

Dog Show Judging in Canada, Eh?

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

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As well, there has been some worry in the U.S. about Canadian rules concerning conversation in the ring between judge and exhibitor. As is often the case, some blatant example of cozy chatting preliminary to favorable awards likely caused a vitriolic complaint and the powers in charge overreacted. Common sense always prevails. A kindly general greeting to exhibitor and/or dog never hurts, and handlers are never referred to by name. An impartial, cheerful management of the ring makes everyone relax and remember that this is supposed to be an enjoyable event. When a club requests approval for a new U.S. judge, the CKC verifies that judge's qualifications with the AKC, the breeds, groups and possibly BIS for which the judge is licensed. Some differing group classifications for breeds, and CKC-recognized breeds, as covered in Dawne Deeley's companion article, should be noted. The CKC does not put restrictions on the numbers of shows per year for visiting U.S. judges, as long as that judge is in good standing with the AKC. Canadian judges, with the exception of a few "grandfathered" individuals, are allowed to judge six all-breed shows per year in the U.S., with no limit on specialties or single breeds. It is important to remind the U.S. judge that our time and distance limitations are greater, and we cannot judge at shows within 90 days and 250 miles (402 km) of each other. It is the judge's responsibility in Canada to be aware of these limitations. Transgressors are charged an administration fee. Clubs inviting the U.S. judge will provide standards for the breeds to be judged. When the judge is approved, the CKC will send our Conformation Show Rules, Judge's Handbook and Handbook of Disqualifications, and these are renewed every three years. Please be aware that the CKC standards may differ from the AKC's, and that you should of course ALWAYS judge by the Standard of the country where the show is held. The CKC has recently ruled that judges may watch group and BIS competition, but they may not watch breeds that they are scheduled to judge at an all-breed show or a specialty show held in conjunction at the same venue. The guidelines for ethical behavior of judges towards exhibitors are similar in both countries, well covered in the judges' booklets. In summary, the U.S. judge need not have apprehensions about a trip to Canada. We speak approximately the same language in a variety of interesting and mostly understandable accents, we are friendly and hospitable, we take our dog shows quite seriously but maybe with a bit less stress, and we do breed some excellent dogs that we are proud to show. Prepare to enjoy your visit, and bring an extra sweater, just in case.