

The Apprentice Draft Judge

The purpose of this paper is to help you know what to expect and to prepare for your upcoming assignment as an Apprentice Judge.

The Draft Judge Community wants you to benefit from the knowledge accumulated by those who have spent many years in the sport. Sharing our experiences and information benefits everyone.

You have met all of the requirements to be an Apprentice Judge and it is time for you to begin working with mentors – Approved Draft Judges.

I. Upon receiving confirmation of your Apprentice Draft Test assignment.

Call, write, or email the Judges you will be apprenticing with to establish a dialog. If you have questions or concerns, let them know.

Discuss the different styles the Approved Judges may have in handling a Draft Test. For example, they may have different styles of briefing handlers, different manner of calling commands, different ideas on setting up courses, they may handle the schedule differently, conduct the equipment check differently, may have varying safety concerns and may have different perspectives on the actual judging of a Test.

Each of your mentors (role models) may differ in style. Comparing and contrasting their styles will help you in selecting the styles you want to include in your own role model as an Approved Judge.

II. At least two weeks before the test, send your 2 maneuvering course plans to each of your judges.

They will critique your plans and discuss them with you – perhaps not until the draft test. Those plans and the critique will be turned in with their evaluation after the test. If, after your discussion of the plans with the judges, you would like to make changes, you may give “improved” plans to the Approved Judges to turn in with your originals.

III. The day before the test (or perhaps whenever the club meets to put up the ring) you will probably meet with the Judges and the Draft Test Committee.

This is a time for you to learn how various judges develop a maneuvering course, adapt a plan to the conditions they find at a test site, and work with the host club. Feel free to ask questions. You will help design the maneuvering course and check the freight haul.

You will meet with the Draft Test Committee to see where the Ring will be located, what objects will be available to be used to mark the ring elements and where the Freight Haul will be.

If they haven't already done so, the judges may take this time to explain your duties during the draft test. The judges will be looking for ways that you can actively participate in the various draft activities. Remember that you are being evaluated on such criteria as: knowledge, attitude,

focus, ring presence, communication skills, organization, efficiency and physical ability to judge. Some of the areas where you may be able to demonstrate these are:

During the Equipment Check, you may be asked to assist the Approved Judges .

If a Steward's Briefing is to be held separately from the Handler's briefing, you may be asked to brief each ring steward on their duties as they are placed into position.

You may be asked to pull a cart through the maneuvering course as the Approved Judges brief the Handlers

Discuss with the Approved Judges areas that you would feel comfortable in answering Handler's questions so that you can have another opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills. The Approved Judges may ask you to answer these questions if they arise during the Handlers Briefing.

You will be responsible for marking score sheets for each team just as the Approved Judges do and discussing each team. Now is the time to ask questions about the score sheet.

IV. During ring set up and marking of the freight haul, you may help with placement of objects.

The judges may adjust the course design once the ring is set up. Feel free to ask questions so you understand what they are looking for and observe how the two judges each contribute their ideas, work together and compromise. The Judging team may walk the freight haul with the committee as they mark it. Observe the different thoughts on how to mark a freight haul.

V. During the Draft Test.

The judging team will meet with the Test Committee -

To review the paper work. Are the judging forms ready? If not, you may be asked to help the Draft Secretary prepare the three sets of Judging Forms for each team.

Where are the Open Handlers to go so as to be out-of-sight,

During the Equipment Check, you may be asked to greet the handler/dog and examine the collar and lead to be used. As some judges also like to see the dog in harness at this time, you may be asked to have the handler do this. You should also be observing how the Approved Judges are measuring the carts and weights to be used. You should understand any unusual carts or weights. Ask questions.

During the handler briefing and walk through, you may be expected to answer some of the handler's questions (as determined with the Approved Judges). Don't be afraid to ask for a judge's opinion on gray area questions that your Judging team has not already discussed. This is a time for you to gain knowledge and confidence. You should aspire to be able to pleasantly and efficiently conduct the briefing and walkthrough on your own.

During the walk through of the freight haul, you may be asked to brief the Stewards on any special handling of hills or other unusual terrain where safety is an issue.

In the maneuvering ring, you will mark a score sheet for each team. After each team leaves the ring, both Approved judges will go over the performance and the marking of the score sheets with you. The host club knows an Apprentice is present, so don't feel pressured to speed things along and let questions go unasked – if your mentors wish to defer some discussion to the end of the test or the next break, they'll let you know. Meanwhile, make the most of this opportunity and ask your questions.

You may be asked to check the width of the Narrows against the Equipment Check Sheet after the Steward has finished setting the Narrows width.

During the freight haul, the Judges will direct you as to your duties. You will score each team just like you did in the ring.

During the closing and awards presentation, you may be asked to do the “thank yous”. As the Approved judges make comments to the entrants and present the awards, observe how each judge does this; learn from them, and use what you feel fits your style to develop your own plan for the end of a test.

VI. Post Test

Immediately after the conclusion of the Test, if conditions and schedules permit, you will be asked to call the maneuvering course for at least one dog. Using the previously selected volunteers, this activity should simulate an actual draft team's ring performance. Before calling the team, you may be asked to brief the course to the handler. Remember that a Draft Match, if available in your area, is an excellent opportunity to practice for this part of your Apprentice assignment.

As the judging team goes through the paperwork, make sure you understand the procedure. Ask questions.

In your final discussion with the judges, ask any questions you may still have. They are there to help you understand the job of the Draft Judge. They are your mentors and a wonderful source of information. Take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

After the Draft Test, you will complete a judge's report just as the Approved Judges do. Be certain to include all of the items listed in the regulations. You will also have an Apprentice Self Evaluation to complete. Send both to the BMDCA Draft Chair within 10 days of the Draft Test.

Thank you for your desire to become a BMDCA Draft Judge.