

Judging Toy Breeds on the Floor

An exhibitor should speak up if a judge bends down to judge a small dog and startles it.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I own a Toy breed that is examined on a table in the show ring. This past weekend, an elderly judge examined the dogs on the table but then later, when making her final selection, bent down to touch a few dogs while they were on the ground. Some reacted badly. What could I have done?

A. I would have courteously asked the judge to please not bend down to touch my dog while it was on the ground. I have done this over the years, and once or twice have even asked the steward to be excused from the ring if the judge ignored my request. I have never been challenged or reprimanded for speaking up.

The reason the Toy breeds are examined on the table in the first place is that they can be startled if examined on the ground. A judge who wishes to re-examine some part of a dog – the layback of shoulder, shape of feet, etc. – should have the dog put back on the table. Alternatively, the judge could ask you to pick up the dog if he or she wishes to see the face more closely or feel the weight of the body. This is often done with Pekingese.

I wouldn't risk having my dog startled – and possibly ruined for future showing – for the sake of a \$25 entry fee.

I would also file a complaint with the show committee. A Toy breed judge should know better.