NAVHDA

NORTH AMERICAN VERSATILE HUNTING DOG ASSOCIATION

# Apprentice Judge Program

This pamphlet addresses the procedures for becoming a NAVHDA Judge. Free information packets and brochures defining other sanctioned NAVHDA guidelines and events are available on the www.navhda.org website.

## WELCOME

Congratulations on your commitment to NAVHDA and your desire to become a NAVHDA Judge. Completing the NAVHDA Apprentice Judge Program is demanding and rewarding but is not guaranteed. The number of dogs you have trained and handled; your participation within your chapter; your hunting experience; your ability to "read" dogs; and your understanding of NAVHDA rules are some of the factors considered when evaluating your total readiness to be appointed as a NAVHDA Judge. The Apprentice Judge Program takes a great deal of personal commitment, you must be active and engaged in this program, and you must be willing to travel. Personal conduct, sportsmanship, professionalism and integrity are the hallmarks of a NAVHDA Judge. As an Apprentice Judge you are a representative of NAVHDA and the entire Judging cadre. As such, you will be expected to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with these values at all times. Approval to enter the Apprentice Program in no way guarantees that you will be appointed as a NAVHDA Judge. Dismissal from the Apprentice Program is at the discretion of the NAVHDA Executive Council. Authority to take action on Apprentice status has been delegated to the Apprentice Judge Program Manager in consultation with the Director of Judge Development, and the Judging and Testing Committee. The EC considers the recommendations of the Judging and Testing Committee when making appointments. These recommendations are based on your Apprentice Judge score cards, your test reports and on the Apprentice Judge Evaluation forms written by the Judges with whom you have worked. In addition, the Judging and Testing committee, as well as the EC, will also consider any input received from local Chapters and / or their members. Each Judge appointment is unique and considered separately by the EC.

## QUALITY CONTROL

The most important factor in determining the success of NAVHDA tests is the quality of judging. Judging must be uniform, objective and in accordance with NAVHDA rules at all times. Only the Judges have the ability, the power and the opportunity to maintain standardized testing of versatile hunting dogs. Judging is a special privilege and responsibility. The conduct of Judges and Apprentices must show consideration for the handler and exemplify exceptional field manners at all times. Although NAVHDA Judges and Apprentices do not wear uniforms, they must be aware of their appearance and the manner in which they present themselves to the public. Judges should dress in appropriate field attire that illustrates respect for the event. Attire should demonstrate the individual's awareness of the responsibility of being a representative of NAVHDA. Jeans are not appropriate, and shirts should be collared and well maintained. Please avoid wearing white shirts while judging. The use of any kennel specific or breed specific logos should be avoided. Any breach of these rules could result in immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program.

## HOW TO APPLY TO BECOME AN APPROVED APPRENTICE JUDGE

To apply for the Apprentice Judge Program, you must complete the following requirements:

1. Applicants must have a minimum of holding an active membership for the **three consecutive years of NAVHDA International** before applying.
2. Applicants must be at least **18 years old**.
3. Applicants must provide proof of holding a **hunting license for at least two years**. NAVHDA needs apprentices who also hunt--NAVHDA's testing system is based on hunting situations.
4. Applicants must have **trained and handled their own dog in a UT test** and earned a Prize within the past three years.
5. Applicants must have **trained and handled their own dog in a NA test** and earned a Prize at some point in the past.
6. Applicants must have **attended an Aims and Rules Clinic** within the past three years prior to applying to the program.
7. When applying, the following must be submitted in addition to the Apprentice Judge Application:
   - A digital "head shot" **photo** of the applicant.
   - **A brief bio**, showcasing the applicant's experience with NAVHDA, hunting, and hunting dogs.
   - **Two letters of recommendation**: One from a **Chapter Officer** describing the applicant's involvement, and one from a **NAVHDA Judge** who has worked directly with the applicant.

When you have completed the minimum requirements and believe you are ready to actively pursue the goal of becoming a NAVHDA Judge, complete the Apprentice Judge Application and send to the NAVHDA office: navoffice@navhda.org. Once your application has been reviewed for completeness and to ensure you meet all the requirements, you will be contacted by the Apprentice Judge Program Manager. The Apprentice Judge Program Manager will interview you, review the Apprentice Judge Program with you, communicate expectations, answer any questions you may have, and assign to you an official Apprentice Judge Mentor. You will then be listed as an Approved Apprentice and you will receive a copy of the NAVHDA Aims, Programs, and Test Rules book. Acceptance into the Apprentice Judge program is ultimately at the discretion of the Judging and Testing Committees.

## REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A NAVHDA APPROVED JUDGE

1. Meet all the requirements as outlined in the section below: "THE DUTIES OF A NAVHDA APPRENTICE JUDGE"
2. Must be actively engaged in the NAVHDA Apprentice Program for a minimum of two years and must apprentice judge a minimum of six test days each year while in the apprentice program.
3. Submit all required reports in a timely fashion to your apprentice mentor and the NAVHDA office during your apprenticeship.
4. Evaluate a minimum of 125 dogs at the NA and GDT level **and** no less than 35 dogs at the UT level during your apprenticeship.
5. Must have received multiple and consistent scores of "9's" or "10's" from different judging teams on your Apprentice Test Evaluations. Additionally, immediately prior to submitting your application for approval as a NAVHDA Judge you must have six days of Apprentice Test Evaluations giving you scores of "9" or "10" and recommending your approval as a NAVHDA Judge.
6. Must have attended a NAVHDA sanctioned Aims & Rules Clinic or Judges Workshop within three years of submitting your application for approval.
7. Successfully train and pass a dog you own in a NAVHDA Utility Test with a minimum of a Prize III score, or train and handle a dog you own in the Invitational Test within a three-year window of submitting your application for approval.

# The NAVHDA Apprentice Judge Program

## THE DUTIES OF A NAVHDA APPRENTICE JUDGE

1. It is your responsibility to contact the Chapter Secretary for tests where you would like to apprentice and identify yourself as an approved NAVHDA Apprentice Judge. The local Chapters choose Apprentice Judges for their tests. A maximum of two Apprentice Judges are allowed per judging group. You must notify the Test Secretary in advance if you are unable to apprentice for an assigned test. Failure to do so will be noted in your apprentice folder.
2. When you are apprenticing, you must judge at least 6 days per calendar year. Additionally, during your 2-year apprenticeship you must travel to at least 2 tests outside of your local region. This "out of region" experience is critical in enabling you, if approved as a Judge, to understand the different environments, conditions and other factors that may affect NAVHDA testing. Out of Region is defined as judging 500 miles or more from your home city or chapter location as determined by the NAVHDA Portal.
3. You are strongly encouraged to ask the Judging team questions throughout the day. If you are unsure, or you do not understand what is being done, why something is being done, or how judging consensus scores are being determined, you are expected to ask questions seeking clarification.
4. Be familiar with Chapter 2, especially sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 of the Aims and Rules book. Violation of any of the guidelines in these sections may result in immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program. Additionally, you are expected to know and be familiar with Judges Email Blasts.
5. You are expected to communicate with your Mentor. The role of the Mentor is to guide you through the Apprentice Program and help facilitate your approval as a NAVHDA Judge. In this regard, your Mentor can help to answer questions that may arise outside of the testing environment, or as you study the Aims and Rules. Based on your communication and your Apprentice Test Evaluations, your Mentor will monitor your progress and report to the Apprentice Judge Program Manager.
6. You are required to submit a short-written report for each test day you judge as an Apprentice. Reports should be submitted no later than two weeks after the test. The report should include what you learned for the day, what you feel you need to work on and what comments and feedback you received from the Judges. A template for this report will be sent to you in your welcome packet from the NAVHDA office. Reports that do not contain the requested information as set out in the suggested template will not be accepted. All Apprentice reports should be emailed to your Mentor and to the NAVHDA office: navoffice@navhda.org by the required deadline.
7. You are also required to submit an Apprentice Judge Year End Activity Report by December 1st of each year. The Apprentice Judge Year End Activity Report can be found under the forms section on this website. Please email completed year end activity reports to your Mentor and to the NAVHDA office: navoffice@navhda.org
8. Judges and Apprentice judges may not judge a test where a handler is running a dog that the Apprentice Judge or Judge owns or co-owns, or a dog that is owned or co-owned by any member of his/her immediate family. Any breach of this rule could result in immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program.
9. Judges and Apprentice Judges may not judge a test that evaluates a dog run by handler that he or she has a personal relationship with. This would include but is not limited to; husband, wife, spouse, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend or family members. Any breach of this rule could result in immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program.

**Note:** The judging team must be made aware prior to the start of the test if you have received compensation for breeding or training any of the dogs scheduled to run on that day.

*Conduct, performance, and professional representation of NAVHDA is paramount to your approval to become a judge. Your skills in public relations, your personal conduct throughout your apprenticeship, interactions with judges, and overall ability to manage the activities and your behavior at test weekends will also be considered in addition to your apprentice evaluations.*

## SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

When you believe you have met all the requirements to become a NAVHDA Judge, you should contact your Mentor and let him or her know that you would like to apply for approval as a NAVHDA Judge. You and your Mentor should then review your entire body of work as a NAVHDA Apprentice to be certain you have met or exceeded all requirements. You will then be required to submit a resume that details all of your Apprentice activity. In addition, you are required to submit a letter with your application that details why you would like to be a NAVHDA Judge and why you should be approved as a NAVHDA Judge. All applications must be submitted for consideration by December 1st prior to the upcoming Annual Meeting. Any applications for Judge approval submitted after December 1st will not be considered until the following year.

## THE APPROVAL PROCESS

In December, the files for each Apprentice Judge are sent to the Judging and Testing Committee for review. Each member of the Judging and Testing committee has approximately two weeks to review each file. A conference call is then scheduled by the Director of Judge Development with the Judging and Testing Committee. The merits for approval are discussed in detail, and each member of the committee is asked to vote on whether to approve each applicant who has applied. The final recommendations made by the Judging and Testing Committee are then sent to the NAVHDA Executive Council for review and potential approval. The EC will meet formally to decide who will be approved as a NAVHDA Judge prior to the upcoming NAVHDA Annual Meeting. Once apprentices are approved to become a judge, each person will be notified individually. NAVHDA International will announce new Judge Approvals to the general membership at the Annual Meeting and then post them to the NAVHDA website.

## AS A NAVHDA APPROVED JUDGE

1. All Judges are required to attend a NAVHDA Judges Workshop either in person or online at least once annually. There are three opportunities to attend each year: one in person at the Annual Meeting and two virtual sessions.
2. All Judges are required to handle and pass a dog they have trained in a sanctioned NAVHDA Natural Ability, Gun Dog, Utility or Invitational Test within a four-year period beginning in the year of your appointment as a NAVHDA Judge. As soon as you handle and pass one of the above-named tests, a new four-year period begins. Additionally, every NAVHDA Judge must handle and pass a dog he or she has trained in a sanctioned NAVHDA Utility or Invitational Test within an eight-year period beginning in the year of your original appointment as a NAVHDA Judge. As soon as you handle and pass one of the above-named tests, a new eight-year period begins. Please note that no grace periods will be provided.
3. When assigned to judge a test, you must contribute to the evaluation of the performance of each participating Apprentice Judge.
4. All NAVHDA Judges are brought up for review by the Executive Council annually and qualified persons are reappointed for the following year.