

The Latest from the JGHV Director of Testing (3/2023)

Becoming a Judge is not difficult - but actually being a Judge is!

A nice saying, but is it really like that in practice? Is it really not that difficult to become an Association Judge, or are the hurdles higher than some people expect? Is it more work than expected, is the way more difficult, and time-consuming? I think it is not the path, with all its requirements, regulations, guidelines which must be observed, no it is often the lack of hunting experience which some people are missing. Added to this, we or many "old hands" are constantly telling our young apprentices that they lack hunting practice, especially hunting practice on small game. Before we make a statement about this, shouldn't we carefully consider how this misery, this poor small game population in some places, came about?

There are certainly many factors responsible for this. Nevertheless, we must try everything to show our new generation, the dog handlers and Association Judges, the right way and support them in their career as an Association Judge. This does not mean that we constantly tell them about the "good old times" and constantly rave to them about how great it all used to be. The Association Judge or the Judge Apprentice often has it harder than it was many years ago.

The Association Judge or Judge Apprentice of today, must judge dogs, which have often had few opportunities to prepare in the field, which were sometimes also poorly or incorrectly prepared and trained and at the test itself, to top it all off, often lacked sufficient numbers of small game. I do not want to further elaborate on all of this, or share additional factors, but we must find a way to support our next generation, whether as a dog handler or Judge Apprentice, at the present time, with today's hunting conditions, with today's incidence of small game.

The question is always who assumes responsibility for these tasks, who is in a position to take these dog handlers by the hand and show them the way? In concrete terms: to give them the opportunity of shaping/training their young dog in the field. Who has the game in their fields, who has the experience, and who has the time? It is certain that we still have people in our circles who are competent to do this and who actually do it.

But let's get back to the training of the Judge Apprentice, our next generation. Of course, the training itself is governed by the Regulations for Association Judges. Much more important is the support by us, by the Association, by the Director of Judge Development and by the respective Senior Judge of a test group. This path begins with the Introduction to Judging Seminar of the JGHV, where since January 1, 2023, participation or registration is only possible through the respective JGHV Landesverband.

The second step is then the application to become a Judge Apprentice. Here the sole(!) responsibility lies with the club, the Director of Judge Development and not with the JGHV. Those responsible must check if all the requirements have been fulfilled. However, they also have the duty, if the personal aptitude does not correspond to what we expect from an Association Judge, to reject the application or not to submit it. Then, on the way to becoming an Association Judge, many other people are obliged to ensure that the path is correctly laid out. For example, the Director of Judge Development has to accompany the Judge Apprentice on their way, support them with all their questions and make sure that all the appropriate deadlines (tests/Judges' seminars, etc.) are met.

The most important task with the greatest responsibility, however, is entrusted to the respective Senior Judges at the tests. Those who shirk this duty and think that the training of the Judge Apprentice is just an annoying add-on to the test, have missed the point and are damaging the hunting dog system of the future. So, we all have to take a little more time to put the training of Judge Apprentices on the right track.

This also includes giving jobs to the Judge Apprentices and involving them in the test proceedings. To involve them in the preparation of the test, in the chip inspection, in the determination of physical defects and to challenge them in the evaluation of the individual work and test subjects. We must take time to explain everything to them in detail. We must support them throughout the test, show them that we are a team, but we must also challenge them in their duties and always follow the path of the 7 "F":

„Find" (*Finden*), find the right new talent.

"Foster" (*Fördern*), offer them all the support and help they need.

"Challenge" (*Fordern*), yes, that is also part of it, give them tasks and always involve them in what is happening.

"Give feedback" (*Feedback geben*), one of the most important elements - feedback - no matter what it looks like - talk to each other.

"Celebrate" (*Feiern*) is also important. Celebrating together in an enjoyable atmosphere, discussing matters, and having fun. But both sides have to be willing to do this and take the time.

"Fire" (*Feuern*) is certainly not the most pleasant part of the 7Fs, but it is also part of the process.

If we Association Judges determine that the person or persons do not fit into the team, that they are not on the same wavelength, then we must part ways with them.

"Show fairness" (*Fairness zeigen*) This should actually be a matter of course, from all sides and from all persons involved.

We are training the Association Judge of the future - our next generation of judges who will one day carry on our work, ideally in our spirit. During the

training we should also consider that we are training the Judge Apprentice who will possibly judge our dog one day.

Whoever complains today or later about the new generation of Association Judges, should carefully consider whether they themselves have correctly accompanied young dog handlers and young Judge Apprentices/Association Judges on the way. Let us celebrate every young person, hunter, and dog handler, who follows this path. We need them, especially at the present time. Our hunting "ship" is increasingly under fire, and we can only keep it on course together!

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