

## How to Best Show Your Dog

### Here's your passport to the world of showing dogs!

In the Ring At some shows and in some countries, exhibits are required to stand in numerical order. If not, you can carefully time your entry into the ring to gain a place in line that will suit your dog best. If you are new to the show ring, it is not generally a good idea to head the line, for you may feel more comfortable following someone else. If you know that your dog is a reluctant mover, placing yourself at the end of the line can be sensible so that you do not hold up anyone following you.

Another consideration is the size of your dog. If he is a little small for his age, try not to stand him next to a large exhibit; if your dog is larger than you would like, the reverse is true. In classes with dogs of different breeds, the judge usually requests that the steward arranges the dogs such that all table dogs head the line, and sometimes that all exhibits of a certain breed are grouped together. Should this not be the case, you would be wise to consider which dogs your own is next to, especially avoiding any that appear to overly dominant in presence.

As you observe and enter more shows, you will also become wise about which exhibitors are likely to chatter too much to their neighbors, and it would be prudent to give these people a wide berth. In the ring, you will need to give your dog your full concentration, without unnecessary distractions. Apart from focusing on your dog, your concentration must also be on the judge. Watch his every move and carry out his instructions to the letter. If the judge requests a triangle when you move, don't do a circle. The judge requests a certain pattern for a reason, so that he can watch your dog moving in specific directions. Nothing aggravates a judge more than an exhibitor who does not pay attention to the directions given.

Keep an eye on the judge at all times. Although you may allow your dog to relax, take care that the judge is not looking your way when your dog decides to put his feet in an unflattering position. Many a judge casts a quick eye on a dog that has already been judged to compare the dog with another, often because he is mentally placing the dogs before the class draws to its conclusion.

When the judge is assessing the final exhibit in the class, you will need to stand your dog correctly, setting him off to his best advantage. The steward may, but not always, alert exhibitors that the last dog is being assessed, so you should always remain attentive and well prepared for the crucial moment of selection.

A judge may ask to see all or just a few of the exhibits move again, so listen carefully to instructions. The judge might also want to re-check certain points on your dog, so be prepared for this. Always keep in mind that your inexperienced youngster may not be familiar with a judge suddenly approaching him on the floor. It is important, at this early stage in your show-dogs career, that he has every confidence in you so that he does not become unsettled in the ring.