

Basset Hound Club of America  
Board of Directors  
2/6/08

Subject: Proposal to make the use of the ramp mandatory for judges

Dear Board Members;

Please consider some thoughts I've had concerning the proposal for mandatory ramp use by all judges. I have read Kitty's article which covers very valid considerations. I personally prefer to use the ramp both as an exhibitor and when judging.

I think one of the most valuable and important functions of Judges' Education is to make judges both knowledgeable and comfortable with Bassetts. Above all, hoping their comfort level lets them appreciate this wonderful hound. That said, we have a lot of work to do and must always be ambassadors and "promoters" of our breed. The fact is, 20% of the judging community does 80% or more of the judging at AKC shows. Another unfortunate fact is that Bassetts are not among the most popular breeds among judges.

Please consider the reasons why no other ramp eligible breed was enthusiastic about this proposal. Having judged for 20 years, I assure you that in so many circumstances the use of the ramp creates an obstacle to judging rather than an enhancement. I recently had an assignment of 160 dogs in five different rings in a very large multi-building complex. (This is becoming more common.) I had several breeds that were ramp eligible (but not in consecutive order) in my junior assignment. There was a ramp available. However, there was no place to leave the ramp in the ring without compromising safety of the exhibitors. My steward was not physically able to help me carry the ramp in and out of the ring and it's always a two person task. I had already had to take time to go to the restroom to wash my hands after a dog had relieved himself into my hand and all over the table. (I needed soap - a wet one wouldn't do!) The rest of the scenario is to keep in mind the time allotted to judge, and that each delay backs up the next judge and causes him to need to make up time. The judge who backs up the judging process is not appreciated by his fellow judges or the superintendents, handlers and exhibitors. If you want to give consideration to every exhibit, a few minutes here and there (ramp set up and removal) becomes an irritant and even a financial liability to all. Consider that the judge who has only a few Bassetts and has been judging them on the floor for many years will not appreciate the mandatory ramp rule - and be less enthused about Bassetts. I'm sure everyone has had the experience where the judge tells you not to bother stacking your dog, reaches down and pats them on the head, never examines them, and tells you to take them around the ring, out and back, and points. Your option is not to show to them again. There are quite a few of them, and even more who go through the motions of examining your Bassetts but can't wait to get through the breed. I sincerely feel the mandatory ramp rule would make our breed even less popular than it is now.

All of the points Kitty made are accurate and stipulate why AKC will have difficulty with this and the show superintendents will have even more disgruntlement. My comments may seem cynical, but please consider them. I would suggest that you submit a simple questionnaire to the *Judges Newsletter* and request input on and reception of this proposal from the judging community before proceeding further. I feel sure that in significant Basset entries in the classes, most judges will gladly use a ramp as they do for Specialties, but may feel strongly about any effort to *require its use under all circumstances*.

Sincerely,

Barbara Cromley