

## Dog Show Judging in Canada, Eh?

**An experienced dog show judge tells you what to expect from your first assignment over the border.**

*Janet Leslie Buchanan*

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The show superintendent is jointly responsible, with the show secretary, for the enforcement of all rules and regulations related to the show, and any additional rules announced in the premium list. The show secretary actually runs the show, catalogs, exhibitor numbers distribution and schedules much like U.S. superintendents. Show setup will more often be managed by club members, using club-owned materials. Arriving at the designated ring, the judge will find one steward and no exhibitor numbers they will have been obtained at the secretary's table. The show begins and the judge settles into the familiar routine. Timing, the 175-dog limit, ring patterns and placements are all much the same, and the judge's book is reasonably similar. We now mark the time at the beginning of a unit of work (for instance, breeds judged in a group) and at the end, instead of timing each breed judged. There will be observers checking the new judge's procedure and manner in the ring, and they are not intrusive. Some procedural differences include the puppy awards, for Best Puppy in Breed and ultimately for Best Puppy in Group and Best Puppy in Show. The Best Puppy in Show winners are eligible to compete for Puppy of the Year at the end of a calendar year. Ribbon colors differ only slightly, with purple and gold for Best of Winners, and red, white and blue for Best of Breed as well as Best in Show (with obvious difference in size and complexity). All puppy ribbons are pale blue. Every Best of Breed winner must compete in the group. Numbers for both breed and puppy winners in each group are checked by the steward and the judge before judging proceeds. As at U.S. shows, numbers are always checked before any award is given to the handler. It sounds a bit tedious, but becomes automatic in practice. At many shows the groups are judged immediately after Breed completion, though some clubs like to use the "American" system of breeds, groups and BIS at the end of the show. The U.S. judge may be somewhat concerned by fewer entries in the breeds. This again is often the result of our small population, but lower numbers do not mean lesser quality. It is not unusual to see high-quality dogs in fierce group competition, starting from very low numbers in the breeds. Serious breeders in Canada have made their marks and records internationally for many years. The whole point is to relax and enjoy the Canadian show. There is much less pressure than at high-profile U.S. shows, and there will be some very good dogs. There will be some skilled handlers, though the highly crafted professional "stacking contests" may not be as evident. Owner-handlers can still achieve respectable records with good performances and quality dogs. Some visitors worry about our bilingual system in Canada, but French is predominant only in Quebec, and a translator will be available for the visiting judge.