

Judges Email Blast

November, 2022

Year End: As of this writing we only have two more tests on the calendar. Thank you to all judges for your efforts and flexibility this year. We were still feeling the effects of Covid in 2022 and we had many judges take on extra assignments with very short notice.

Invitational Judges: Thank you to the 25 Judges who judged our first ever Western Invitational in New Mexico. Many of you arrived early and left late. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. Many thanks to all the members of the Zia Chapter, and The Ranches, for all your hard work and efforts hosting this test. It was a great event, and we look forward to returning to beautiful New Mexico.

Annual Meeting: The Annual meeting will be held on January 26th - 28th in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. On Saturday the 28th at 10:15 am, there will be a Judges Breakout session. All Judges and Apprentice Judges are invited to attend. Attendance is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. This session will be open for Judges and Apprentice Judges only. **If you attend this session you will be given credit for a Judges Workshop.**

At 1:00 pm on the same day there will be a Judges Q&A Session open to all attendees. All Judges and Apprentice Judges are invited to attend. This will be an opportunity for all NAVHDA members to ask Judges any questions they may have.

Judges Workshops: We will be offering two virtual Judges Workshops this year for those not able to attend the Annual Meeting. The dates for the workshops are Sunday, March 12th at 1:00 pm Eastern and Sunday, March 26th at 1:00 pm Eastern. Please add these dates to your calendars. If you are not attending the Judges Breakout session at the annual meeting, you are required to attend **one** of the virtual sessions to maintain your Judges status for 2023. Invitations for the virtual sessions will be sent out shortly. Apprentice Judges are strongly encouraged to attend. All judges are required to attend **one** Judges Workshop a year. There are three opportunities to do so as outlined above.

Securing Judges for 2023: Please encourage your chapters to secure Judges for 2023 as soon as possible. Many Judges have already reported that their NAVHDA calendars are full for next year. We will not be approving any tests for 2023 with only two Judges. The only circumstance that 2- Judge Teams will be approved would be in event of illness or injury.

Apprentice Update:

Earlier this year, upon recommendation by the Judging and Testing Committee, the NAVHDA Executive Council (EC) decided to change a requirement in apprenticing and provide additional program incentives. First, upon being accepted into the Apprentice Judge program, the apprentice may apply for reimbursement of the fee for the required Aims and Rules clinic. Second, traveling "out of area" twice was reduced to once "out of area". And, to

alleviate some of the cost of traveling out of area, a request for reimbursement of travel expenses up to \$500 may be made when the apprentice is approved as a judge.

The changes to the Apprentice judge program and increased publicity regarding apprenticing have yielded encouraging results. We currently have 51 apprentices in the program. This is significantly higher than the 35-40 apprentices we have had in past years. The high standards to become a NAVHDA judge have not changed. If your chapter can help with providing accommodation or meals for apprentices this will further help these dedicated people along the way.

Spectators: Spectators are permitted to accompany handlers in the field at all NAVHDA tests, as long as the judging team and handler are in agreement. For safety reasons, there should never be any more than two spectators in the field. Spectators are never permitted to coach the handler in any way. If the judging team feels that the spectators are posing a safety risk, or their presence is negatively affecting the dog's performance, they have the authority to remove spectators from the field.

Apprentice Score Cards: We ask that Apprentice Judges fill in their score and the consensus score in the vertical "score" column of the card. Refer to the legend in the bottom right-hand corner of the card. The upper left side of the score block is for your score, the bottom right corner of the block is the consensus score.

Judge Performance Standards: Originally published in the October 2021 Judges Email Blast and the December 2021 VHD. This document has been revised to include appeal language.

NAVHDA Judge Performance Standards

It has been a standard in NAVHDA since the establishment of the Association that the most important factor in determining the success of NAVHDA tests is the quality of judging. Therefore, it is essential that Judging always be uniform, objective and in accordance with NAVHDA rules. 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 must show consideration for the handler and always exemplify exceptional field manners. Additionally, the reputation and the public image of the Association are, in large part, reflected by our judging and the performance of individual judges.

To maintain the high standards NAVHDA advocates and has traditionally been acclaimed for, it is mandatory that judge's performance be consistent with the following standards:

1. Because of the significant leadership role and the public image judging inherently provides, judges will be held to a higher standard when considering compliance with the NAVHDA Bylaws, specifically Article II, Section 2:09 (Termination and Reinstatement), "a violation of the corporation's rules, misconduct, any action determined by the Executive Council to be harmful to the corporation, or any action contrary to the conduct of a sportsman who respects and conserves the natural environment."

2. Judges must know and comply with the most current edition of the Aims, Programs and Test rules book. This includes ensuring knowledge and use of updates and clarifications of rule application as specified in the notes and minutes of Judges Seminars and the quarterly “email blast’s” promulgated by the Director of Judge Development.
 - a. In addition to judging in accordance with NAVHDA rules, judging should demonstrate knowledge, consistency, and objectivity. Further, A judge’s conduct must show consideration for the handler recognizing that he or she is our customer and is to be treated with respect.
3. A judge’s personal conduct, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity shall be consistent with the high standards expected for leadership within the Association. Being a judge is a leadership position that reflects on the entire NAVHDA membership.
4. The loyalty of a judge in adhering to NAVHDA principles and guidelines established both in writing and by tradition are essential to remain in good standing as a NAVHDA judge. When discussion of areas of improvement is needed, such discussions will be directed to the appropriate members of the NAVHDA Executive Council and should not be shared with the public.
 - a. At no time may a handler or his or her dog be publicly vilified.

(Note: The public reading of scores after a test is not considered public praise or vilification. It is, rather, a simple statement of the dog’s performance as evaluated by the judging team. After scores are read and questions answered, score cards are put away and further discussion of a dog’s or handlers’ performance is to be discouraged and in no case will it be conducted in public. If at some point after completion of all aspects of a test a question arises regarding scoring or judging and a further discussion or review is required, the Executive Council may direct such a discussion or review.)
5. Appointment as a judge is temporary. Such appointment is a special privilege and responsibility. Termination of this appointment may be made by the Executive Council if a breach of the standards stated in this document are violated. Termination may also be caused by failure to adhere to certain performance and qualification criteria.
6. If a judge’s conduct does not meet the criteria established in this document, a letter or email describing the circumstances and related facts should be sent to the Director of Judge Development. It is the longstanding policy of NAVHDA that circumstances regarding judge conduct may be investigated. Upon receipt of communication regarding a judges conduct, the Director of Judge Development may, as he or she determines, refer the matter to the Judging and Testing committee to investigate. The investigation may include:
 1. Asking for corroborating information,
 2. Interviewing the judge or judges involved,
 3. Seeking additional sources of information as necessary.

(Note: To maintain confidentiality, the identity of the person(s) lodging a complaint may, at the discretion of the Director of Judge Development or the Executive Council, be withheld.)

 - a. During the investigation the letter or complaint may be forwarded to the judge in question. If it is determined that disciplinary action may be warranted the judge(s) who are the subject of the investigation will be asked for a response.

- b. When the Judging and Testing committee is prepared to make a recommendation on the investigation the recommendation will be given to the Director of Judge Development for submission to the NAVHDA Executive Council for final action. After discussion and careful consideration, the Executive Council may accept, reject or modify the Judging and Testing Committee's recommendation.
- c. Any Judge who believes discipline, actions or recommendations made by the Executive Council are unjust, may appeal by following the guidelines below:
 - i. An intent to appeal must be submitted in writing to the Director of Judge Development within 10 calendar days of receiving the initial decision from the Executive Council. The written request should briefly but specifically state the reason for appeal.
 - ii. The NAVHDA President and the Director of Judge Development will appoint an appeal committee within 10 calendar days of receiving the intent to appeal. The appellant will have the opportunity to present his or her full appeal to the appeal committee either in writing, a virtual meeting, or both. Any virtual meeting involving the appeal will be recorded.
 - iii. The appeal committee will hear the appellant and make a recommendation to the Executive Council. Any decision made by the Executive Council involving the appeal will be communicated in writing within 10 calendar days. All appeal decisions are final.

Hunting Season: The Judging & Testing Committee wishes all of you a productive and safe hunting season, and a wonderful Holiday Season!