

# **QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR NCA WORKING JUDGES**

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In 2014, due to the NCA membership requests, the NCA board approved a process by which judges representing the NCA continue to demonstrate their excellence and commitment to the advancement of the sport of Working Events through a process of testing, experience, and judging assignments.

## **Requirements for all NCA Working Event Judges**

NCA judges take an open book test about the current NCA Draft or Water Test Regulations, Judges Code of Ethics, and Draft Equipment Guide (if applicable), every three years. Judges must demonstrate their excellence in knowledge of the regulations by scoring **94%** or above.

NCA provisional and partner judges must exhibit once every four years in their discipline. Mentor judges are exempt from these exhibiting requirements. Requalifications are allowed, and the exhibition does not need to result in a passing performance. However, for the exhibition to qualify for this requirement, the dog must be trained through the exercises, complete the test and participate in each of the exercises.

NCA judges, as part of their agreement to accept judging assignments, sign a contract agreeing to abide by NCA regulations and accept the NCA Judges Code of Conduct.

Judges at all levels are encouraged to continue their experience and education in dog sports.

Judges who meet these criteria are posted on the NCA website and are able to accept assignments. The lists are posted on the NCA website and are updated monthly to reflect changes throughout the year.

## **Qualifications for becoming a Judge and the Requirements to move up in judging levels**

*This information pertains to water and draft judges. Unless otherwise noted, qualifications and requirements are identical for both specialties. Applicants should apply the information to the specialty for which they are applying.*

### **I. Prerequisites to Judging**

Judging applicants must meet the following prerequisites:

1. earned two (2) WRD or DD titles.
2. earned one (1) AKC Companion Dog (CD) title.

3. worked as a test chair, test secretary, or chief steward.

In certain circumstances, where it may not be possible to serve in one of these capacities, a prospective judge may request approval from the Working Dog Committee (WDC) to “shadow” one of these three positions instead. Requests for the shadowing alternative should be made to the WDC observer judge contact person and must include a description of the circumstances that would prevent the applicant from holding one of the three required positions.

## **II. Shadowing**

If the shadowing request is approved by the WDC, the requirements and conditions are as follows:

1. If the potential judge is already an approved judge in one specialty, he/she will “shadow” one (1) of the required positions (test chair, test secretary or chief steward) for the entire day at one test of the specialty for which he/she is applying.
2. If the potential judge is not an approved judge in either specialty, he/she will “shadow” two (2) of the required positions (test chair, test secretary or chief steward) for the entire day at two (2) separate tests for which he/she is applying. When the shadowing alternative is approved, the WDC will provide the applicant an evaluation sheet(s) to be completed after each test by the chair, secretary, or chief steward mentoring the shadowing experience. The two judges at each test will also sign the evaluation sheet attesting to the active involvement throughout the test by the potential judge.
3. Test chairs, secretaries, chief stewards are permitted to exhibit at tests but those “shadowing” the position may not exhibit. To meet the “shadowing” requirement, the evaluation(s) must be very positive in nature and attest to the prospective judge’s active involvement throughout the test.
4. The prospective judge will submit the shadowing evaluation form to the WDC

## **III. Testing and Observations**

When the above-listed prerequisites have been successfully completed, the applicant will request the appropriate test (water or draft) from the WDC. The applicant will take this test as an open-book test. Upon completion, the applicant will return the test to the appropriate WDC contact for grading. The contact will notify the prospective judge, within two weeks of receiving the test, as to whether the test has been passed with a score of at least 94%. If the applicant does not receive a passing score, he/she must wait at least thirty (30) days before requesting another test. This will allow the applicant additional time to study the *Regulations and/or the Draft Test Equipment Guide and/or the Judges Code of Ethics*, as appropriate.

Once an applicant has passed a written test, he/she may contact a test committee of an upcoming test to ask permission to observe at that test. (Observers are not permitted at National Specialty tests.) The WDC will approve an observation provided the signature of the test chair has been obtained accepting the observer and the judging panel consists of at least one mentor

judge, combined with either another mentor judge or with a partner judge. The test committee will notify the judges that there will be an observer judge at the test. The appropriate WDC contact must receive the observation request at least thirty (30) days prior to the upcoming test to allow for approval to be sent back to the applicant. (Previously the judges needed to approve having an observer).

An applicant must successfully complete 2 observations with the following conditions:

- Each judge involved in the observation must provide positive written reviews.
- The observations must be in two (2) different locations and with four (4) different judges, using the criteria listed above for judging panels which are allowed to have an observer.

Applicants may accept a second assignment, before receiving the evaluation of their first assignment, as long as the second assignment is at least four weeks after the first assignment. The applicant will receive the results of their first evaluation from the chair of the WDC within four weeks of the assignment. If one of the evaluations is unsatisfactory the observer judge must do a third observation. The observer judge may not accept the next assignment until they have received the first two evaluations. If two out of three evaluations are unsatisfactory the observer must retake the open book test, speak directly with a member of the WDC, and start over in the process.

Following the completion of two successful observations, the WDC chair will advise the applicant that all requirements have been met successfully and that the applicant has been granted provisional judging status. The new judge's name will be added to the judges' list on the NCA Website and posted in e-notes. It is optional for the judge to add a brief biography and/or picture to the judges list.

During the observation assignment the observer judge will work with the judges as they judge the test. The observer judge will mark a set of judging sheets with their own notes and questions that they want to discuss with the judges after the test. Observer judges should fill out an observer evaluation form for the test explaining the areas in which they felt they were sufficiently mentored and areas in which they wished more mentoring had taken place.

## ***Requirements to move up in judging levels***

### ***Snapshot view:***

- **To move from Provisional level to Partner level:**
  - Must have judged at least three assignments at the Provisional level (a two day test counts as one assignment at the Provisional level)
  - Must have received at least two positive evaluations
  - Must have judged with at least two different mentor level judges
  - Must have judged at a minimum of two different sites
  - Must have exhibited a dog at least once every 4 years
  - Must pass an open book test once every 3 years
  - Must earn an additional title for a total of three (3) WRDs, or two WRDs and one NCA WRDX or three DDs or two DD's and one TDD or NCA DDX
  - Must complete an observation for WRDX and/or DDX**

- **To move from Partner level to Mentor level:**
  - Must have judged at least four assignments at the Partner level
  - Must have judged with at least three different judges at the Partner level
  - Must have judged at a minimum of two different sites at the Partner level
  - Must have judged for at least two different clubs at the Partner level
  - Must have exhibited a dog at least once every 4 years
  - Must pass an open book test once every 3 years
  - Water judges must earn an additional title for a minimum of four (4) WRDs or three (3) WRDs and one (1) NCA WRDX
  - Draft judges must earn an additional title for a minimum of three (3) DDs and one (1) TDD or two (2) DDs, one (1) TDD and one (1) NCA DDX.

### **Detailed view of how judges advance:**

#### **IV. Requirements for Advancement from Provisional Status to Partner Status**

After having met the requirements described above to attain Provisional status a Provisional Judge must meet the following requirements to advance to Partner Status:

1. A provisional judge must successfully judge a minimum of three (3) assignments **and complete an observation on WRDX and/or DDX** before moving to the partner level. A provisional judge may accept a second assignment, before receiving the evaluation of their first assignment, as long as the second assignment is at least four weeks after the first assignment. These assignments must be with at least two (2) different mentor judges and in at least two (2) different locations. At the first two (2) assignments, the mentor judging with the provisional will provide the WDC with a written evaluation of the provisional judge's performance. If one of these two assignments receives an unsatisfactory review, the third assignment would also be evaluated. Feedback from exhibitors will also be considered as part of the evaluation process by the WDC. A provisional judge will receive copies of these evaluations, together with the summaries of comments from the test. A provisional judge needs at least two positive evaluations to complete the evaluation requirements.
2. Following each of the evaluated provisional assignments, the new judge will be notified that the WDC has reviewed the evaluations/comments, and the WDC chair will advise the provisional judge of the status of the evaluations.
3. If the first two evaluations contain sufficient positive feedback, the provisional judge will be approved to continue judging without need for further formal evaluations. However, before moving to partner level, a judge must complete a third assignment with a mentor judge.
4. If two (2) out of three (3) evaluations are unsatisfactory, additional evaluations will be required as outlined in the Re-evaluation Procedure.
5. Provisional judges must exhibit a dog at least once every four years in whatever type of test is appropriate, water or draft. Requalifications are allowed, and the exhibition does not need to result in a passing performance. However, for the exhibition to qualify for this

requirement, the dog must **be trained through the exercises**, complete the test and participate in each of the exercises.

6. Provisional judges who are delinquent in the exhibiting requirement may not accept judging assignments. Their judging status will be flagged on the NCA Website until they have exhibited or passed an open book test (see #7 below).
7. Provisional judges must take an open book test about the current NCA Draft or Water Test Regulations, Judges Code of Ethics, and Draft Equipment Guide (if applicable), every three years. The test will be sent to one third of the judges list each year from the WDC. The test must be returned to the WDC within three months of receipt. If passed, by receiving a score of 94%, the judge's status will remain unchanged. If failed, the judge must take another test within three months. If the second test is failed or the judge does not return the first or second test within three months of receipt the judge's name will be removed from the judges list. If, after one year, the judge wishes to reapply to be put back on the judges list the judge must complete the open book exam or an exam on the judges code of ethics and sign a written contract to agree to follow the NCA judges requirements and judges code of ethics. When these requirements are completed the judge will return to the judges list at the same judging level previously held. If the same offense is repeated the judge will permanently be removed from the judges list unless the judge experiences a unique situation which will be judged on a case by case basis.
8. During the evaluated assignments the provisional judge will work with the mentor judge to judge the test. The provisional judge will mark a set of judging sheets but should also keep their own notes and questions that they want to discuss with the mentor judge after the test. Provisional judges should fill out an evaluation of the mentor judge explaining the areas in which they felt they were sufficiently mentored and areas in which they wished more mentoring had taken place.
9. Provisional judges are encouraged to continue their experience and education. See Section IX for suggested activities.
10. Once the provisional requirements have been fulfilled, a judge will move to partner level provided he/she has earned at least one additional WRD or NCA WRDX (the WRDX title may be on the same dog as one of their WRD titles) or DD/TDD/NCA DDX title (the TDD or NCA DDX may be on the same dog as one of their DD titles). A partner judge will have a minimum of three (3) WRDs, or two WRDs and one NCA WRDX or three DDs or two DD's and one TDD or NCA DDX, total.

## **V. Re-Evaluation Procedure for Provisional Judges**

1. If a provisional judge receives two unsatisfactory evaluations, his/her next judging assignment 1) must be with a mentor judge who is a member of the WDC or 2) must be observed by a mentor judge selected by the WDC. This mentor observer may or may not be a member of the WDC, may be a current or retired mentor judge, and may not be entered in the test. If this evaluation is satisfactory or shows improvement, the provisional judge may accept another assignment where this re-evaluation procedure will

be repeated. If this second re-evaluation is satisfactory, a provisional judge may move on in the judging process without further evaluation.

2. During the re-evaluation procedure, a provisional judge who fails to receive satisfactory evaluations or meet the standards expected by the WDC will be asked to attend a test and observe the test with a mentor judge selected by the WDC. Following this test observation, a provisional judge must repeat the re-evaluation procedure.
3. If after repeating the re-evaluation procedure the judge does not receive satisfactory evaluations, the judge will not be allowed to continue in the judging process and his/her name will be removed from the judging list.

## **VI. Requirements of Partner Judges**

1. Partner judges must judge a minimum of four (4) assignments. These tests must be with at least three (3) different judges, in at least two (2) different locations, and for at least two (2) different clubs. "Different" is defined as in any previous assignments on any level.

2. Partner judges must exhibit a dog at least once every four (4) years in whatever type of test is appropriate, water or draft. Requalifications are allowed, and the exhibition does not need to result in a passing performance. However, for the exhibition to qualify for this requirement, the dog must **be trained through the exercises**, complete the test and participate in each of the exercises. Partner judges who are delinquent in the exhibiting requirement may not accept judging assignments. Their judging status will be flagged on the NCA Website until they have exhibited or passed an open book test (see #3 below).

3. Partner judges must take an open book test about the current NCA Draft or Water Test Regulations, Judges Code of Ethics, and Draft Equipment Guide (if applicable), every three years. The test will be sent to one third of the judges list each year from the WDC. The test must be returned to the WDC within three months of receipt. If passed, by receiving a score of 94%, the judge's status will remain unchanged. If failed, the judge must take another test within three months. If the second test is failed or the judge does not return the first or second test within three months of receipt the judge's name will be removed from the judges list. If, after one year, the judge wishes to reapply to be put back on the judges list the judge must complete the open book exam or an exam on the judges code of ethics and sign a written contract to agree to follow the NCA judges requirements and judges code of ethics. When these requirements are completed the judge will return to the judges list at the same judging level previously held. If the same offense is repeated the judge will permanently be removed from the judges list unless the judge experiences a unique situation which will be judged on a case by case basis.

4. Partner judges are encouraged to continue their experience and education. See Section IX for suggested activities.

## **VII. Advancing from Partner to Mentor Status**

1. Water Judge: Once the partner requirements have been fulfilled, a water judge will move to mentor level provided he/she has earned at least one additional WRD or NCA WRDX title. A mentor water judge will have a minimum of four (4) WRDs or three (3) WRDs and one (1) NCA WRDX, total.

2. Draft Judge: Once the partner requirements have been fulfilled, a draft judge will move to mentor level provided he/she has earned at least one additional DD/TDD/NCA DDX title and at least one of the titles must be a team draft title. A team is defined as a minimum of two (2) Newfoundlands, at least one of which has not previously earned a team title. A mentor draft judge will have a minimum of three (3) DDs and one (1) TDD or two (2) DDs, one (1) TDD and one (1) NCA DDX.

## **VIII. Requirements of Mentor Judges**

1. Mentor judges are required to mentor observer, provisional and partner judges. It is their job to answer questions and be sure that the other judge understands and follows the NCA regulations, Judges Code of Ethics and Equipment Guide (when applicable). Mentor judges must work with observer and provisional judges at their assignments, go over the regulations, help them to understand test procedures and calls that are made at the test, explain paperwork and evaluate them in a fair and timely manner.

2. Mentor judges must meet with an observer or provisional judge after the end of the test to verbally evaluate their performance that day and explain to them what will be on their written evaluation. The evaluation must be received by the WDC within two weeks following the test. If not received a reminder will be sent to the mentor judge. If the evaluation is not received within two weeks of the reminder the judge will be moved to the partner level for not fulfilling the job of a mentor judge and will again be reminded to send the evaluation. If the evaluation is not received within two more weeks the judge will be removed from the judges list.

3. Mentors will no longer have the option of accepting an observer at a test. The committee will decide whether to accept the observer and will notify the judges.

4. Mentor judges must take an open book test about the current NCA Draft or Water Test Regulations, Judges Code of Ethics, and Draft Equipment Guide (if applicable), every three years. The test will be sent to one third of the judges list each year from the WDC. The test must be returned to the WDC within three months of receipt. If passed, by receiving a score of 94%, the judge's status will remain unchanged. If failed, the judge must take another test within three months. If the second test is failed or the judge does not return the first or second test within three months of receipt the judge's name will be removed from the judges list. If, after one year, the judge wishes to reapply to be put back on the judges list the judge must complete the open book exam or an exam on the judges code of ethics and sign a written contract to agree to follow the NCA judges requirements and judges code of ethics. When these requirements are completed the judge will return to the judges list at the same judging level previously held. If the same offense is repeated the

judge will permanently be removed from the judges list unless the judge experiences a unique situation which will be judged on a case by case basis.

5. If a mentor judge decides they no longer wish to mentor or evaluate observer and provisional judges they must notify the WDC and be moved to the partner level.

6. Mentor judges are encouraged to continue their experience and education. See Section IX for suggested activities.

## **IX. Continuing Education and Experience**

Judges at all levels are encouraged to continue their experience and education. Suggested activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Exhibit in tests.
- Steward or assist with the smooth operation of tests.
- Serve on a test committee.
- Attend continuing education seminars provided at National Specialties. A sign-up sheet from National Specialty seminars will be provided by the host of the seminar to the WDC for documentation in each judge's individual record.
- Read the Judges' Corner newsletter, which is designed to keep judges informed about the latest issues related to judging.
- Participate in regional working dog seminars as instructors, trainers, or trainees.
- Assist at as many working events as possible during the year, in addition to exhibiting and judging.
- Attend dog training seminars for a variety of dog related activities conducted by well-known trainers.

It is recommended that judges submit verification of their continuing education and experience to the WDC within six (6) months of participation. A form for reporting this information, which will be added to a judge's record, is available on the NCA Website.

Judges must also provide documentation of completing the exhibiting requirements.

Documentation of completing the requirements to move to the next judging level should also be provided within six (6) months of the events applicable.

## **XI. Reporting Requirements for Judges**

Judges must report the completion of required, ongoing experience at tests during the year, with details regarding exhibition requirements met, with examples of continuing education

opportunities and of documentation, including titles earned which support the move up to another judging level to the appropriate WDC contact who keeps the judging statistics. Each individual judge will be responsible for ensuring the WDC has the correct names of co-judges, dates of all requirements met, locations and club names, etc., for recording of their judging experiences and for titles earned. Judges will provide documentation of the above items within six (6) months of each event applicable.

An official form, created for this purpose will be used to record accomplishments and compliance with required exhibition or experience gained, or to advise the WDC that the judge has completed all requirements to move to a higher level of judging status. This form is available on the NCA web site. The form will be sent by each judge to the appropriate WDC contact keeping judging statistics and is available on the NCA Judges Corner website (see Judges Activity). Documentation of those in attendance at continuing education offered at National Specialties events will be provided to the WDC by the host of these National Specialty seminars. This documentation will be added to each judge's record.

The NCA website will be updated at least once monthly with transitions in judging status, to record judges who cannot accept judging assignments due to required exhibition requirements outstanding, as well as the names of judges who are able to accept assignments once again after any lapse. The WDC will also use the documentation provided by the judges to flag the names of all judges who have earned a Team Draft Dog, NCA WRDX or NCA DDX title.

## **XII. WDC Monitoring of Judges**

The WDC, as the monitoring and certifying body of NCA working events, also monitors judging performance. Entrant evaluations, WDC member observations, and member complaints about judges will be given thorough evaluation by the WDC.

Judges are asked to sign a contract with the NCA and the clubs with which they agree to judge tests stating that NCA regulations and code of ethics will be followed.

WDC members attending tests in any capacity may also speak to a judge after the test if they notice the judge not judging to the regulations. WDC members attending tests will also summarize the judging that they witnessed good or bad, to the WDC after the test.

Judges who are out of compliance with any part of the judge's agreements including knowledge of regulations, improper test procedures or who violate the NCA judges code of ethics when exhibiting or judging will be given opportunities for correcting deficiencies and additional judges education. This corrective/educational process will afford both the judge and the WDC due process as well as encourage dialogue regarding specific circumstances regarding complaints. Following that due process, measures to address these issues may include:

Written suggestions for correcting actions  
Educational retesting - out of cycle  
Required observation(s) by a member of the WDC  
Removal from the judge's list for a period of time

Should removal from the judges list be recommended, all documentation regarding deficiencies in judging will be forwarded to the NCA board for final review.

Individuals who have "self selected" to be removed from the judging list, by not returning their open book test, can be reinstated to their former judging level after the period of one year by requesting the test from the WDC, and successfully passing that test.

## Approval for Judging Panels

Test committees should consult the NCA website to aid in their judging panel selections. The following is the approval process for judging panels only. Tests also need to follow site approval processes outlined in the regulations.

- The NCA WDC strongly encourages committees **not** to use the same judges often and not to always use a mentor/mentor judging panel or the same combination of judges. Committees are encouraged to use a wide variety of judges. When asking a mentor judge to judge a test ask them to recommend a partner or provisional judge with whom they would like to judge.
- Judging panels for Water or Draft tests consisting of Mentor/Mentor or Mentor/Partner, Mentor/Provisional or Partner/Partner judges will receive **automatic** approval from The Working Dog Committee.
- In rare circumstances, a partner/provisional judging panel be approved by the WDC.
- Only in emergency situations would a panel consisting of two provisional judges be approved.
- For a Draft Test judging panel to be approved, at least one (1) of the two proposed judges must have earned a Team Draft title, as defined in this document. Those Draft Test judges who have earned a Team Draft title will be designated on the NCA website, so that the test committees may make appropriate selections.
- For a Water or Draft Test to have an observer approved to join the judging panel, that panel must be made up of mentor/mentor judges, or of mentor/partner judges. Only one observer is allowed at each test. Those judges who have an observer with them are **required** to submit their evaluation of the observer within two (2) weeks of the test so that the observer may be promptly notified of his/her status by the WDC. (see VIII, #2)
- Observers are not allowed at tests held in conjunction with a National Specialty.

- **An NCA WRDX test judging panel** must consist of two Mentor judges, Mentor/Partner judges or Mentor/Member of the WDC who is a water test judge of any level.
- An NCA DDX/TDDX test judging panel must consist of two Mentor judges, Mentor/Partner judges or Mentor/Member of the WDC who is a draft judge of any level.