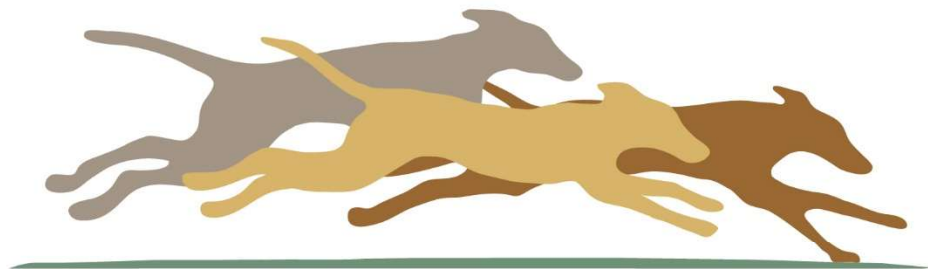


A GUIDE FOR HOUND SHOWS, PUPPY SHOWS, & PERFORMANCE TRIALS



MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA

————— *Promote ~ Preserve ~ Protect* —————

2026

A GUIDE FOR HOUND SHOWS, PUPPY SHOWS, & PERFORMANCE TRIALS



*Established 1907
Incorporated 1926*

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A GUIDE FOR HOUND SHOWS, PUPPY SHOWS, & PERFORMANCE TRIALS

The purpose of Hound Shows and Performance Trials is to promote interest in and provide information essential to the breeding of a pack of foxhounds. A Hound Show should provide the opportunity to gain knowledge in many areas, to evaluate the quality of hounds, and, by discussion, both formal and informal, to exchange ideas, not only about breeding and showing hounds, but also relating to many other areas that are essential to the sport of mounted hunting. The purpose of this pamphlet is to clarify rules and provide guidelines for recognized Hound Shows, Puppy Shows, and Performance Trials.

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I. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HOUND SHOWS

1. The Masters of Foxhounds Association of North America (MFHA), through its Board of Directors, the District Director, and the Hound Show and Performance Trial (HSPT) Committee, must give approval. These guidelines must be provided to each judge by the Show and Trial Committee.
2. All hounds exhibiting must belong to a Registered or Recognized pack, or approved "farmer pack", which is a member in good standing of the MFHA, and which has paid the hound show fee to the MFHA. Such hounds must be registered or eligible for registration with the MFHA.

The term "farmer pack" traditionally refers to farmers or hound owners who hunt their hounds in territory registered to a member hunt with the permission of the latter. There are no restrictions for member hunts concerning farmer packs.

3. To receive funding from the MFHA, all show secretaries must send one (1) prize list, by email, to the MFHA thirty (30) days prior to the closing date of the show. Upon receipt of said catalog (program), one-half of said show's allotment will be sent. The Executive Director of the MFHA determines and approves the allotments.
4. To receive the second half of the allotment, show secretaries must send show results, including results of the horn-blowing contest (if applicable) and pictures of the champions and the grand champion foxhounds, to the MFHA no later than two (2) weeks after the show.
5. A show must be held for two (2) consecutive years before applying for recognition or an allotment.
6. Show dates must be determined and approved by the MFHA so as not to conflict with the date of any other recognized show nearby. By **July 1st** of each year, a recognized show must advise the MFHA of the date and place of next year's show.
7. Adequate and secure kennels must be provided for hounds. Ringside kennels are suggested if overnight kennels are far from the show. A night guard is recommended at the overnight kennels.
8. A prize list and catalog (program) are necessary, but they do not need to be expensive.
9. Results of a recognized show will be published in the MFHA official publication, *Covertside*, the member newsletter, and/or on the MFHA website, and must include the full name and year of entry of each winning hound, the full names of their sires and dams, and their entry year. Photographs of winners must be sent.

10. Classes should include a minimum of the following in each division:

- a. Unentered Dog
- b. Entered Dog
- c. Stallion Hound
- d. Champion Dog
- e. Unentered Bitch
- f. Entered Bitch
- g. Brood Bitch
- h. Champion Bitch

Additional classes may include:

- a. Couple of Unentered Dogs
- b. Couple of Unentered Bitches
- c. Two (2) Couples of Dogs (Entered or Unentered)
- d. Two (2) Couples of Bitches (Entered or Unentered)
- e. Stallion Hound with two (2) or three (3) of Get
- f. Brood bitch with two (2) or three (3) of Get
- g. Pack Class of five (5) Couples of Hounds
- h. Shows are encouraged to include a Junior Handler Class and a horn-blowing contest.

11. Different breeds of foxhounds should be shown in separate divisions, but if the divisions do not fill, entries may be combined at the discretion of the Show Committee.

II. SHOW CONDITIONS

- 1. Show conditions must include this statement: "A Master exhibiting hounds in unentered classes certifies that they fully intend to enter these hounds at the proper time. Hounds in entered classes must have been hunted regularly."
- 2. Each show may establish additional individual regulations within reason. THE MFHA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO APPROVE SAID REGULATIONS.
- 3. A dress code should be stated and enforced, requiring white kennel coats for all exhibitors in the ring. A discreet hunt logo on the left breast pocket is optional. White shirts with a tie or choker are suggested. Bowlers are worn in the English division, and hunt caps are worn in other divisions. A show may require formal attire for special classes (i.e., the Pack Class). Inordinately hot, cold, or wet days may require alternative dress at the discretion of the Show Committee.
- 4. All classes for dog hounds should be held before classes for bitches.
- 5. The second-place finisher to the Champion dog or bitch in any division may compete for the Reserve Championship.

6. Rings should be enclosed with a fence at least 3 feet high and be a minimum size of 60 feet by 40 feet. A firm, stable, non-slippery surface not less than eight feet wide and sixteen feet long should be provided in each ring to show hounds on. Smaller divisions may be 4 feet wide and 16 feet long.
7. Show rings should be placed, when possible, in shaded areas. The ground should be as level as possible, and the grass cut short so that the feet of the hounds can be seen and hound movement is not impaired.
8. The Show Committee may specify whether hounds are to be shown on or off leads and state such preference in the prize list. We strongly encourage each Show Committee to allow hounds to be shown off lead. Each hound should be able to move freely during each class, whether on or off lead. Ample room should be provided so that handlers can move hounds easily, either loose or on a lead. In the case of a Hunt showing two (2) or more Stallion Hounds with Get in divisions where hounds are shown off lead, a total of two (2) handlers per entry are permitted. Two handlers per entry are also permitted in two couples classes.
9. Dry biscuits only are permitted, as the residue of liver, etc., distracts hounds.
10. In order to prevent exposure to diseases, including canine brucellosis, bitches in whelp, bitches that have whelped within the last 60 days, and bitches in season are not permitted on the grounds. This applies to all hounds and other dogs.
11. Dogs not entered in the show should not be permitted on the grounds.
12. A show may not change the published "conditions" of the show after entries close.
13. Shows wishing to include a class for Performance Trial winners must stipulate the following: "All of the above rules apply; however, hounds shown may have the prefix of another member Hunt so long as said hound belonged to the Hunt making the entry at the time of the Performance Trial win. Any hound competing in a sanctioned Performance Trial that scored and completed each day's hunting without elimination and placed in the top 10 in HGA (High General Average) is eligible. Entries must be from current season winners of MFHA-sanctioned Performance Trials."

III. PRIZE LIST AND CATALOG

1. A prize list stating the conditions of the show must be emailed *at least one month before the closing date*. The show's conditions and rules must be listed. *The closing date should be as close as possible to the show date.*
2. The show catalog (program) should repeat conditions stated in the prize list and must list all entries by division, showing name of hound, sex, year of entry, sire, and dam.

3. All Hunts showing must be a member in good standing of the MFHA, or an approved farmer pack, and must have paid the \$100 MFHA Hound show fee to participate in hound shows. Show secretaries must obtain verification of payment by calling the MFHA office before the Hunt is accepted for participation.
4. Any hound showing from a non-MFHA member Hunt may not compete for the Grand Championship at an MFHA-sanctioned show.
5. Each show may determine the number of entries per Hunt allowed in each class.
6. Conditions for substitutions must be clearly stated.

IV. JUDGES

1. It is required that at least one judge from the list of qualified judges provided by the MFHA be used in each ring at all MFHA-sanctioned shows. When there are two judges in a ring and one judge is not an MFHA-sanctioned judge, the MFHA judge will have equal or higher status. It is recommended that, when possible, an apprentice judge be given the opportunity to be in the ring with qualified judges. The qualified judges should be informed that the apprentice judge is inexperienced and is there only to learn. MFHA-approved judges are listed with their qualifications and contact information. That list is kept at the MFHA office. Each qualified judge must have prior experience apprentice judging several recognized shows and/or Puppy Shows under the supervision of a qualified judge. The HSPT Committee of the MFHA will decide when, or whether, an apprentice judge is considered a qualified judge. The Chair of the HSPT Committee will send a list of qualified judges to all show managers well in advance of the show.
2. The judge or judges for each division and the Grand Championship must be listed in the prize list and catalog (program). Apprentice judges should also be listed if known.
3. Shows that choose to use professional hunt staff as judges must notify a Master of his/her Hunt. Professional staff used as judges should be reimbursed for their expenses.
4. Judges must be provided with a clipboard and a separate sheet for each class, with the conditions for that class clearly stated at the top. If time permits, it is desirable for the judge to comment as to why he or she has chosen the class winners.
5. There should be no more than three (3) officials (judge or judges, and a ring steward) in the ring while judging is taking place, *unless an apprentice judge is present*.
6. Qualified co-judges should have equal rank unless both are MFHA-sanctioned judges and the show wishes to make one the senior judge.
7. When judges have equal rank, any judging dispute or failure to agree will be decided by the show management's designated judge brought in to make the final decision.

8. An apprentice judge should be given every opportunity to learn. The qualified judge will comment to the Show Chair at the conclusion of the show as to the apprentice judge's capabilities. The Show Chair must share those comments with the MFHA HSPT Committee Chair. Apprentice judges should pay their own expenses associated with the show.
9. Under no circumstances should a program or show catalog be consulted by a judge until after the show.
10. Judges' Attire: Professional attire is expected of all judges, with gentlemen required to wear a coat and tie, and ladies expected to appear in season-appropriate attire, which may include dress, a skirt with a blouse/sweater, or tailored trousers with a blouse/sweater, all of which should reflect the tradition and formality of the event.
11. MFHA-sanctioned shows shall not allow non-member Hunts to participate in MFHA-sanctioned classes, unless approved by the Chair of the HSPT Committee. Distinctly different classes with non-member Hunts and MFHA member Hunts may be allowed. However, the winners of those classes, if not an MFHA member hunt, are not eligible for Breed or Show Championships.

V. STEWARDS

1. A Chief Steward should be appointed by the Show Committee. The Chief Steward shall be responsible for all Stewards and have the final word in any dispute. Judges and Stewards should wear badges identifying them as such.
2. Stewards should meet with their respective judges and ask them if they wish to give their own orders to the exhibitors, or if they wish the stewards to do so.
3. Stewards should read the show conditions carefully and know the number of ribbons to be awarded.
4. In the championship class, all first-place winners of classes that qualify for the Championship should be called in. Once the champion hound has been determined, the hound placing second to the champion hound in the class, which qualified him for the championship, shall be called into the ring to compete for the Reserve Championship.
5. Two Stewards may be assigned to each division. No more than one Steward should be in the ring when the class is in progress. The same Steward should do either all dog classes or all bitch classes.
6. A Steward must count the hounds as they enter the ring and report to the judge when all hounds are present. The Steward must verify that each exhibitor is wearing the correct numbered armband for each hound being shown.

7. The Ring Steward should announce the ribbons, including the number and name of hunt and hound, beginning with first place, unless an announcer is present, in which case the Steward gives a signed judge's card, clearly marked, to the announcer.
8. The Steward's job is to ensure each class runs smoothly without distractions to hounds. Stewards should be alert to the wishes of the judge and follow his or her desires promptly.
9. Additional guidance for Stewards is available on the MFHA website at <https://mfha.com/hound-shows/>
10. Class results should be transmitted to the Clerk's tent and posted without delay after each class.
11. No one, other than exhibitors, is allowed in the ring during the judging of a class. Photographers can enter only for the presentation of trophies.
12. Stewards are responsible for choosing a suitable presenter of awards for each class in their ring. The presenter should be selected before the class starts.
13. The Ring Steward should have a shovel and rake to use as necessary.

VI. SECRETARIES

Duties:

1. Check and correct addresses in advance.
2. Send out prize lists at least thirty (30) days before the closing date of the show.
3. Receive entries. Make sure all entries are from Hunts that are members in good standing of the MFHA. Call the MFHA office to get verification before the Hunt is accepted to participate.
4. Check eligibility of entries with the MFHA Stud Book or via the MFHA website at <https://mfha.com/stud-book/>
5. Supervise printing of the show catalog (program).
6. Provide judges with a clipboard, a pen, and a separate sheet for each class, with the conditions of each class clearly stated at the top.
7. Send results and pictures of the overall Grand Champion of the show (best of show) and the Grand Champions of each division, with proper identification giving names, year of entry, and the sire and dam's names and year of entry, and horn-blowing results (if applicable) to the MFHA office.

VII. FOXHOUND ELIGIBILITY

1. In all foxhound classes at a recognized show, all entries must have been registered with the Keeper of the Foxhound Kennel Stud Book of the MFHA, or if unentered, be eligible for such registration.
2. An unentered hound, for show purposes, is defined as a hound whelped after *December 1st, two years prior to the show*. An entered (hunted) hound of this age may be shown as "unentered" but may not be shown in both entered and unentered divisions.
3. Show secretaries must verify registration of entered hounds by identifying the hound in the Stud Book, or on the MFHA website, under the correct American, English, Cross-bred, or Penn-Marydel classification and year of entry. *English hounds must be a minimum of 93% English, American hounds must be a minimum of 93% American, and Penn-Marydel hounds must be a minimum of (93%) Penn-Marydel to compete in their respective divisions.*
4. All show secretaries must check their entries on the MFHA Stud Book webpage to establish hound eligibility and to be sure that they are entered in the correct division. Contact the MFHA office if you have questions.
5. The show secretary needs only to determine that unentered hounds' sires and dams are in the Stud Book. *Except in special classes, which include non-member hunts, where their pedigrees would not be available in the MFHA Stud Book, all foxhound entries in all MFHA-approved classes must be owned by an MFHA Recognized or Registered Hunt, an approved farmer pack, or by the Master of such Hunt, at the time of the show.*
6. It is suggested that Hounds drafted from other Hunts, with the exception of unentered hounds, may be shown only in Stallion Hound, Brood Bitch, Pack, and Two Couple classes unless the show makes exceptions and it is so stated in the prize list and catalog (program). In any case, drafted hounds may participate in pack classes. If the show chooses to allow Hunts to show hounds that were drafted from another Hunt, the show must ensure all participants are informed well in advance.
7. Any dog hound shown in any class must have both testicles.
8. Foxhounds bred by a person, kennels, or organization, not primarily devoted to fox and/or coyote hunting, are ineligible to be shown at a recognized show.

VIII. SUGGESTED CLASSES

At a recognized show, it is customary, but not required, to have separate classes for each breed of foxhound (American, English, Cross-bred, and Penn-Marydel). It is recommended that at least three (3) places be awarded in each class. Classes may include the following:

DOGS

1. Single Dog, Unentered
2. Couple of Dogs, Unentered
3. Single Dog, Entered
4. Couple of Dogs, Entered
NOTE: A show may combine the couples classes without regard to age, but couples in such combined classes should be of the same sex.
5. Two (2) Couples of Dogs, Entered or Unentered
6. Stallion Hound, certified to be the sire of living puppies
7. Stallion Hound, shown with two (2) or three (3) of his Get. The Get determines which division the entry is shown in.
8. Champion Dog and Reserve Champion Dog (second-place finisher to the Champion Dog may compete for Reserve only).
9. Performance Trial: The top 10 high general average winners in any MFHA-sanctioned Performance Trial conducted in the last two years. Dogs and bitches are shown together.
10. Handlers class for children.

BITCHES

11. Single Bitch, Unentered
12. Couple of Bitches, Unentered
13. Single Bitch, Entered
14. Couple of Bitches, Entered (See note under 4, above)
15. Two (2) Couples of Bitches, Entered or Unentered
16. Brood Bitch, certified to be the dam of living puppies
17. Brood Bitch, shown with two (2) or three (3) of her Get. See # 7 above.
18. Champion Bitch and Reserve Champion Bitch (second place finisher to the Champion Bitch may compete for Reserve only)
19. Performance Trial: The top 10 high general average winners in any MFHA-sanctioned Performance Trial *conducted in the last two years*.
20. Handler's class for children

CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES

21. The prize list and Show catalog (program) should state clearly that the Dog Championship is open only to first-place winners of the Single Unentered Dog, Single Entered Dog and Stallion Hound classes. The Bitch Championship is open only to the winners of the Single Unentered Bitch, Single Entered Bitch, and the Brood Bitch classes. English judges should be made aware of this rule as championship qualification is different in England.
22. Eligible for the Reserve Championship are the winners defeated by the Champion hound and the hound placed second to the Champion in the class which qualified the champion for the championship.

GRAND CHAMPION OF THE SHOW

23. The best of Show Class is open to the overall Champions of all divisions (i.e., American, English, Cross-bred, and Penn-Marydel). If each division has a class for the Champion Dog and Champion Bitch only, the winners of those classes will compete for Best of Show.

PACK CLASS

24. The pack class shall consist of five (5) couples of hounds of either sex. *Drafted hounds may be shown in this class.* There may be separate classes for each breed, but a small show may have a single pack class open to packs of different or mixed breeds. Packs must be exhibited on foot by a huntsman and one whipper-in, dressed in kennel coats and hunt caps or in formal livery. The prize list and catalog (program) should specify the required attire. Show conditions and judges' sheets should also state guidelines for judging a pack class: (a. b. e. f.)
 - a. Judge as a unit.
 - b. Judge on uniformity, conformation, movement, and obedience of hounds to huntsman: A judge may request that hounds be moved with the huntsman over a specified course, which could include a small fence in a fence line.
 - c. Packs may be asked to be held by the whipper-in while the huntsman walks away, and after a reasonable period of time, calls them to him. Packs should not be required to leave their huntsman and follow the whipper-in.
 - d. The area for judging a pack class must be large enough to allow free movement and separation of the packs.
 - e. Huntsmen that don't use biscuits should have an advantage over huntsmen that use biscuits.
 - f. A happy pack with sterns up should have the advantage over the opposite.

IX. HORN-BLOWING CONTESTS

Every show should have a Horn-Blowing contest after the judging of hounds at the end of the show or the night before. It is very popular with attendees and encourages the improvement of this vital skill. Winners of each Horn-Blowing contest from recognized shows are eligible to compete in the North American Horn-Blowing Championship, sponsored by the MFHA.

1. Only huntsmen and professional or honorary staff are allowed to participate.
2. A prize of cash and/or a trophy is appropriate for first place. Three (3) places should be awarded.

3. Hold the contest in an area that maximizes the sound of the horn to the crowd.
4. Before each call, state the name of the call that will be blown. This helps to educate the audience. The judges should select three or four hunting calls to be blown, such as finding the fox, gone away, gone to ground, and going home (end of day).
5. Position the judges so they cannot see the participants when they blow.
6. Giving a number from one to ten for each of the calls simplifies judging.
7. Have two or three finalists have a blow off, if appropriate.

X. PUPPY SHOWS

A Puppy Show should be on a lower key than a recognized Hound Show. The purpose of a Puppy Show is to give experience to puppies, recognize puppy walkers, and to provide a pleasant day with hounds for members, landowners, neighboring hunt staff, and interested foxhunters. It is also an occasion to assess the overall quality and levelness of a kennel's breeding program. A Puppy Show can be in the afternoon or the morning. Try to avoid the heat of the day.

A Puppy Show should follow, in general, the rules and conditions of a recognized Hound Show, except that only unentered hounds are eligible to be shown.

1. The date should not conflict with a recognized show.
2. If the Puppy Show involves more than one pack, a prize list should be mailed in advance.
3. Entries can be either Post Entries or Advance Entries at the discretion of the Committee. Entries made in advance should allow liberal substitutions.
4. A program listing entries, their breeding, and puppy walker should be provided the day of the show.

A. SHOW CONDITIONS

1. The ring should be enclosed by a suitable fence and provide enough space for hounds to move freely. A plywood board covered in artificial green turf, or other non-slippery surface, should be provided. If shade is available, it is a major advantage on a hot summer's day.
2. If any of the packs showing travel from a distance, provide safe kennels and a ready supply of drinking water.

3. Even though a Puppy Show should be informal, a dress code is desirable. Kennel coats should be worn when exhibiting hounds. At the discretion of the Committee, hunting caps or bowlers need not be worn.
4. Judges should be chosen with care, and if possible, at some point during the show, they should give explanations of what they like to see in a hound. Professional attire is expected of all judges, with gentlemen required to wear a coat and tie, and ladies expected to appear in season-appropriate attire, which may include dress, a skirt with a blouse/sweater, or tailored trousers with a blouse/sweater, all of which should reflect the tradition and formality of the event. Both should wear a proper hat. A Puppy Show should be a learning experience for the audience.
5. Dogs should be shown before bitches. Whether hounds are to be shown on or off leads is left to the discretion of the Show Committee.
6. It relaxes the puppies to bring them all into the ring before being shown as couples (two at a time). This gives the judge an opportunity to assess the overall standard of quality before all dogs or all bitches are brought back in and eliminated one at a time, leaving only ribbon winners in the ring.
7. The show management should insist that bitches in season, bitches in whelp, and bitches that have whelped within the past 60 days not be allowed on the grounds because of the danger of exposure to canine brucellosis.
8. At a regional Puppy Show, different breeds can be shown separately if entries warrant.
9. An unentered hound, for show purposes, is defined as a hound *whelped after December 1st, two years prior to the show*. These are hounds, which have not yet been entered.

B. SUGGESTED CLASSES

1. Unentered Dog
2. Unentered Bitch
3. Champion Puppy
4. Handlers class (the handler's ability to show the hound). This class is to encourage children to show hounds.

C. SHOW MANAGEMENT

1. Show management personnel should include the following:
 - a. Chair
 - b. Secretary: takes entries and keeps results
 - c. Steward: one steward is sufficient if there is only one ring

- d. Stewards: manage the ring and give out ribbons
 - e. Grounds Crew: responsible for the ring and kennels
2. Ribbons should be awarded liberally to recognize as many puppy walkers and younger members as possible.
 3. The District Director, through the MFHA, can assist in selecting judges.
 4. After the classes are pinned, it is interesting to spectators to bring in the best working dog and bitch of the previous year's entry, followed by the best two (2) couples of working hounds in the pack.
 5. It is useful to involve as many people as possible in a Puppy Show, and a Fun Class with the younger members exhibiting hounds is an entertaining way to end the day.
 6. The inclusion of a class for puppies of the current year is a crowd pleaser.
 7. In conclusion, a Puppy Show, whether regional or confined to one Hunt, should be a happy affair. It is an opportunity for people to meet and discuss hounds, hunting, and to have a pleasant day together.

XI. PERFORMANCE TRIALS

1. The performance trial rules and regulations are posted on the MFHA website at <https://mfha.com/performance-trials/>
2. All Hunts participating in the performance trial must be a member in good standing of the MFHA, or an approved farmer pack, and must have paid the MFHA Performance Trial fee of \$75 to participate. Trial secretaries must obtain verification of payment by calling the MFHA office before the Hunt is accepted for participation.
3. Performance trials are eligible for up to a \$500 allotment per trial. To receive funding from the MFHA, the trial secretary must provide a copy of the trial results to the MFHA office within two (2) weeks following the close of the trial.