agreement of both the Society and the Judge may be put in place. Where the Society organising the Trial require a Judge to enter into a written contract, Judges, if they are prepared to enter into a contract, should:

3.1 Ensure that they have received a written invitation from the Field Trials Society.

3.2 Confirm that they are available and are able to comply with any conditions laid down by the society.

3.3 Confirm eligibility and acceptance of the appointment in writing.

3.4 Ensure that the acceptance is followed by written confirmation of the appointment by the Society.

3.5 The invitation, acceptance and confirmation taken together form a contract between the Judge and the society.

3.6 Clarify the position regarding expenses.

Section 4. Appointment to The Panel of Field Trial Judges

4.1 Judges should be aware of the provisions of Regulation J.5.

4.2 Panel Judges should be aware of their responsibility to assess their co- judges and provide a written report on each of them at the end of the Trial. These reports are of the utmost importance in establishing the competence of ‘B’ or non-Panel Judges to be promoted to the ‘A’ or ‘B’ Panel in due course.

All 'A' Panel Judges are required to provide reports on the 'B' or non-Panel Judges at a trial and ‘B’ Panel Judges for Retrievers and Spaniels are required to provide reports on any non-Panel Judges. Where the Trial is run under the four Judge system ‘A’ Panel Judges must be aware that they will be required to assess and provide reports on all the ‘B’ and non- Panel Judges and not just the Judge with whom they

are paired. 'A' Panel Judges have an obligation to ensure that they make an opportunity to assess their co-Judges for this purpose.

Section 5. Before the Trial

The Society should send a Trial schedule to the Judge as a reminder of the appointment. This will also indicate the Stake to be judged and should be accompanied by information on accommodation and the location of the 'meet'.

The Judge at this point should obtain from the Field Trial Secretary enough information to enable him/her to identify the meet and generally prepare him/herself for the Trial.

The Judge should enquire of the Field Trial Secretary the time at which he should arrive and the planned time for the commencement of Judging.

It is important at this time that the Judge plans his/her route to the Trial to avoid arriving late.

All Judges must be aware of the penalties for failing to honour an appointment. These apply whether the appointment is oral or the subject of a contract in writing.

If such an eventuality arises, the Judge should take the following action:

- Notify the Society immediately.
- Confirm the reason in writing in order that a report can be made to The Royal Kennel Club.

Section 6. At the Trial

At the Trial all Judges must:

6.1 Arrive in ample time for their judging appointment – it is discourteous to keep the host Society/Club and competitors waiting. Make sure you have a notebook and pencil and a copy of the 'J' Regulations in case these are not supplied.

6.2 Report to the Field Trial Secretary or Chief Steward to collect a Judge's book, if supplied, together with any other papers, instructions and special requirements.

6.3 Arrive at the Venue in good time to meet with your co-Judges, the Stewards, Steward of the Beat, and the Guns. The Judges should take care to speak with the Guns, who may not have shot at a Trial before and explain both general requirements and the specific restrictions, if any, relating to the Trial in question.

6.4. All judges have the responsibility to be courteous and co-operative with all those involved with the shoot, to achieve the best result possible in an atmosphere of friendliness and confidence.

6.5 Discuss with his/her co-Judges how the Trial is to proceed.

6.6 The Judges will decide how they wish the Stake to be organised, and should discuss this with the Stewards and the Steward of the Beat.

6.7 Dress in a manner appropriate to the event and behave at all times in a way which will be sure to command respect.

6.8 At the conclusion of the Trial the Judges should place the dogs in order of merit, decide on any special awards offered in the Schedule, Programme or by the Host or Guns on the day, and give this information to the Field Trial Secretary or Chief Steward.

6.9 The Judges should attend the prize giving and ensure that awards are made in accordance with the instructions they have given to the Field Trial Secretary.

6.10 At the conclusion of the Trial the Judge should express his/her thanks to the Host, Steward of the Beat, Stewards, Field Trial Secretary and other helpers.

Judging the Trial

When judging do not make "snap" decisions. Study the situation. Take account of all the circumstances and adopt a fair, reasonable and moderate view of what has occurred and how you will deal with it. Always give the dogs the benefit of any doubt.

Judges should be prepared to make a judgement on an incident, which they did not foresee. Remain calm and take sufficient time to reach a decision that you can justify to yourself and to others who may require an explanation.

Have a clear view and understanding of the RULES and REGULATIONS and how and when to apply them. Always have a copy of the current Royal Kennel Club J Regulations available for reference when required.

While officiating:

6.11 Judges should not smoke/vape.

6.12 Judges should not consume alcohol.

6.13 Judges will need to speak to their co-Judges, the Host, the Guns, the Steward of the Beat or Head Keeper and the Judges Stewards from time to time during the Trial but should not engage in unnecessary conversations which might distract them from concentrating on what is going on around them and the dog work in particular.

6.14 Judges should not use or activate a mobile phone while judging.

Judging the Dogs

These listed items are intended to assist and enable Judges to appreciate their obligation to competitors, Field Trial Societies and The Royal Kennel Club:

6.15 Judges should concentrate solely on the dogs they are judging and must Judge the dogs as they perform on the day and not on previous performance.

6.16 Judges should do their utmost, in so far as this is possible, to give every dog an equal opportunity to show merit, and should keep accurate and adequate notes.

6.17 Judges must judge in accordance with The Royal Kennel Club 'J' Regulations.

6.18 Judges should be aware of the number of dogs to be judged, the conditions and time available, and regulate their judging accordingly, but without prejudicing the standard of the Trial. Regulation J(A)3.j. refers.

6.19 Judges should not wait unduly for competitors who are late reporting for a Trial as this would delay the Trial, but should be mindful of Regulation J8.b.(1).

6.20 Judges may dismiss from the Trial any dog if, amongst other things; it is likely to cause suffering to the dog if it continues competing. The dismissal should be reported to the Field Trial Secretary.

6.21 It is usual for Judges to allow a dog to be withdrawn from competition provided the Chief Steward is notified.

6.22 All awards made by the Judge at a Field Trial must be made in accordance with 'J' Regulations. Equal placings are prohibited. Where the Judges cannot agree on the placings the award must be decided by a run-off.

Section 7. After the Trial

Critiques

Judges at Field Trials are not required to provide critiques but they should be prepared to explain their assessment of individual competing dogs with the handler or owner of that dog, but no-one else. This should not become a discussion, merely an explanation of the reason for the relevant decision. A Judge's notes are and should remain confidential.

Judges should always be prepared to provide advice to inexperienced handlers if asked.

Judges should be prepared to say a few words at the conclusion of the Trial if requested to do so. Speeches should be confined to polite generalities and should not be an in depth analysis of any one dog's performance. Judges may use the opportunity to thank Hosts, keepers and others, but if not asked to speak should make sure to thank the appropriate people before leaving the ground.

Records

It is important for all Judges that they keep records of all their judging experience. This is of particular relevance to those hoping, at some future date, to be put up for the 'B' or 'A' Panel by one of the Societies for which they have judged. It is a requirement of the Royal Kennel Club that prospective Panel Judges complete a questionnaire detailing their experience. Accuracy in completing this questionnaire is essential and the Judge signs a declaration that the information provided on the form is accurate. Therefore, it is beneficial to retain a marked Programme from each appointment to assist with the completion of the questionnaire.

If at anytime this information is misplaced the appropriate Field Trial Secretary can be contacted, the Royal Kennel Club Stud Book can be consulted, or it may be produced from the records held by The Royal Kennel Club. Always remember that Field Trial Secretaries have enough to do without having to provide information about a Judge's record which that Judge should be able to provide for him or herself. If a Judge supplies inaccurate or misleading information on an application for the Panel this could lead to disciplinary action by The Royal Kennel Club.

Section 8. Overseas Judges and British Judges Officiating Overseas

Judges from overseas officiating in this country must judge in all respects in the same general manner as is expected of Judges resident in the UK. Overseas Judges judging at Royal Kennel Club licensed Trials should note that they must judge to Royal Kennel Club Regulations.

The suitability of overseas Judges to judge at Royal Kennel Club licensed Trials will be assessed in the same way as for Judges resident in the UK. To assist Judges from overseas, inviting societies are required to supply them with:

1. A copy of the relevant Royal Kennel Club Regulations and

2. A copy of this guide.

By the same token, British Judges are reminded when judging overseas that they must conform to the rules, regulations and conventions of the host country. Judging must be undertaken on the basis of the Regulations that are recognised in that country.

Overseas Judges who are not endorsed by the relevant Royal Kennel Club of their country will not normally be approved to judge in the UK.

Section 9. Pitfalls

1) Lack of knowledge of Breed to be judged.
2) Lack of knowledge of Regulation updates.
3) Lack of knowledge of the shooting field
4) Acceptance of alcoholic drinks.
5) Inability to keep up with the line or co-Judges.
6) Loss of concentration.
7) Lack of communication with co-Judges or Steward of the Beat etc.
8) Being in a bad position to observe the dogs working.
9) Failure to be decisive with handlers or to control the Trial.
10) Failure to deal with aggressive dogs or competitors.
11) Failing to deal with adverse weather conditions.
12) Failure to deal with harsh handling.
13) Failure to deal with any contravention of The Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations.
14) Adverse comments of any kind.

Section 10. Use of Social Media

Overview

The rapid growth of social media technologies combined with their ease of use and pervasiveness make them attractive channels of communication. However, these tools also hold the possibility of a host of unintended consequences. To help you identify and avoid potential issues we have provided some examples of best practices which are intended to help you understand, from a wide range of perspectives, the implications of participation in social media.

General Guidelines

Maintain Privacy

Do not post confidential or proprietary information. Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. As a guideline, do not post

anything that you would not present in any public forum. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?

Does it Pass the Publicity Test

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site.

Think Before You Post

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility

You are personally responsible for the content you publish on blogs or any other form of user-generated content. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy

Be Aware of Liability

You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

Be Accurate

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later.

Correct Mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

Respect Others

You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Respect Your Audience

Don't use personal insults, obscenity, also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive. Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another, but be respectful of others' opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Take the High Ground

Remember that you're most likely to build a high-quality following if you discuss ideas and situations civilly. Don't pick fights online.