

Fit for Function: Fit for Life

August 2015

Re: Judges and Judging

This is the fourth of what has become an annual communication to all Challenge Certificate Judges to provide you with an update on new initiatives and a reminder of the various resources which are available to you as a KC approved judge.

Breed Watch – Fit for Function, Fit for Life

The Kennel Club, Breed Clubs, Breeders, Exhibitors and Judges are all working hard to improve and maintain the health of pedigree dogs. It is important to recognise that as a Championship Show judge you strongly influence the future development of the breed(s) you judge. Given the fact that one of the most significant functions of a dog show is to identify stock from which to breed, it is essential that you take into account the health and welfare of the dogs you judge and by implication the stock that will be bred from these dogs.

At the beginning of last year the Kennel Club introduced compulsory health monitoring for all those breeds featured on Breed Watch with points of concern. You may already be familiar with the optional health monitoring form which is now routinely printed as the last page of the judges' book and you may have received, direct from the Kennel Club a yellow health monitoring form for those breeds featured on Breed Watch. Samples of the forms and advice on how best to fill them in can be found on the KC website at www.breedwatch.org.uk.

As part of your preparation of a judging appointment we strongly advise that you not only review the relevant breed's Breed Standard but also check to see whether the breed is featured on Breed Watch and whether there are any health concerns to look out for. Points of concern can change and therefore it is important you are as up to date as you can be prior to an appointment.

Judges Education

Each year the Kennel Club along with many other registered clubs and societies organise seminars relevant to breed specific subjects and/or particular health or welfare concerns associated with a breed or range of breeds. These are over and above the mandatory judges' education seminars presented by Accredited Trainers. It is strongly recommended to keep up to date with the breed or breeds in which you are interested. Whilst you may have attended the mandatory seminars in order to be approved to award CCs for the first time, you must keep yourself up to date by attending breed specific seminars as well as refreshing your knowledge on the Kennel Club seminars for Conformation and Movement and Regulations and Judging Procedures. There are likely to have been changes made to these seminars since you last attended and you should keep yourself up to date with current issues and show regulations.

The Kennel Club's Judges Sub-Committee recognises the importance of judges keeping themselves up to date so much so that it has recently been announced that it will become mandatory to attend and pass at a breed specific seminar for each of the second and third breeds for which you are nominated to award Challenge Certificates. This will apply to all questionnaires received on or after 1st January 2016. So you can see that the Kennel Club

and Breed Clubs are working hard on your behalf to provide you with opportunities to keeping yourself up to date and when you avail yourself of these opportunities this can only enhance your position as a Kennel Club approved judge.

The following Kennel Club Publications are recommended reading for new and established judges;

• **Breed Standards (www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/dog-showing/breed-standards)**

All Breed Standards now carry a uniform introductory paragraph pointing out the importance of avoiding obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of each breed.

• **Code of Best Practice for Judges (www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/275062/guidejudges.pdf)**

Your attention is drawn to the chapter on Canine Health and Welfare which explains in more detail the principal responsibilities of the judge in the show ring including the fact that judges should never award prizes to dogs which are visibly suffering from any condition which would adversely affect their health or welfare. The Code goes on to explain what, in particular, judges should look out for whilst judging.

• **Show Regulations (www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/49543/breed_show.pdf)**

There are quite a number of new show regulations which have been introduced to give judges the confidence and authority to make decisions in the show ring when presented with exhibits which they consider to have a visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare.

The Code of Best Practice for Judges clearly states that judges must not award prizes to dogs which are visibly suffering – several examples of conditions which would adversely affect a dog's health or welfare are given in the Code.

The Show Regulations also confirm that;

- Awarding a Best of Breed is no longer mandatory, as a judge you have discretion as to whether you make this award, this change is relevant to all types of licensed show.
- As a judge you may request or suggest to a handler that an exhibit be **withdrawn** from competition. This is particularly useful when a dog may not be going well or may have another visible problem and where you would prefer not to have to withhold an award. Remember, a judge must not award prizes to dogs which are visibly suffering. Any withdrawal must be reported to the Show Secretary who will then forward the details to the Kennel Club after the show.
- Awards may be **withheld** due to lack of sufficient merit associated to either breed type or a visible health or welfare problem. You should mark your judging slips accordingly. Remember, if you withhold third in a class, you must withhold all subsequent awards in that class.

- A dog may be **excluded** from competition due to temperament, soundness or health and welfare issues. Any exclusion must be reported as soon as possible to the Show Secretary who will forward the details to the Kennel Club after the show. This is obviously the most extreme of the actions available to a judge and it is not anticipated that exclusions will happen on a regular basis. However this option is available to you as a judge should you so wish.
- Please keep any explanation to the exhibitor to the minimum and you should not offer an opinion on what might be the cause of the dog's problem, in other words no veterinary diagnosis.

Judges Briefing Note

It is appreciated that the responsibilities of judges at Kennel Club dog shows has, over recent years, increased and that it is not always easy to keep up to date with regulation changes and other news. Therefore all of the information included above has been summarised in a document called the Briefing Note for Judges at Kennel Club Dog Shows. A copy of the briefing note is reproduced with this letter.

Critiques

The importance of providing critiques cannot be stressed enough. Exhibitors are very keen to read critiques on their dogs. Judges at Championship and Open Breed Club shows are required to produce written critiques on the first two placings in each class. Some judges like to include an introduction giving their thoughts on the state of the breed, provided there is a large representative entry.

If one virtue or fault is common then the introduction is a useful way to bringing it to the attention of breeders, exhibitors and fellow judges. A comprehensive guide to writing a critique is included in the Code of Best Practice for Judges.

Breed Health Monitoring Forms

When expected to do so, judges must submit a completed breed health monitoring form and critique to the Kennel Club within 21 days of the show. These forms are essential in gathering up to date information on the health status of a breed. Compulsory health monitoring forms for Breed Watch Category Two & Three breeds will be sent by the Kennel Club to judges two months prior to their appointment. The Optional Health Monitoring Form should you wish to raise a health concern on Category One breeds will be the last page of your Judges book.

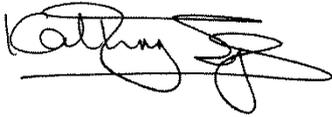
Directory of Championship Show Judges (www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/judge/)

The Directory is available on the Kennel Club website and it has proved to be an extremely useful tool for championship show secretaries in helping them locate available judges. The Directory provides an alphabetical listing of all judges, by surname together with their contact details and confirms the breed/s each judge has previously been approved to judge with Challenge Certificates, Groups and Best in Show. It is therefore important that we have a valid email address for you and your contact details are correct and up to date. If you wish

your Kennel Club record to be updated please contact the Judges Section preferably by email at breedshows@thekennelclub.org.uk or telephone 01296 318540 ext. 210.

As a judge, you are eligible to receive exclusive offers on some of the Kennel Club publications including a discount on 'The Code of Best Practice for Judging', offered at just £1.50.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Symns', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kathryn Symns
Executive-Canine Activities