

Show Handling Tips

Written By Eveanne Schiavo, a Neapolitan Mastiff Breeder

Showing a dog can be extremely fun and exciting but it can also be a nerve racking situation even if you have experience. I hope the following suggestions can help make your exhibiting experiences a little bit easier. The showing of dogs is considered a sport it has developed in our country for the past one hundred years. Please remember that the sport of showing dogs is one of the few professional sports that an amateur person can participate in.

Conditioning Your Dog From Day One: The purpose of dogs was not meant to be pranced around a confirmation show ring, this is not to say it can not be done but you have to train the dog to feel comfortable with the routine. It also helps when you have a temperament that is more conducive to showing, (there are some great dogs that just do not show well). You must get your pup when properly vaccinated to a breed handling class, you will also need to practice every day or every other day. Most dogs require socialization the show dog requires even more so get the dog out in public as much as possible. You need to get your pup used to traveling, (start with short trips) and being in a crate, (never leave your dog unsupervised in a crate at a show). One important factor is showing the dogs bite, time & time again a good dog will loose due to a refusal of showing the bite and teeth. Start as soon as you get your pup every day go over the pup's body, gently open the pup's mouth in the front always say the word teeth when you open the mouth, then move from side to side opening the jowls top & bottom, never force the pup, after time they won't care if there is trust.

Breed Handling Class: If your planning on showing your dog breed handling classes are critical. It is recommended that you get your pup into class as soon as you feel the puppy has had enough vaccines to protect them. Finding a breed handling class can be difficult for those people who live in rural areas. The following suggestion will hopefully help you with this endeavor. Contact the CKC or AKC and ask for breed clubs in your area or state, contact the breed clubs and ask where they train. Go to shows or fun match shows in your area and ask where they are training their dogs. Call dog training schools in your area or state and ask them if they know of any breed handling classes available. Call any breeders who are showing dogs in your area or state and ask them if they are aware of a training facility. Last but not least if all else fails consider organizing dog people in your area, this will at least condition your dog to be sociable.

Dress Code: I can not begin to express the importance of proper attire to exhibitors, yes your there to have your dog judged but the judge has to get passed you first before he gets to your dog. Next time your showing or at a show take note when the judge approaches you or the person showing is he or she looking at the dog or you first. Dressing properly is showing the judge respect. There are advantages and disadvantages to wearing the right cloths for showing. Here are some of the do's & don'ts. **Do's:** Wear solid colors that compliment your dogs color, example; grey dog, wear dark colors, black dog wear medium to light colors. The man who wears the shirt and tie will usually have the advantage, like it or not. It helps to wear a clean shoe or sneaker with good traction to prevent a spill. **Don'ts:** It is recommended that you not wear loud colors or clothing. I would recommend that you not wear a piece of clothing that is too busy with a pattern it will detract the judges eye from your dog to you. Do not wear a linear horizontal print your giving the judge a gauge to go by. You should never wear jeans, tee shirts, sweat shirts, shorts, work boots, cloths that are stained or ripped.

Collars & Leads: You should only use a lead that is no longer then 36 inches. I recommend for the Neapolitan Mastiff the 36" Nylon Handlers Show lead, once connected it becomes totally one with the collar, unless your dog pulls the lead out of your hand you'll never loose the dog to a faulty clasp. I recommend for neck sizes 26" and smaller the Hexagon collars, you will have more control and it looks better on the dogs neck, they are strong. Always use leads and collars with secure clasps or connections. Never use a prong collar. You should never use a leather collar.

One of the keys to success is to be prepared a head of time, if your not rushed you'll be less nervous. Remember your arm is the telephone line to your emotion, your dog will pick up on what your feeling so try and relax and remember win or not you love your dog. Now let's run you through some basic's on what to expect in the ring. Remember every judge has there own way of doing things.

*** Always be a polite exhibitor***

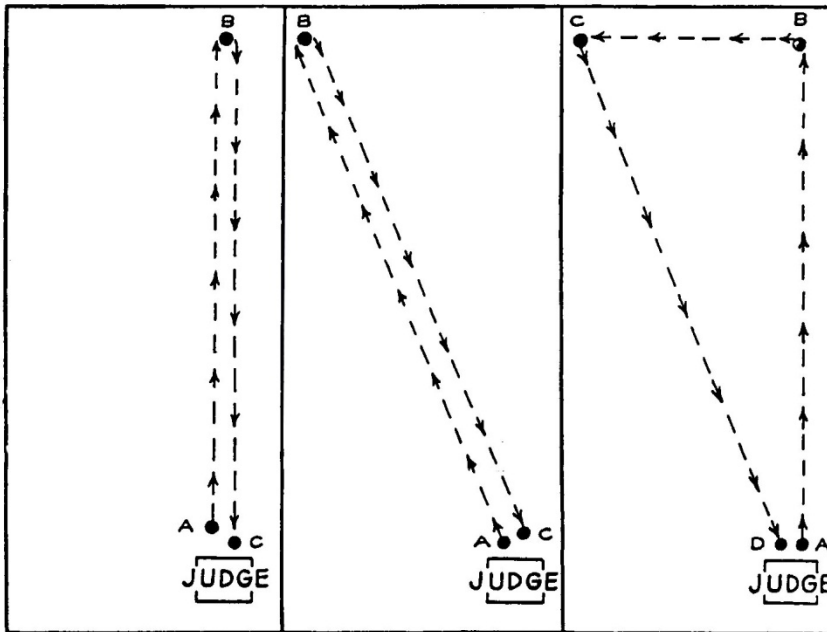
- Always be standing close enough to the ring so that when your arm band number is called out you are ready to enter the ring. Tardiness is quietly frowned upon by the judge & other exhibitors it's a sign of disrespect. Do not block the entrance of the ring allow exhibitors to enter and exit without any interference.
- Always have a drool towel to keep your dogs mouth dry & clean. Judges do not appreciate your dogs drool all over their hands so wipe your dogs mouth when the judge wants to inspect the dogs bite.
- You will enter the ring and be expected to stack (refer to terminology) your dog in a straight line. Always keep one eye on the judge and one eye on the dog so to speak Always pay attention to what the judge wants and what is going on around you in the ring.
- Some judges might approach you to examine the dog or some might prefer for you to go around the ring once.
- When the judge comes to examine your dog they usually will look at the dog, then ask you to show the bite. **Showing The Dogs Bite:** There are judges who will ask if they can touch the dog or open the dogs mouth, I prefer to show the dogs bite only due to limiting the spread of germs. However I will tell you that some judges could get offended by preferring to do it yourself (I will take that chance for the well being of my dog). First open the front of the dogs mouth to show the bite (meaning the jaw should be closed), then move to each side of the dogs mouth lift the dogs jowls to show if the dog has all

their teeth. The judge will examine the rest of the dog, if it's a male some judges unfortunately feel the need to feel the testicles to make sure there are two.

- There are basic movements in the ring, but learn all the movements that the judges might ask you to do (refer to Basic's In The Ring). You will be asked to go around the ring, this means move your dog around the ring. If you are moving around the ring in a group and you find your dog is moving to slow move in a little for other exhibitors to pass you, if your moving fast try and slow your dog down or pass on the out side. If you can always pay attention to your dogs movement You will be asked to most likely to do a triangle (refer to Basic's In The Ring) and you could be asked to go down and back which means go away from the judge in a straight line turn around and come back.
- After every one has gone around and finished their routine the judge has a good feel of who is going to place in which position. Pay attention your most likely standing with your dog stacked one last time for the last glance.
- Now the judge is picking out the dogs for placement. No matter what happens good or bad it is good sportsmanship to congratulate the winners or be gracious if you win. Always thank the judge before leaving the ring.

Never Ever Bring A Bitch That Is Coming In To, Is In Or Coming Out Of Heat! Never Ever Get Discouraged! Remember One Day, One Show, One Judge & One Opinion!

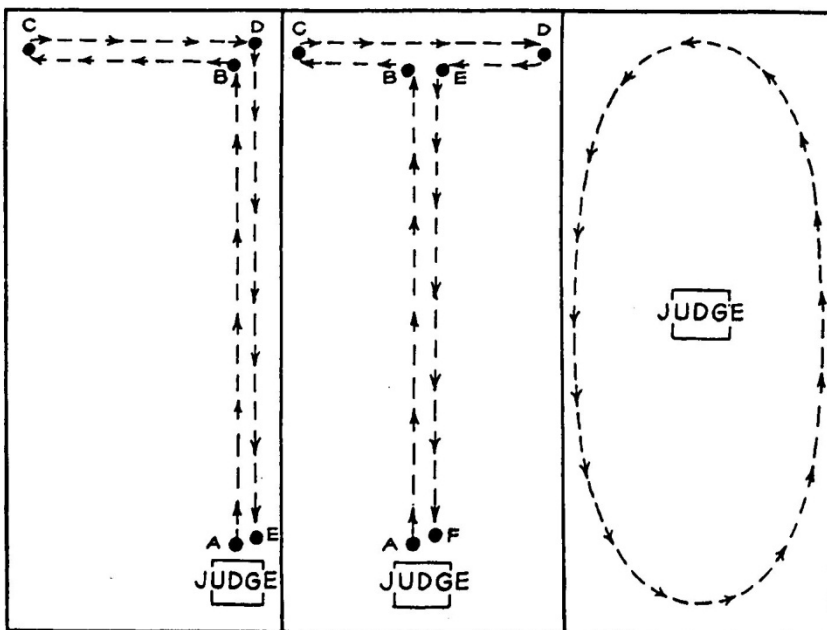
Terminology



Number One

Number Two

Number Three



- **Judge:** The person who is judging the dog.

- **Steward:** The person in the ring aiding the judge.

- **Exhibitor or Handler:** The person handling the dog in the ring.

- **Professional Handler:** A person who usually gets paid to show a dog.

- **Bait:** Usually this is a treat, some times toys are used to get the dogs attention. Never throw your bait and then not pick it up off the floor.

- **Stacking The Dog:** This is a standing position where the judge can fully examine your dog.

The following diagrams represent the direction of movement a judge will ask of you in the ring. **Figure 2:** This movement is considered down and back. **Figure 2:** This movement is considered to the corner and back. **Figure 3:** This movement is considered a triangle. **Figure 4:** This movement is considered an 'L'. **Figure 5:** This movement is considered a 'T'. **Figure 6:** This movement is considered a circle. It is very important to focus and know where your judge is at all times. When moving around in the ring try and keep your dogs movement as straight as possible so the judge can judge the dog accurately. When you are moving along with your dog stay lined up with the front shoulder of the animal. Always hold the lead in your left hand unless you are asked to do an 'L' or a 'T', (Figure 4 & 5) in these situations you have to, change hands so that the dog is always on the judges side. You should always pay attention to what's going on around you in the ring. If you are first in line and are asked to go around the ring in a circle, you should ask the person behind

you “are you ready”, if so move out. If someone is ahead of you make sure you leave them and yourself enough room so that you don't run them over, but never leave a big gap between you and the next person. If your dog is moving slower than the dog behind you move towards the inside so that they may pass you. A helpful suggestion if you have a reputable, clean breed handling class near you take full advantage of what they have to offer, remember, you can go into the ring with the most beautiful Neapolitan Mastiff but if his or her behavior is poor or your not handling the dog properly, you can not expect the judge to exam the animal properly.

****NOTE TO ALL DOG OWNERS:***

It is important to remember whether you're in the show ring or walking around the show grounds with your dog to keep him or her on a short leash. Never allow direct eye contact or close body contact with another dog. Mishaps are occurring at shows due to a owners inexperience or it may be just a case of just plain irresponsibility. Injury to you and your dog can be avoided, just pay attention to your dog at all times!