

Judges Training: Pointers and Setters

Notes on keeping an Official Judging Book

Introduction

Most competitors in Field Trials will be aware that Judges keep a record in a book of what competing dogs have done by way of performance when running under them in a Trial. Indeed in Regulation J(A)3.n. judges are advised to place each dog in a category such as A or B (+ or -) according to the work done. In addition, it is recommended that additional notes for subsequent reference supplements the marking, making the point that it is vitally important for Judges to make short notes of each dog's work. The point is also made that Judges should never expect to be able to trust to memory. Given that judges can be looking at up to 45 dogs in a pointer and setter trial, where there are going to be a whole range of incidents and different levels of work, this is sound advice.

Different judges have different methods of keeping the Judging Book, there is no official format, but the following notes set out a method which could be used at outset by Non Panel Judges and adapted by them in light of experience.

Basic advice

Always use the Kennel Club Judging Book with wet weather pages whatever the prevailing weather conditions.

Ensure that there are sufficient wet weather pages in the book to keep a short record for each dog running in each round

Complete the book using pencil, **NOT** biro, felt pen or other medium. This way the record will remain intact in the most extreme of conditions.

Prepare the book in outline before the day of the trial and on the day of the trial enter the details of the draw. This way the book is quickly ready for use and the Trial can commence without undue delay.

Make sure when judging that a plentiful supply of spare pencils is carried as well as a pencil sharpener. Similarly if glasses are worn by a judge they should carry a spare pair.

Setting up a Judging Book

It is as well to remind novice Judges that the Judging book is not only a record of their opinions on the dogs competing before them, but a current record of the stage and state of the trial they are judging. For this to be the case it should be completed after each brace and will be key to the way they and their fellow judge manage the trial.

Prior to the day of the trial the book should be prepared for use as follows:

The front page should be a header page with the details of the trial and the date.

The next page should have the details of the draw to be completed on the day of the trial for ready reference during the trial.

The third page should be for the draw for the second and/or third round.

The fourth page should be the 'See Again' list for dogs the judges wish to see more of and whose run had been curtailed by the performance of their brace mate. It is advisable that this page is tabbed by a coloured marker tab for easy access and periodic reference.

The next two or three pages should be set up as follows and on which the judge's marks will be entered after each brace to form a matrix of marks.

First Round

A	B	C	D	E

The Second and Third round marks should obviously be clearly separated from the First and from each other.

Subsequent pages should be used for short notes on each dog and it is recommended that they are divided into two so that with the facing page each brace can be entered as drawn.

24 PD	31 GSD
8 ESB	19 ISB

In order to keep the notes for the First, Second and Third rounds separate it is advisable to have a clearly marked divider sheet at the front of each round's notes possibly with a marker tab.

Using the Judging Book

On the day of the trial, once the draw has been completed it should be entered in the book at the front to be available for ready reference. The draw should then be entered on the pages reserved for short notes on each dog (see above). The number, breed and sex for each dog is all that is needed and for speed of purpose it is suggested that the abbreviations PD, PB, ESD, ESB, ISD, ISB, GSD, GSB, IRWSD, IRWSB be used. The entry on the left page will be the dog drawn on the left and the entry on the right facing page will be the brace mate drawn on the right.

Once this has been done the book is ready for use and at this stage some Judges like to 'call over' their book with their fellow Judge as a final check.

The Trial can then commence!

- After each brace has run the Judge should confer with their co-Judge and discuss the dogs that have just run noting what has been seen by the other Judge which they may have missed.
- After forming an opinion on each dog a few short notes should be made for each dog before allocating a mark and entering their number on the matrix at the front of the book.
- It is important to note that at this stage the judges should aim to agree the same mark and there should be no retrospective adjustment of marks. Consistency in approach is helpful as is developing a rapport with the co-Judge.
- For the purposes of the system being outlined the marks to be used are A, B, C, D, & E with the addition of + or – within each category.
- Once allocated, the dog's number should be entered in the appropriate column on the matrix at the front of the Judge's book with a + or - if necessary as further demarcation.
- Even dogs that have committed an eliminating fault should have sufficient notes to enable total recall of the run if the handler enquires as to the reason for his elimination.
- Similarly, dogs that have given a pedestrian performance, not hunted with style and purpose should be given a D mark as they are deemed not up to standard.
- Each Judge will over time evolve their own shorthand for use and it is essential to be succinct when making notes getting down the key features of a dog's performance. Before a dog can get an award it has to have found game and been shot over so this needs to be noted and indicated on the matrix either by an asterisk X or S/o (Shot over)
- Provided that each brace has been entered on the matrix after they have run, and those that have been shot over marked with an X or S/o at the end of the first round, it will be possible to see at a glance who the top dogs are and which dogs might go through to the next round by looking at the A & B columns and perhaps the C column particularly for C+ marks.
- At this point the Judges will have a discussion to agree the dogs for the next round. If they differ this is when the notes can be referred to as an aid to help recall of any disputed dog's performance. Having agreed the dogs needed for the second round the Judges may run them in pairs as they see fit otherwise there will be a draw.

- Before proceeding many Judges like to count up their entries on the matrix or any lists they may use to ensure the total number of entries tallies with the number of dogs in the round and thereby ensure no dog has been omitted.
- Again for a second and third round the running order should be entered in the Book in the same way as for the first round. At the end of a second round a quick reference to the matrix will indicate the top dogs for the Judge. It may be that the Judges at this stage feel, after discussion, that they have seen enough to make the awards. If not a third round will be necessary and it would be usual for the Judges to decide the braces and running order.
- At the end of the third round the awards, if any, should be given to the secretary for the presentation.

Conclusion

A Judge's Book should be kept methodically throughout the trial without slowing the progress of the trial and be subsequently available for reference.