

How to Best Show Your Dog

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

Brought to you by Showing Your Dog
Selecting Classes When you fill out your entry form for a show, you will select the class or classes in which you want to enter your dog. You should pay careful attention when making your selections. Entering dogs in inappropriate classes is a fundamental error made by many novice exhibitors, so try not to fall into that trap.

In some countries, there is little choice as to which classes you enter; in other countries, the range is wide. There are classes based on age, and others in which eligibility is restricted to maximum wins. A prime example is in the UK, where even a six-month-old puppy that has never won anything is eligible to compete in every class up to and including the Open Class (but not the Veteran Class, which is for older dogs). On the other hand, a champion is only permitted to compete in the Open Class (unless an age class is appropriate). This means that it is possible to enter ones newcomer puppy in the same class as champions, against which he will be totally out of his league, being so immature.

At the Show
Unless your dog is entered in the very first class of the day, you will have an opportunity to watch exactly how the judge is conducting the ring. This can be invaluable. In the knowledge that your own dog is fully prepared for his entrance into the ring, take a few moments to study the ring and to watch how the judge is moving each exhibit. For example, is he requesting the handlers to gait the dogs in a triangle and just once up and down, or, after the triangle, is he watching them make their circuit back to the line of other exhibits? Does the judge show any preference as to the direction in which he requires the dogs to face while standing?

If it is a hot summer day, how can you protect your dog from the heat when the two of you are in the ring? You probably can provide him with shade by protecting him with your shadow but, in some breeds, people like to take damp towels into the ring to cool down their dogs. There are so many factors to consider, and a few moments observation and contemplation by the ringside can certainly pay dividends.

You will also find that your ring number may be available before entry into the ring. It may be located on your bench or issued at the secretarys table; alternatively, numbers may be given out in the ring before judging of your class. If the number is available beforehand, never go into the ring without it or you will not be allowed to be judged until it is located. You must wear your number visibly, either by attaching it on an armband or with a ring clip. You are unlikely to find these at pet shops, but you will be able to purchase them at shows.

Next Step: In the Ring