

# The NAVHDA 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 from the NAVHDA International Office, P.O. Box 520, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60006-0520. Telephone 847.253.6488, Fax 847.255.5987, Email [navoffice@navhda.org](mailto:navoffice@navhda.org).

## 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 Executive Council 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 Executive Council, will also consider any input received from local Chapters and / or their members. Each Judge appointment is unique and considered separately by the Executive Council.

## 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. Be a NAVHDA International member in good standing.
2. Be at least 18 years old.
3. Have trained and handled your own dog in a sanctioned Utility Test with a minimum of a Prize III score within three years of the date of your application.
4. Attended a sanctioned NAVHDA Aims & Rules Clinic within three years of the date of your application.
5. Submit two letters of recommendation from active NAVHDA members with your Apprentice Judge application.
6. Submit a digital “headshot” photograph of yourself.
7. Submit a brief bio about yourself to include your NAVHDA experience, any other dog related experience you may have, and your hunting experience

When you have completed the minimum requirements and believe you are ready to actively pursue the goal to becoming a NAVHDA Judge, complete the Apprentice Judge application included in this packet and send to the NAVHDA office: [navoffice@navhda.org](mailto:navoffice@navhda.org). Once your application has been reviewed you will be contacted by the Apprentice Judge Program Manager. The Apprentice Judge Program Manager will 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 NAVHDA Aims, Programs, and Test Rules as well as a copy of the Judges Handbook.

## REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A NAVHDA APPROVED JUDGE

1. Meet all the requirements as outlined in Section 4 “Duties of a NAVHDA Apprentice Judge”
2. Must be actively engaged in the NAVHDA Apprentice Program for a minimum of 2 years.
3. Submit all required reports in a timely fashion to your apprentice mentor and the National office during your apprenticeship.
4. Evaluate a minimum of 125 dogs during your apprenticeship, including no less than 35 dogs at the Utility level.
5. You must have received multiple and consistent scores of “9’s” or “10’s” from different judging teams on your Apprentice evaluations. You must have a minimum of six days of testing that you have received scores of “9’s” or “10’s” from judging teams who are recommending your approval immediately prior to submitting your application for approval as a NAVHDA Judge.
6. Attend a NAVHDA sanctioned Aims & Rules Clinic or Judges Workshop within a three-year window 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 travel to tests that are outside of your local area. This "out of area" 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. A map outlining out of area regions can be found on the NAVHDA website: [www.navhda.org](http://www.navhda.org) under the testing tab; map of regions tab. A minimum of two "out of area" tests are required.
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 score are being determined, please ask questions. The Judging team is there to provide a fair and balanced evaluation of each dog under judgement that day. The team is also there to help facilitate the learning process of every Apprentice.
4. You are strongly encouraged 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. Your Mentor will monitor your progress and report to the Apprentice Judge Program Manager.
5. 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](mailto:navoffice@navhda.org) by the required deadline.
6. 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](mailto:navoffice@navhda.org)
7. 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 the immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program.
8. 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 the immediate expulsion from the Apprentice Program.

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 that day.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> will not be considered until the following year.

## THE APPROVAL PROCESS

In mid-December the files for each Apprentice Judge, who submitted an application for approval, are sent to the Judging and Testing Committee. 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. Each application for approval is discussed in detail and each member of the committee is asked to vote yes or no for each applicant who has applied for approval. The recommendations made by the Judging and Testing Committee are then sent to the NAVHDA Executive Council for their review. The Executive Council will meet at the Annual Meeting to decide who will be approved as a NAVHDA Judge. New Judge Approvals are then announced to the general membership at the Annual Meeting and posted on the NAVHDA website.

## AS A NAVHDA APPROVED JUDGE:

1. All Judges are required to attend a NAVHDA Judges Workshop at least once every three years.
2. All Judges are required to handle and pass a dog they have trained in a sanctioned NAVHDA Natural Ability, Utility Preparatory, Utility or Invitational Test within a three-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 three-year period begins. Additionally, every NAVHDA Judge must handle and pass a dog he or she has trained in a sanctioned NAVHDA Utility Preparatory, Utility or Invitational Test within a six-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 six-year period begins.
3. When assigned to judge a test, you must submit an evaluation of the performance of each participating Apprentice Judge, and a test report.
4. All NAVHDA Judges are brought up for review by the Executive Council annually and qualified persons are reappointed for the following year.