

An Introduction to Showing Dogs in Conformation

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- ❑ How conformation dog shows work and are structured
- ❑ Steps to determine if your dog is of show quality
- ❑ How to get involved in showing
- ❑ Showing your dog yourself or using a professional handler

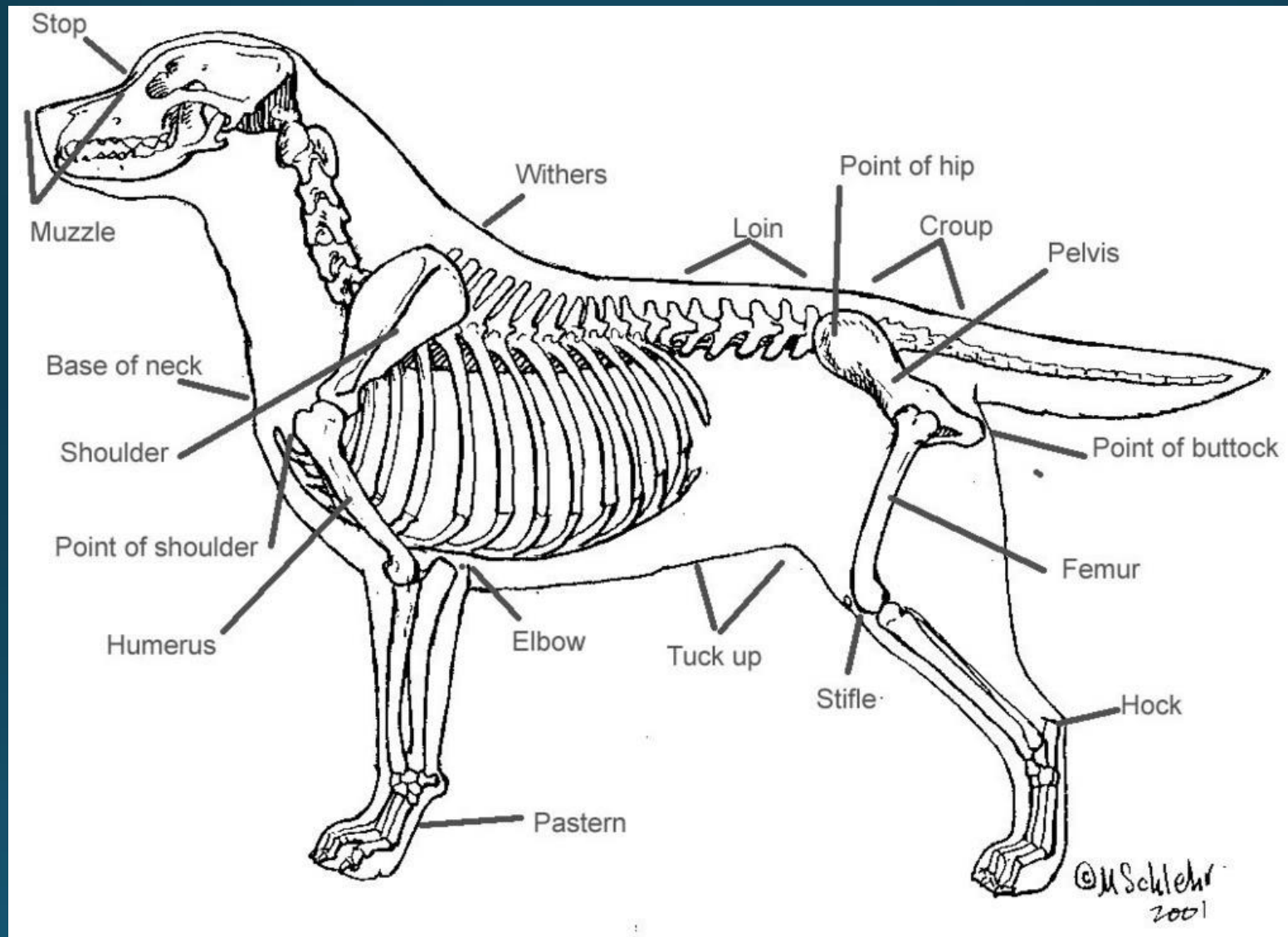
What is conformation and why it is important?

Conformation is the skeletal and muscular structure of an animal. It is crucial because it enables an animal to function normally in terms of eating, reproduction, and mobility.

The term conformation refers to a dog's physical attributes, including appearance and body structure [source: American Kennel Club (AKC)]

Correct conformation is essential for dogs to perform effectively. I.E. Golden Retrievers doing field work, agility, obedience, etc.

What is conformation and why it is important?



What is a conformation dog show?

A Conformation dog show, also referred to as a breed show, is a show in which a judge familiar with a specific dog breed evaluates individual purebred dogs on how they conform to their individual breed standard.

Dogs competing are intact and registered on AKC unlimited registrations.

The Westminster Dog Show is the most well known AKC show in the U.S.



Criteria Used for Judging Show Dogs

In a conformation dog show, judges judge each dog against the parameters of the idealized version of its breed. When the judge looks at your Golden, he is comparing it to the written standard of the ideal Golden.

The Golden Retriever Breed Standard addresses various body parts and attributes, such as Appearance, Size, Structure, Coat, Color, Gait, Temperament and Disqualifications.

Note that **judging is subjective**. You may attend shows for a breed over multiple days and see variations of dogs chosen as winners or for class placements from the same set of dogs being shown.

How conformation dog shows work and are structured

Dog Classes and their breakdown (except champions)

6-12 Months old – (these maybe divided as 6-9 and 9-12 months old)

12-18 Months old

Novice (6 months and older, and having won no previous championship points)

Amateur Owner Handler (Where the Owner is exhibiting the dog and has not received funds for showing any other dog)

Bred By Exhibitor (where the person handling the dog is an owner and breeder of record)

American-bred class - For all dogs six months of age that whelped in the USA as a result of a mating that took place within the USA.

Open – A regular class for all other dogs above 6 months of age.

This breakdown is separated by sex where all males are judged first, then all females.

Judging the classes

Each class is judged separately and the judge awards first through fourth place in each class.

The 1st place winners of all classes in each sex compete for Winners (best) Dog and Winners Bitch.

These wins are awarded points toward a Championship, based on the number of dogs in each sex competing in the classes.

The remaining class winners are then joined by the 2nd place (runner-up) from the class from which the Winner was selected and the second place winner in each sex is chosen, called Reserve Winners Dog or Reserve Winners Bitch.

If for any reason the Winner is determined to be ineligible for the points on that day, the win would then be awarded to the Reserve Winner.

2014 GRCA National

Winner's Dog Class



27 Puppy (6-9) Dogs **230 Class Dogs Entered**

29 Puppy (9-12)

15 12-15 Months

23 15-18 Months

14 Novice Dogs

6 Amateur Owner Handler

29 Bred-By-Exhibitor

39 American Bred Dogs

48 Open Dogs

59 Puppy (6-9) Bitches **345 Class Bitches Entered**

42 Puppy (9-12)

31 12-15 Months

40 15-18 Months

17 Novice

17 Amateur Owner Handler

27 Bred-By-Exhibitor

49 American Bred

63 Open Bitches

Judging Best of Breed

Best of Breed consists of any dog or bitch that has finished its Championship, plus the Winners Dog and Winners Bitch.

The judge then selects the dog or bitch that best represents the breed standard on that day and awards it Best of Breed; the best Golden of the opposite gender is awarded Best of Opposite Sex.

The judge then judges between the Winners Dog or Winners Bitch and awards the Best of Winners.

The Winners Dog or Bitch can be awarded Best of Breed or Best of Opposite Sex. The judge then selects both Select Dog and a Select Bitch.

The Select Dog and Bitch may gain points toward their Grand Championship if they are champions.

In a Specialty show, the Best of Breed is also called Best in Specialty.

Group Judging

At an AKC All-Breed conformation show there are seven groups.

Sporting Group

Herding Group

Hound Group

Non-Sporting Group

Terrier Group

Toy Group

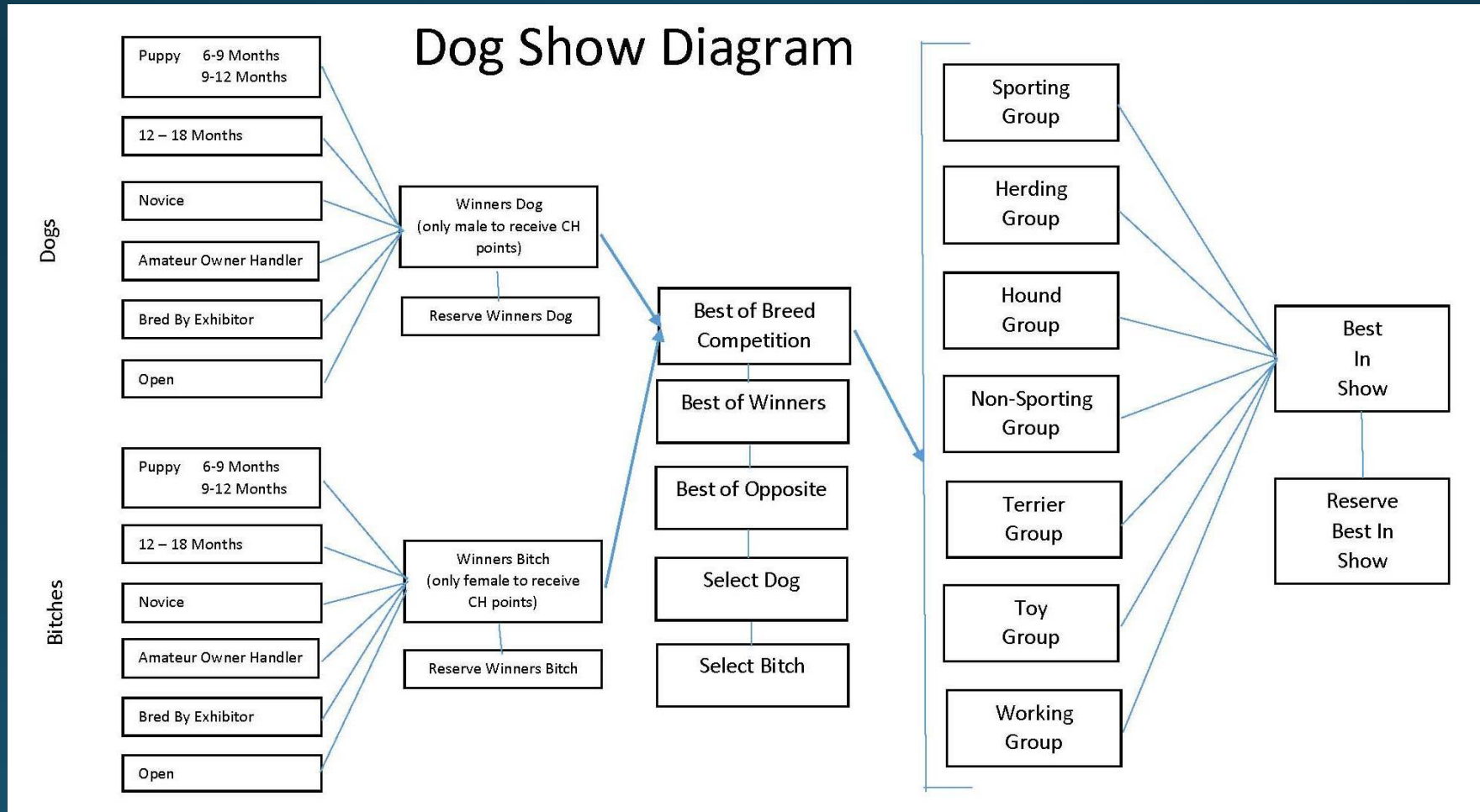
Working Group

After the judging of all the individual breeds within a group has completed, group judging may begin. The order of the judging of the individual groups differs from show to show based upon when the individual breeds within a group are finished and the judge judging the group is available.

Groups are called in one at a time, consisting of the all the Best of Breed winners with that group and the group judge then selects their Group 1 through Group 4 winners.

Best in Show Judging

When all seven groups have been judged the Group 1st winners from each group then compete under the best in show judge. One of these group winners is then chosen Best in Show and the judge then awards a Reserve Best in Show winner.



Becoming an AKC Conformation Champion

To become a conformation champion, a dog must acquire 15 points from three different judges. At least two of these wins must be major wins (3 points or more) from separate judges.

Point Schedules

The AKC has divided the US into 15 divisions. A division states by breed the point schedule for all breeds within it.

Division 1 is comprised of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Within each division a point schedule is set for the year on or about May 15th.

For 2014-2015 the Division 1 point schedule for Golden Retrievers is as follows:

1 Point (2-2) 2 points (7-10) 3 points (12-18) 4 points (16-23) 5 points (22-33)

The 1st number in parenthesis represents the number of dogs competing the 2nd number the bitches. Each division and its breeds point schedule is set based on statistical analysis done by the AKC on a yearly basis.

Steps to determine if your dog is of show quality

Your best bet is to find a good, ethical, show breeder who is willing to mentor you. They can teach you about proper structure, temperament, and ring handling for the breed.

Puppies

Puppies are typically evaluated at 7-8 weeks. Waiting the extra week till 8 allows you to see the puppies move more correctly (more trotting and less bunny hopping).

Puppies at this age reflect many of the attributes you would hope to see in them when mature such as overall proportions, head piece, top-line, depth of chest, angulation, shoulder layback, neck, tail-set, foot placement, etc.

If you've breed the litter, have a puppy party and invite people who have experience breeding and/or evaluating puppies for conformation (best within your breed). If someone else has breed the litter that you are interested in obtaining a puppy from it then you should ask to be invited to the evaluation. Keep in mind that pick of the litter doesn't make it a show dog only the best of what is in the litter.

Not all breeding produce show quality dogs.

Steps to determine if your dog is of show quality

Puppies



Steps to determine if your dog is of show quality

Go to shows. Determine what dogs you would choose in a class and in what order and why. Watch what the judge does. What placements are made and try to understand why those placements were made. Understand that the judge has the advantage of physically going over the dog that you don't have watching at ringside.

Study pedigrees. (www.K9data.com) Pedigrees won't tell you the quality of the dog but a 5 generation pedigree with no conformation champions in it is much less likely to produce a conformation quality dog.

Ask for feedback from others experienced in conformation. Understand that all dogs have faults.

If your Golden is 18 months or older consider entering a GRCA CCA evaluation. This is the GRCA's noncompetitive Certificate of Conformation Assessment program where your dog is judged and scored against the Golden Retriever Breed Standard. Your evaluator will talk with you through the evaluation and discuss their observations and evaluation.

Other resources – evaluating dogs

Golden Retriever Breed Standard:

http://www.akc.org/breeds/golden_retriever/breed_standard.cfm

Even better read The Golden Retriever: An Illustrated Study Guide from the GRCA site:

http://www.grca.org/education/judge_guide.html which covers the following

AKC Breed Standard for the Golden Retriever

Judging the Golden Retriever

A Brief History of the Golden Retriever

Breed Character and Temperament

Function and Purpose

Size, proportion, and substance

Dentition

Coat

Color

Feet and Tail

Gait

Grooming and presentation

Other resources – evaluating dogs

Pat Hastings' – The Puppy Puzzle as a guideline for evaluating puppies.

Pat Hastings' – Tricks of the Trade – From Best Intentions to Best In Show.

Marcia Schlehr's - A Study of the Golden Retriever. Known as The Blue Book, this 60 page illustrated book is essential for understanding the breed standard. (Available from the GRCA store).

GRCA BOOK STORE - <http://www.grca.org/store/bookstore.html>

Other resources Pat Hastings' – The Puppy Puzzle evaluation form example

dogfolk ENTERPRISES

Puppy Evaluation Form

FROM THE "Puppy Puzzle" video

DATE: 7/19/2003	AGE: 8 weeks	FOOD:
BREED: Golden Retriever	SIRE: Cody	DAM: Abby
Breeder/Owner:		Phone: ()
Evaluator:		Phone: ()

8 weeks +/- 3 days	Points: 1 – 5	3 = show average
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PUPPY ID	D	B	HEAD	FRONT	SHOULDERS	REAR	TOPLINE	EYE	MISC
Blue	X		5 pellet found good bite strong head	4 good depth of chest, drops even, good posternum	4 good angles layback	4 good angulation	4	4	concern about high tail
Green	X		3	2 short depth of chest	2 straight forward	2 long hocked	4	4	
Red	X		4 pellet found might be missing teeth	4 medium depth of chest	4	4	3	4	bite concern and topline

How to get involved in showing

Handling Classes

Attend a handling class – Google “handling classes” in your area. Some of the local All-Breed clubs and training facilities have drop in classes.

Matches

Show in Matches. Many clubs put on matches (Yankee’s is May 3rd). These tend to be low-key, no pressure, fun matches.

Most All Breed clubs hold at least one a year.

Many of these are listed on the InfoDog site at <http://www.infodog.com/showinfo/matches.htm>

Seminars

Attend a Handling Seminar such as George Alston’s or Norma Smith’s.

How to get involved in showing

Yankee 2012 Spring Match 3-6 month bitches



How to get involved in showing

Some Reading:

The Winning Edge – Show Ring Secrets – George Alston

New Secrets of Successful Show Dog Handling – Peter Green

Show Me – Caroline Colie

Dog Showing for Beginners – Lynn Hall

Supplies:

A slip lead

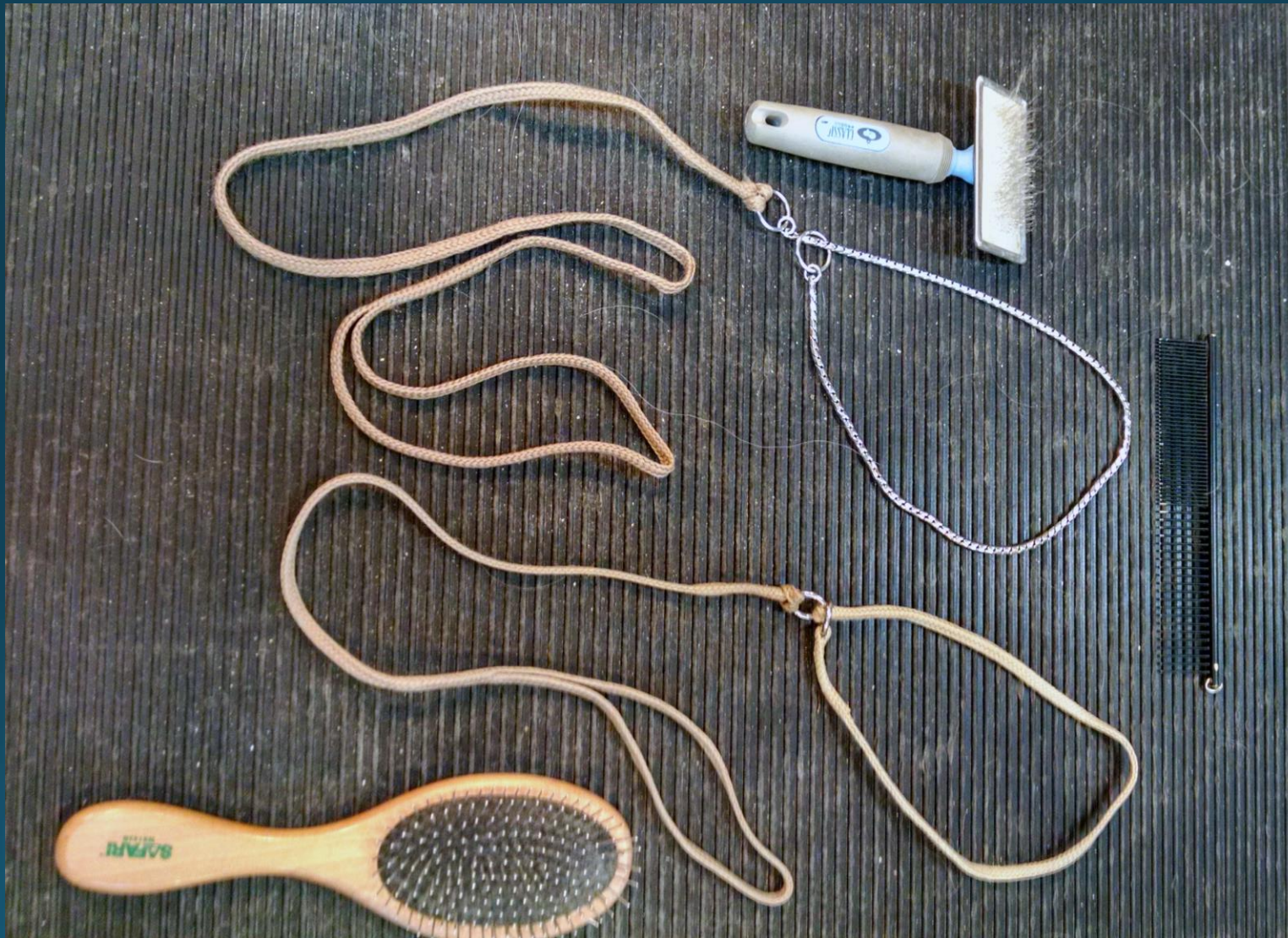
Presentable attire (Men – Sports Suit and Tie, Women – Dress or Skirt & Blouse).

Brush & comb (for the dog).

A dog that is washed, groomed dog and in good condition.

Supplies

Slip lead, brushes and comb



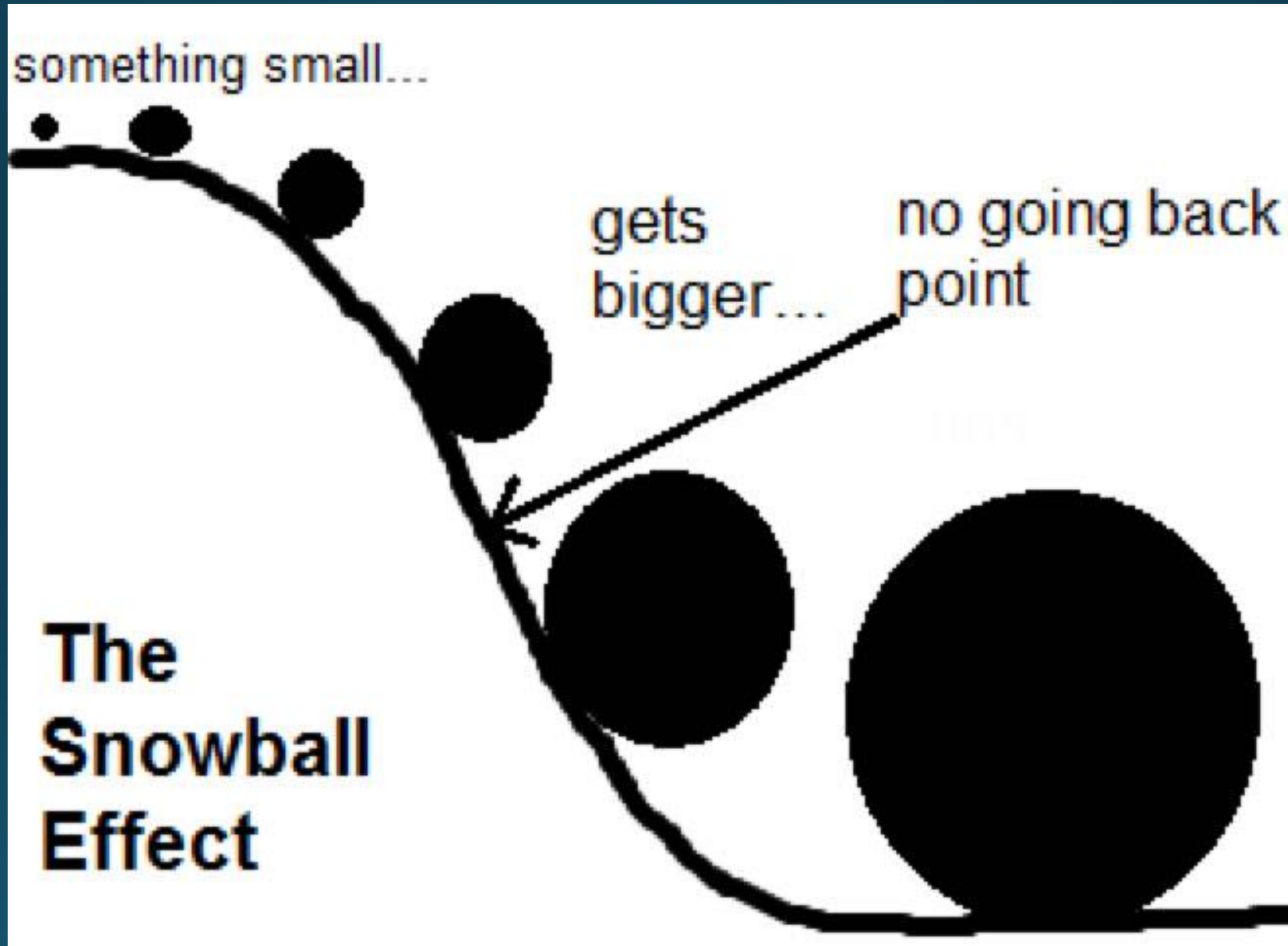
Supplies



Supplies



Supplies



Grooming

Grooming, like hairstyling is an art.

Tip: When learning it is best to practice on a dog that isn't going to be shown if available.

Online Resources:

Potomac Valley Golden Retriever Club website has a tutorial on doing the ears, feet and tail done by Joanne Lastoka. <http://pvgrc.org/grooming-your-golden/>

Seminars:

Occasionally Golden Retriever Clubs within the region host grooming seminars either done by members or professionals. Erik Strickland of Strickland Sensations does these seminars and also has grooming DVDs. <http://stricklandsensations.com>

Entering Dog Shows

Superintendents

Each show has a superintendent

For New England it is typically either MB-F Inc. (InfoDog) or RAU (Jim Rau Dog Shows)

A dog show superintendent is hired by a dog club's show committee to oversee the production of a dog show.

Responsibilities usually entail printing the premium list, taking entries, printing the show catalog, managing the setup and teardown of all of the tents, tables, rings, and other structures required to put on a dog show.

The business of superintending dog shows range from small family outfits to large companies. Dog show superintendents may operate only in a certain area or have the capacity to manage shows across the country.

Entering Dog Shows

InfoDog (MB-F Inc. Superintendent's website) provides a wealth of information
www.infodog.com

- Show Calendar of upcoming shows
- Downloadable premium lists
- Judging panels for shows
- Judge history look-up by breed
- On-line show entries
- Show results



The screenshot displays the InfoDog website interface. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with the following buttons: "Show Information", "Winners for the Week", "WABR", and "AKC Show Entry". The main content area features a horizontal row of buttons: "Show Calendar" (highlighted in red), "Enter an AKC Show", "Search Panels", "Judges Directory", "Judge Changes", and "Search by State". Below these buttons, the text "Show Calendar" is displayed in a large font, followed by "Check Results or View a Catalog". A paragraph of text describes the Show Calendar feature: "The InfoDog Dog Show Calendar provides results information for shows within the past 6 months and information on shows scheduled within the next 60 weeks. Results and Upcoming Shows information includes the show name and sponsoring kennel club information, the type of show, the show location city and state, and the show dates."

Entering Dog Shows

InfoDog
Show page
example



MB-F Show # 367 Holyoke Kennel Club, Inc. - Thursday November 20, 2014



General Club Info

Superintendent:
MB-F Inc.
P O Box 22107
Greensboro NC 27420
PHONE: (336) 379-9352 FAX:(336) 272-0864
<http://www.infodog.com>

Show Location:
Eastern States Exposition Grounds
1305 Memorial Ave.
West Springfield, MA 01089
[Area Map & Driving Directions](#)
[Local Weather Forecast](#)
[Check Local Gas Prices](#)

AKC Event #: [2014105511](#)
Event Status: Approved
Type of Event: [AB/O](#)
Show Date: Thursday 11/20/14
Closing Date: Wednesday 11/05/14
Entry Fee: \$29.00

Show Info:

- [Judging Panel](#)
- [Judge Changes](#)
- [Past Entry and Points](#)
- [Entry Breakdown](#)
- [Premium List \(PDF\)](#)
- [\(Full info\)](#)
- [Make an Entry](#)

Entering Dog Shows

InfoDog Show Entry Page

The screenshot shows the InfoDog Online Entry website. At the top left is the InfoDog logo. At the top right, there is a link for "My InfoDog Log In - InfoDog.com" with a question mark icon. Below the logo is a navigation menu with the following items: "Make an Entry" (with a sub-menu: 1. Read Rules, 2. Find a Dog, 3. Update Dog Info, 4. Select Show(s), 5. Enter Agent, Handler, 6. Select Class(es)), "Review Entries", "Check Entry Status", "Upload Photos (VDS)", "Review Rules", "FAQ", "Help", and "Contact Us". The main content area is titled "Find A Dog On File" and contains the following text: "Please use one or more of the following methods to select a dog. If you do not know if your dog is on file with us, try entering either the AKC number or dog's name, click 'Search for Dog', and we will check." Below this text are four search options, each with a text input field: "Enter an AKC number:", "OR Enter a Dog Name:", "OR Enter your Email Address:", and "OR Enter your Phone Number:". Each input field has a corresponding instruction: "Enter at least the first 6 characters of the name and we will find a match. Include CH titles if applicable." for the Dog Name field, and "We will find all previously entered dogs under this address." for the Email Address field, and "We will find all previously entered dogs under this phone number." for the Phone Number field. At the bottom of the search area are two buttons: "Search for Dog" and "Clear Fields". At the very bottom of the page is a copyright notice: "Copyright © 2005-2014 MB-F, Inc. All rights reserved."

INFODog

[My InfoDog Log In - InfoDog.com](#) ?

InfoDog Online Entry Tuesday November 11th 2014 9:59am EST

Find A Dog On File

Please use one or more of the following methods to select a dog. If you do not know if your dog is on file with us, try entering either the AKC number or dog's name, click "Search for Dog", and we will check.

Enter an AKC number:

OR Enter a Dog Name:
Enter at least the first 6 characters of the name and we will find a match. Include CH titles if applicable.

OR Enter your Email Address:
We will find all previously entered dogs under this address.

OR Enter your Phone Number:
We will find all previously entered dogs under this phone number.

Search for Dog **Clear Fields**

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Entering Dog Shows

Enter either via an on-line such as Rau or InfoDog or hand mail entries.

OFFICIAL AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB ENTRY FORM			
Please enter the name and date(s) of the show you wish to enter in the space provided below.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 367 Holyoke Kennel Club, Inc. - Thursday November 20, 2014 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 098 Windham County Kennel Club, Inc. - Friday November 21, 2014 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> # 623 South Windsor Kennel Club - Saturday November 22, 2014			
I Enclosed \$75.00 for entry fees. IMPORTANT -Read Carefully the <u>instructions</u> Before Filling Out. Numbers in the boxes indicate sections of the Instructions relevant to the information needed in that box. (PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY).			
BREED: GOLDEN RETRIEVER		VARIETY [1]	SEX: FEMALE
DOG [2][3] Bred-by Exhibitor Bitch		CLASS DIVISION [3] (Weight, Color, etc.)	
SHOW			
CLASS			
ADDITIONAL CLASSES		OBEDIENCE CLASS	JR. SHOWMANSHIP CLASS
NAME OF JUNIOR HANDLER (if any)			
FULL NAME OF DOG: STARHILL MAD ABOUT YOU			
Enter Number Here SR78308102		DATE OF BIRTH: 05/06/2013	
[X] AKC REG. NO.		PLACE OF BIRTH [X] U.S.A. [] Canada [] Foreign	
[] AKC LITTER NO.		[] Do Not Print Above in Catalog	
BREEDER: GREGG VON STERNBERG & MARGARET VON STERNBERG			
SIRE: GCH STARHILL DAYBREAK SPEAK TO ME IN RIDDLES			
DAM: STARHILL'S REDHOT CHILI PEPPER			
ACTUAL [4] OWNERS: GREGG & MARGARET VON STERNBERG OWNER'S ADDRESS: 182 LACY STREET CITY: NORTH ANDOVER STATE: MA ZIP: 01845			
NAME OF OWNER'S AGENT (if any) AT THE SHOW None			
ARE THERE ANY CORRECTIONS OR CHANGES ON THIS ENTRY? YES [] NO [X]			

Entering Dog Shows

After entries are processed.

The superintendent will:

- Send your entries with the number assigned to your dog and a copy of the judging program.
- Send a judging program telling you which ring you are in, your dog's number and judging time.

The day of the show.

Get to the show early enough to leave yourself plenty of time.

- If there are other dogs breeds in before you allow 2 - 2 ½ minutes judging time per dog but take into account that some dogs may be absent.

Showing your dog

At Ringside.

- Be on time. The judge won't wait for you.
- Get your number (armband) from the ring steward.
- Check the catalog to see how many dogs are entered before your class.
- If you win your class you will need to go back in for Winners judging.
- If you are 2nd in your class you need wait in case winner is 1st from your class, then you go back in for Reserve Winners.
- After judging of the breed is over you may want to have the show photographer take a win photo.
- Also check at the superintendent's table for the judge's sheets once posted to check for absentees so you can get a correct count of entrees for your win. (only dogs shown count, not entered).

Track your results and keep notes on your dogs and judges

Date	Event	Location	Dog		Judge	Class	Placement	Entry
6/24/2012	Penobscot Valley Kennel Club	Cumberland, ME	Riddle	MBF	Peggy Beisel-McIlwaine	BOB	Select	4-7(3-0)
7/1/2012	Wampanoag Kennel Club	Wrentham, MA	Riddle		William Cunningham	BOB	BOB	6-11-(5-1)
7/1/2012	Wampanoag Kennel Club	Wrentham, MA	JJ		William Cunningham	Open	4th of 5	6-11-(5-1)
7/4/2012	Naukatuck Valley Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	JJ		Terry M. DePietro	Open	n/a	15-17(4-3)
7/5/2012	Naukatuck Valley Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	JJ		Wendy G. Willhauck	Open	n/a	17-26(4-0)
7/6/2012	Kenilworth Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	JJ		Ann D. Hearn	Open	RWD	14-17(4-2)
7/7/2012	Farmington Valley Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	Riddle		Paula Hartinger	BOB	n/a	14-21(6-2)
7/7/2012	Farmington Valley Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	JJ		Paula Hartinger	Open	n/a	14-21(6-2)
7/8/2012	Holyoke Kennel Club	W.Springfield, MA	JJ		Loraine Boutwell	Open	3rd of 5	13-21(3-2)
7/28/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	Riddle		Valerie J. Brown	BOB	Select	5-11(3-0)0
7/28/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	JJ		Valerie J. Brown	Open	3 of 3	5-11(3-0)0
7/28/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	Jamie		Valerie J. Brown	6-9	2 of 2	5-11(3-0)0
7/29/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	Riddle		Michael Wiest	BOB	Select	5-12(3-0)
7/29/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	JJ		Michael Wiest	Open	3 of 3	5-12(3-0)
7/29/2012	Providence County Kennel Club	Kingston, RI	Jamie		Michael Wiest	9-12	1 of 2	5-12(3-0)
8/5/2012	Cheshire Kennel Club	Keene, NH	Riddle		Sue Sellers Rose	BOB	BOB	4-5(2-0)
8/5/2012	Cheshire Kennel Club	Keene, NH	JJ		Sue Sellers Rose	Open	BOW 1pt	4-5(2-0)
8/5/2012	Cheshire Kennel Club	Keene, NH	Jamie		Sue Sellers Rose	9-12	RWB	4-5(2-0)
8/24/2012	Northwestern Connecticut DC	W.Springfield, MA	Riddle		Nancy S. Cowley	BOB	NA	6-12(3-0)
8/30/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	Riddle		James G. Reynolds	BOB	BOS	3-6(1-0)
8/30/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	JJ		James G. Reynolds	Open	BOW	3-6(1-0)
8/30/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	Jamie		James G. Reynolds	9-12	1st	3-6(1-0)
8/31/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	Riddle		Joe C. Walton	BOB	Select	5-9(2-0)
8/31/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	JJ		Joe C. Walton	Open	BOW	5-9(2-0)
8/31/2012	Central Maine Kennel Club	Union, ME	Jamie		Joe C. Walton	9-12	1st BP SPG3	5-9(2-0)
9/1/2012	Mid-coast Kennel Club Of Maine	Union, ME	Riddle		Sue Goldberg	BOB	BOS	5-9(2-0)

Showing your own dog or using a professional handler

Dog showing is unusual as it is one of the few sports where amateurs and professionals directly compete.

The success of your dog in a show depends both on the dog's natural characteristics and its presentation.

What do handlers do?

A handler trains, grooms, conditions and shows dogs in conformation shows.

A handlers purpose is to finish a dog's championship, or if finished, to show it in the Best of Breed class as a "special".

Showing your own dog or using a professional handler

Attributes of a good handling

A good handler highlights the dog's best features and attributes, appearing to do so effortlessly. The dog will appear to be showing itself and the handler fades to the background.

Why show your own dog?

There is tremendous satisfaction in showing and winning with your own dog.

As an owner you have the advantage of knowing your dog better than anyone.

Why hire a professional handler?

For most professional handlers this is their livelihood and they must do it well to make a living.

A professional tends to go to many more shows so can potentially finish the dog quicker.

Showing your own dog or using a professional handler

Costs associated with showing dogs

(hypothetical example of a handler's rate sheet)

All Breeds	\$100/ show	All Breed Best in Show	\$500
Large or Coated Breeds	\$110/ show		
Ringside pickup(no groom)	\$110/\$125		
Expenses	\$ */show		
Board	\$15/day		
Specialty Show	\$150*	Specialty Best in Show	\$250
* plus actual expenses			
Group Handling	\$10		
Bath & Trim	as quoted	Group First	\$100
Airport Pick-Up	\$75	Group Second	\$75
Westminster	\$750 Breed/ Group \$100	Group Third	\$50
Benched Shows	\$150	Group Fourth	\$50
National Spec.	\$250 classes/ \$350 B.O.B.		

* Expenses include transportation, lodging, meals, and are divided among owners.

Showing your own dog or using a professional handler

Hiring a professional handler

Before hiring a professional handler, you should do your research.

- Talk to other owners who use handlers and get referrals.
- Watch how the handler and his help manage their dogs.
- Watch how the handler grooms and shows dogs and evaluate their skills.
- Once you find a handler you are interested ask for their contract and rate sheet.
- Keep in mind that this arrangement must work for both you and your dog.
- Be sure to have a written contract between you and your dog handler.

THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
ALL AUDIENCES

BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE FILM ADVERTISED HAS BEEN RATED



THE END

Questions?