

NOHS Policies and Best Practices

The purpose of the AKC National Owner-Handled Series (NOHS) is to recognize and showcase the quality dogs being exhibited by owner/handlers and to provide a venue for the owner/handlers to compete against their peers. The determination of the awards in the AKC National Owner-Handled Series is based solely on the quality of the entry. The owner/handler's handling ability is not of consideration.

Policies

General:

- Dog must be marked as eligible to compete in the AKC NOHS prior to the closing of entries.
- There is no additional fee to enter this competition.

Eligibility:

- Professional handler is defined as any person who belongs or has belonged to a professional handlers' organization, distributed rate cards, or otherwise advertised or represented themselves as handling dogs for pay within the last five years. Eligibility restrictions apply to all members of the same household.
- Household members and current assistants to professional handlers in conformation are not eligible to exhibit in this competition. A current assistant is defined as anyone employed by a professional handler on a full-time basis, or assisting a professional handler at the show or any show during the cluster/weekend. Eligibility restrictions apply to all members of the same household.
- Dogs must be handled by an eligible owner/handler for the AKC NOHS throughout the breed level (all classes, Winners, and Best of Breed) competition. Additionally, dogs must be handled by an eligible owner/handler for all AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition (Group and Best in Show). Any person may exhibit the dog in the regular Group and Best in Show competitions.

Judging:

- Any judge approved (including permit judges) for at least one AKC breed may judge the AKC NOHS.
- A judge may not exhibit on the day of their assignment and may steward **after** their judging assignment is complete. If a judge has regular class assignments on the same day/weekend/cluster as an NOHS Group assignment they are held to the policy applicable to regular judges in that you may only steward **after** your entire judging assignment is complete.
- A single judge should not be used to do all the NOHS Groups & Best in Show

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- A judge should not be assigned the NOHS Group *prior* to judging that same group for the all-breed show.

Judging Procedures

Determining Exhibitor Eligibility

The first step in judging the AKC National Owner-Handled Series is determining exhibitor eligibility. Follow these tips to properly make the eligibility determination:

- Exhibitors must declare their dog AKC National Owner-Handled Series eligible at the time of entry using the check box on the entry form.
- The handler must be an owner of record according to the AKC's records as of the date of the show.
- Dogs declared eligible will be identified by an asterisk or other representative mark in the judge's book, steward's book, and the show catalog.
- Professional handlers, household members and current assistants to professional handlers may not exhibit. A current assistant is defined as anyone employed by a professional handler on a full-time basis, or, assisting a professional handler at the show or any show during the cluster/weekend.
- Dogs must be handled by an owner-handler eligible for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series throughout the breed level competition for the regular show. This includes the class competition and subsequent competition in the breed ring. Additionally, dogs must be handled by an eligible owner-handler for all AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition.
- The Owner-Handled Best of Breed will be selected from the eligible dogs that competed in the Best of Breed/Variety competition for the regular show. This includes Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, and the undefeated winners of the non-regular classes. This excludes all dogs defeated during class and winners competition for the regular show.

Determining Best of Breed/Variety

Breed judging for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series is conducted following Best of Breed judging in each breed ring. All dogs in the BOB competition (including WD & WB) will stay in the ring after the judge makes their placements in BOB competition. The ring steward will ask all professional handlers, household members of and current assistants to a professional handler, and any exhibitor that did not indicate on their entry that they were eligible for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series to leave the ring and then the judge will then select the Owner-Handled Best of Breed. A dog being "cut" or otherwise "defeated" in the Best of Breed ring remains eligible to compete in the AKC National Owner-Handled Series. The Owner-Handled

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Best of Breed will be selected from the eligible exhibits based on the program guidelines and procedures.

Judging of the breed/variety for the regular show may determine the dog that is awarded Owner-Handled Best of Breed. Please follow these guidelines:

- If the Best of Breed/Variety winner of the regular show is eligible for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition, it will also be awarded Owner-Handled Best of Breed. In this case the dog will be eligible to compete in group competition for the regular show and group competition for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series.
- If the regular show Best of Breed/Variety winner is not eligible for AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition and the regular show Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed/Variety is eligible, the regular show Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed/Variety will compete against the eligible exhibits of the other sex to determine Owner-Handled Best of Breed.
- If neither the Best of Breed nor the Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed/Variety from the regular show is eligible for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition and both the Select Dog and Select Bitch are eligible, the judge is to choose Owner-Handled Best of Breed from the Selects and any eligible Winners Dog or Winners Bitch.
- If one of the Selects from the regular show is eligible for AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition, excuse all eligible champions and non-regular class winners of the same sex and then choose Owner-Handled Best of Breed from the remaining eligible dogs of the opposite sex including the eligible Winners.
- If the regular show Best of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed, Select Dog & Select Bitch are not eligible, the judge may choose any eligible dog who competed in Best of Breed including Winners Dog or Winners Bitch as the Owner-Handled Best of Breed.
- If no dog remaining in the ring is eligible for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition, Owner-Handled Best of Breed will not be awarded and the breed/variety will not be represented in group competition for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series.

Group and Best in Show Competition

Some guidelines for judging Group and Best in Show competition for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series:

- Eligibility should be checked before each level of AKC National Owner-Handled Series competition. In the Group and Best in Show competition, special attention must be paid to

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the requirement that dogs must be handled throughout the competition by an eligible owner.

- Group judging for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series may take place in separate rings from regular group judging. It is recommended that the group judging for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series begin at least thirty minutes prior to regular group judging. Judging may be adjusted to prevent any delays or interference with the regular group judging.
- Judging for the AKC National Owner-Handled Series Best in Show may take place prior to or after regular Best in Show judging.

NOHS Best Practices

Clubs have had great success offering the NOHS when they use a combination of these best practices.

Preparation

- Identify a club representative who will be responsible for coordinating the NOHS. The representative should have a solid understanding of the NOHS and how the club can successfully offer it.
- At least two weeks prior to the date of your show, notify your ring stewards that your event will be offering the NOHS and provide them information on how to successfully execute the program.
- Dedicate a page in the premium list for the NOHS. Explain the basics and reference the AKC website (<http://www.akc.org/ohs/index.cfm>) for more information. Point out that there is no additional cost, but exhibitors must indicate on their entry that they are eligible for the NOHS. Superintendents have standard verbiage that can be used.
- Trophies are optional, but clubs are encouraged to offer the same size rosettes as offered for the regular groups.
- The best chance of increasing entries and providing exhibitors with the most additional opportunities to compete is by offering the NOHS on all days of conformation competition.

Judge Assignments

- To avoid conflicts at the show, a judge should not be assigned the NOHS Group *prior* to judging the same group for the all-breed show (*see NOHS Judging Policies*). Clubs can further avoid conflicts by not assigning any of the regular show groups to judges assigned to the NOHS Group.
- Use a judge approved for at least one, and preferably many, breeds within the group. Remember that only AKC judges that are approved for at least one breed are allowed to judge the NOHS.

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- Do not assign the same judge to judge a breed, the NOHS Group for that breed, and NOHS Best in Show.
- A single judge should not be assigned to judge all the NOHS Groups and NOHS Best in Show (see NOHS Judging Policies).
- Notify the judges prior to the event that they are scheduled to judge the NOHS Group(s) and/or NOHS Best in Show. Including the information in the judge's contract or the club's hospitality letter to the judge is recommended.

Scheduling

- Schedule the NOHS Groups to start at least 30 minutes prior to the judging of the regular group judging. If you can schedule the NOHS Groups to start even earlier, consider doing so. This will help avoid conflict situations between the judging of the regular and NOHS Groups.
- Schedule the judging for the NOHS Group prior to the regular judging of the same group in the regular show. This minimizes the appearance of pre-judging and allows many owner-handlers to complete their competition earlier in the day.
- For maximum recognition of the NOHS, schedule the NOHS Best in Show just prior to the Best in Show judging for the regular show.

Day of the Competition

- A briefing should be held each morning by the club to refresh club members, judges, and stewards regarding the NOHS procedures.
- If an AKC Executive Field Representative is attending your event, the club representative for the NOHS and the Show Chair should work with them at the event to ensure the smooth and orderly operation of the NOHS throughout the day.
- Use larger rings for the NOHS Group competition. With the growth of the NOHS, it will become necessary to convert two adjacent rings into one large ring like is done for the regular groups.