

## Golden Notes – February 2015

### Ring Etiquette

Going to classes helps you learn what to do as a team – the stacking, movement and the patterns. But do they cover any of the other “do’s and don’ts”? Many are unwritten and some could be deemed common sense courtesies.

First, try to watch the judge a bit before it is your time to go into the ring. You’ll see what sort of movement pattern they want, where to set up and if they watch the dog move all the way around at the end of the individual exam. Some want an initial setup to look over all the dogs in the class and others will check in and have everyone move around. Do they want everyone in catalog number order? If so, try to figure out where you are in the order. For example, if you are the last dog in the class, don’t stand right in the opening and block others from getting in.

Try to be on time and ringside for your class. If you have multiple dogs it can be difficult to quickly switch dogs and numbers (especially if you are alone), but try to have a friend there to help you out with the switch. If fellow exhibitors know you are there, they can save space for your dog in the lineup, so you can easily slip in and set up. Otherwise, if you have to squeeze in, you are forcing everyone after you to move and reset their dog.

Group movement is not meant to be a race; dogs should be moved at a moderate pace. If you are first in line, check with the person behind you and check to see if they are ready; a simple “ready?” while making eye contact is all that is needed after they have collected their lead and have readied themselves. If you are not first, make sure to allow a bit of space between the dog in front of you and your dog. Give the other one a second or two before you start out. Watch where the judge is actually looking AT the dogs and make sure your dog looks good there without running over your neighbor. Not every dog looks good at the same pace, so you need to be aware of your spacing so the movement looks smooth and fluid.

Don’t throw bait to get your dog’s attention when stacked (or overuse a squeaky). Learn to toss and catch a piece of bait (or small toy) with one hand. If you drop a piece of food pick it up right away as a ring littered with food can be dangerous – a dog diving for it can trip a handler or cause people to run into each other. Most judges don’t like it and if you toss it far enough to go out of the ring, most dogs won’t even see it and the spectator doesn’t appreciate getting hit with your liver. If you ever show in UKC, the judges are allowed to refuse the use of bait (food or toys) in their ring.

Be careful of what you say when ringside. The owner of the dog you just commented on could be right next to you. If you would be upset hearing someone say something similar about your dog, don’t do the same – think Golden Rule!

Actually, think Golden Rule for most of these. If any would be upsetting to you, don’t do them and upset a fellow exhibitor.