

Mentoring an Apprentice Draft Judge

The purpose of this paper is to help you know what is expected of you in your upcoming assignment to mentor an Apprentice Draft Judge.

Mentoring a person who wants to be a draft judge is not a task to be taken lightly. We want our newest judges to benefit from the knowledge accumulated by those who have spent many years in the sport. Sharing our experiences and information benefits everyone.

When a judge is notified that all concerned have agreed to accept an Apprentice at a test, it sets in motion a series of events. This outline is presented in an effort to provide guidance in providing the Apprentice with the best experiences for learning.

I. Upon receiving confirmation of Apprentice at Draft Test.

Call, write or email your fellow Judge to discuss how you will work together to mentor the Apprentice. You may wish to consider the division of tasks, your individual styles of draft, and your expectations before each of you contact the Apprentice.

Call, write, or email the apprentice to establish a dialog. Initially, you may wish to ask if they have any questions or concerns about being an Apprentice, or about the regulations, or about things they have seen at draft tests. Let them know you are available if they want more information.

This is the time to begin a discussion of the style of judging that works for each of you. Discuss areas such as:

- How you apply the Draft Regulations as a Standard so as to make each test fair for the handler/dog team.
- How you conduct equipment checks.
- What you like to cover in the Handler Briefing.
- How you call commands and when in relationship to the element.
- What you are looking for in each maneuvering course setup.
- How you apply time management to get through a long day.
- How you keep safety of dog and handler foremost in your activities.
- Your perspective on the actual judging of a Test.

Through sharing your thoughts, you will be helping the Apprentice develop their own role model as a Draft Judge. This will be an ongoing process that will continue through your closing discussion with the Apprentice.

II. At least two weeks before the test, you should receive the Apprentice's two maneuvering course plans.

Write your critique of the proposed maneuvering courses. Contact the Apprentice and discuss the strengths and any areas for improvement you see in their designs. Besides the presence of all the requirements, consider flow of the pattern, and balance between right and left turns. Be available if the Apprentice has questions. The original plans, your critique, and any amendments the Apprentice cares to make to the courses will be turned in with the Apprentice Evaluation Form to be completed by each Approved Draft Judge.

III. The day before the test (or perhaps whenever the club meets to put up the ring) meet with the other Approved Judge and the Apprentice.

Meet with Draft Test Committee

Talk with the Draft Test Secretary -

Check that they have all the required documents

Discuss with Apprentice and Test Secretary how to handle the paperwork

Determine dimensions of ring (some committees may need a reminder that 100 x 100 is not the only ring possible)

Determine the maneuvering course, making an effort to use portions of the plans submitted by the Apprentice, and discuss:

Order and placement of the required elements

Flow of the pattern

Location & duties of stewards

Considerations unique for Open and Brace teams

Other topics you deem important to the education of an Apprentice.

Walk the freight haul as planned by the Draft Test Committee.

Discuss the essential elements and purpose of a freight haul. Remind your Apprentice that the safety of each team is paramount. Judges need to be able to evaluate a freight haul in terms of all teams, open teams and brace teams (weight and size are factors). Get a feeling for their concern for the safety of the dogs and help them understand how to ensure that safety.

With your fellow Approved Judge, review the duties for your Apprentice the day of the draft test (see list below). Assess the level of responsibility that will be appropriate for this Apprentice at this test. Discuss and assign the Apprentice their duties and responsibilities at this time.

You, the Approved Judges, are looking for ways that the Apprentice can actively participate in the various draft activities as your assistant. Remember that you need to be able to evaluate the Apprentice on such criteria as: knowledge, attitude, focus, ring presence, communication skills, organization, efficiency and physical ability to judge. You should be looking for as many opportunities as possible, given the limited time line of each Test, for the Apprentice Judge to demonstrate these skills.

During the Equipment Check, you may ask the Apprentice to assist you.

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

You may ask the Apprentice to pull a cart through the maneuvering course as the Approved Judges brief the Handlers

Discuss with the Apprentice Judge areas that they would feel comfortable answering Handler's questions if these questions arise during the Handlers Briefing.

As part of their education, the Apprentice will be responsible for marking score sheets for each team just as the Approved Judges do. See if the Apprentice has any questions about the score sheet.

IV. During ring set up and marking of the freight haul, the judging team can help with placement of objects.

An Apprentice will need to learn and understand the reasoning behind the placement of the various elements. We know what looks good on paper doesn't always work when we get into the ring and our Apprentices need to know how to evaluate a maneuvering course and be able to quickly adapt or alter a plan to any situation.

The team may walk the freight haul with the committee as they mark it. Each judge has their own thoughts on markers. Allow the Apprentice to learn from your experiences.

V. During the Draft Test.

Meet with the Test Committee

Address any last minute concerns or questions

Equipment check

The Apprentice may assist you by

Greeting the handler/dog and examining the collar and lead to be used.

If you like to see the dog in harness at this time, you may ask the Apprentice to have the handler do this.

You should also be explaining to the Apprentice Judge how you are measuring the carts and weights to be used. You should explain any unusual carts or weights.

Answer any questions the Apprentice may have.

Both Approved Judges will observe and evaluate the Apprentice's performance.

Stewards Briefing and Walkthrough

The Apprentice may assist you by briefing each steward to define their duties and location during the test

Both Approved Judges will observe and evaluate the Apprentice's performance.

Handler Briefing and Walkthrough

Have the Apprentice answer questions (as agreed to before hand) during the briefing

Remember to solicit volunteers for the *Post Test* calling of the maneuvering course by the Apprentice.

Both Approved Judges will observe and evaluate the Apprentice's performance.

Maneuvering course

The Apprentice should mark their own score sheet for each team. One Approved Judge may make quick comments and give directions to the Apprentice during a team's performance, but not so as to detract from their work judging or to distract the team. After each team leaves the ring, both Approved Judges should go over the performance and the marking of the score sheets with the Apprentice.

Group Exercises

The method of work should be the same as in the maneuvering ring. A discussion will take place after each freight haul as score sheets are marked.

Both Approved Judges will observe and evaluate the Apprentice's performance.

At the end of this portion of the test, the Apprentice should have a thorough understanding of how to mark a score sheet.

Closing and Awards

Your candid comments about how to handle this portion of the test will help the Apprentice formulate their own idea of how they will conduct a closing. Although the Apprentice will have to conduct this closing on their own at some point, the Approved judges should give the closing comments to the entrants and present the awards. You might ask the Apprentice to give the "Thank you" part, however.

VI. Post Test

Calling of the maneuvering course (if conditions and schedules permit)

Do this immediately after the conclusion of the Draft Test as the Draft Test Committee is waiting to take down the ring, etc. Using the previously selected volunteers, this activity should simulate an actual draft team's ring performance. Before calling the team, you could ask the Apprentice to brief the course to the handler. You should evaluate the Apprentice's performance as a future judge. Take note of their ring presence, clarity of instructions, etc.

Both Approved Judges will observe and evaluate the Apprentice's performance.

Paperwork

As the judging team goes through the paperwork, make sure to explain the procedure to the Apprentice. Discuss the sheets that the Test Secretary should have completed, what the judges need to complete, where the judges must sign the paperwork, and what the Test Secretary must do with the materials.

Debriefing

The judging team should go over the copies of the score sheets and discuss any questions or notations made about events occurring during the test. Take time to go over the events of the last few days and make sure that the Apprentice has a thorough understanding of the duties of a draft judge. Answer questions, address concerns, and give an oral evaluation of the Apprentice's performance. If you see areas that the Apprentice could concentrate on before their next Draft Judge experience, discuss those with the individual at this time.

Apprentice Draft Judge Evaluation Form

Take time to sit down and carefully consider the questions on the Evaluation sheet.

***Within 10 days of the date of the Draft test, send to the BMDCA Draft Chair:
your judge's report
your Apprentice Evaluation Form By Approved Draft Judge
the Apprentice's two original maneuvering course plans
your critiques of those original plans
any amended course plans the Apprentice has turned in***

Thank you for accepting this very important responsibility of mentoring an Apprentice.