

VHDF JUDGE REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of the Versatile Hunting Dog Federation (VHDF) is to promote ethical hunting practices and conservation of game animals by enhancing the quality and ability of versatile hunting dogs through breeder and handler education, performance-based testing, and by facilitating continuing education and information exchange regarding health and genetics. To that end it is the job of the judges of each event to point out the strengths and weaknesses of each dog for the purposes of identifying genetically valuable breeding stock that can be matched with equally suitable mates that will produce a predictably high percentage of quality offspring. There are a significant number of unpredictable variables that may determine the performance of an individual dog during an aptitude level test; therefore, VHDF performance judges must pay particular attention to determining the aptitude of individual dogs in each subject being evaluated.

A. Basic Prerequisites for All Judges and Apprentice Judges

1. You must be a member in good standing with the VHDF.
2. You must be an experienced upland game and/or waterfowl hunter.
3. You must be thoroughly knowledgeable of the VHDF test rules.
4. You must be at least 18 years of age before applying.

B. Apprentice Judge Application Procedure

Each new judge candidate must complete an apprenticeship under approved VHDF Judges. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in the case of exceedingly well-qualified judges from similar organizations. This exception will only be granted if the VHDF Board of Directors is satisfied that the candidate has a full and complete understanding of the VHDF testing philosophies and rules. This apprenticeship will continue until the candidate can demonstrate the breadth of knowledge required to be an autonomous judge.

The applicant shall submit the items listed below to the VHDF Director of Judging, Barry Wild at PO Box 586, Hoodspout, WA 98548 or by e-mail to erine@hctc.com. 360-877-5693

Upon receipt of your resume and qualifications, the Director of Judging will review and report to the Board of Directors who will accept or deny the application.

1. Your experience with training, and handling your own dog in the HAE and AHAE tests, or equivalent.
2. Your experience hunting wild birds, including species and location.
3. List all the dog breeds that you have owned or trained, or have had experience with.
4. Any experience you have with breeding purebred dogs. Please include breeds, number of litters, and the different venues in which the pups have been evaluated.
5. Previous judging experience of any kind. Please include organization(s) and length of time you have been an approved judge.

6. One of the following reference options:
 - A. Three relevant references with phone number or e-mail address, or
 - B. A letter of recommendation by your breed club, or
 - C. A letter of recommendation from any other organization that has knowledge of your experience in handling and/or judging hunting dogs.
7. Before you can be approved as an apprentice, you must have owned, trained, and handled your own dog(s) in the HAE and AHAE tests, or equivalent. You must provide a copy of these test reports.

C. Basic Guidelines and Etiquette for Apprentice Judges

Each apprentice judge will be evaluated by the judging team at each test event using a 12-point score sheet with comment section, much like the score sheet used for evaluating the dogs.

1. No more than two Apprentice Judges are allowed per test.
2. Apprentice Judges are to report to the test grounds on setup day prior to the test, in sufficient time to meet with the Test Coordinator, Judges, and Field Marshal.
3. On the day of the test, the Apprentice Judge shall participate in the Handlers' Meeting.
4. The Apprentice Judges shall properly record the dog(s) performance in their scorebooks.
5. Apprentice Judges shall participate in any handler conferences with the approved Judges at the appropriate times after the conclusion of the tests. Apprentice Judges shall maintain full confidentiality of all discussions.
6. The Apprentice must also submit a written summary report to be included with their scorebook(s) to the Director of Judging after each completed test event.

The written report should cover the following:

- Test name and date and location
- Judges under which the Apprentice judged
- Scenting conditions for the day/weather
- Description of grounds/cover/condition of the fields and other elements of the test (water, etc.)
- Explanation of any strong agreement or disagreement with the Judges' consensus for any particular score
- Any situations that were unusual and a brief comment on any unusually poor or outstanding performances
- Anything in general that was notable

The scorebook(s) should be complete and include the following:

- The completed Apprentice Judge evaluation forms, which are located in the back of the scorebook
- Numerical evaluation of every dog's performance in each subject
- Notes regarding the performance of each dog
- A brief description of conformation including teeth and bite
- A detailed description of any temperament abnormalities

7. The Apprentice Judge agrees to uphold the VHDF Judge's Code of Ethics at all times.

D. Requirements to Become an Approved Judge

1. The Apprentice must have trained and tested a dog at the PE level.
2. The Apprentice must have met all stated requirements and guidelines.

E. Requirements to Maintain Approved Judge Status

1. Maintain membership and be in good standing with VHDF.
2. Meet any continuing education requirements.
3. Run a dog in at least one VHDF test every four years.
4. Judges are approved annually by the VHDF Board of Directors.

F. Other

No Judge or Apprentice Judge will judge a dog that he or she owns or co-owns.

G. Reinstatement of Inactive Judges

Inactive Judges may be reinstated at the discretion of the VHDF Board of Directors. Contact the Director of Judge Development for further information.

VHDF JUDGE'S CODE OF ETHICS

VHDF Test Judges, to the best of their ability, will uphold these high ideals as becoming of VHDF Judges:

- Be mindful and consistent with the philosophy and purpose of VHDF, its programs and tests.
- Portray a neat and appropriate appearance and manner.
- Refrain from gossip about individuals, dogs, or other Judges.
- Be mindful to be fair in judging the dog's performance, not the handler's personality.
- Set an example for which future Judges and participants will seek to aspire.
- VHDF judges are expected to exercise their judgment based on sound knowledge of hunting dog behavior, wildlife biology, and laws relating to hunting and animal care. VHDF judges should strive to educate themselves accordingly on an ongoing basis.