

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 Rev. November 2022

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.