



4-H Showmanship

DOG PROJECT SUPPLEMENT



Acknowledgements

This 4-H Dog Showmanship Supplement was written and compiled for 4-H by the following member of the Colorado 4-H State Dog Advisory Committee:

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

What you need to
know to be ready
for Showmanship.

Be sure to study the study guide
questions to be prepared for the
test for your age group.

“Showmanship is for everyone who loves dogs.”

The purpose of the 4-H dog showmanship class is to emphasize the ability of the handler to show the dog, not the conformation or breeding of the dog. In this class, the handler is being judged and not the dog. Regardless of the kind of dog you have, mixed breed, purebred, large, or small, or any other description, showmanship is a good opportunity for everyone. The art of showmanship is the skills and techniques a handler uses to exhibit and emphasize the favorable and strong characteristics of the dog and to de-emphasize any of the less favorable characteristics.

Though the dog is not being judged, it is a lot easier to show a well-trained dog in good condition than to show one that has been neglected. A good competitor enters a contest as well prepared in advance as possible. This must be done months prior to show time. Practice is the key.

Learn About Your Breed

Every breed is different and therefore, it is a must to find out how your dog would be shown in conformation before you show your dog. The best way to find out how to show your breed is to study the breed standard and pictures of your breed of dog. Ask your leader, 4-H specialist or show superintendent for help. Talk to a reputable breeder.

Take note of how your breed's feet are placed and how the head and tail are held. If you're watching a class of dogs, notice how fast the dogs are moved and how the handler holds the lead. Many breeds are shown differently. You will need to gait your dog at a speed that makes your dog move its best.

If you have a mixed breed dog, choose the breed your dog most resembles. Learn about that breed. For example, a cross between a poodle and schnauzer should be shown as the breed it looks like. Show the dog as that breed.

Handling Tips

- If possible, never get between the judge and your dog. Be alert and attentive.
- Fold the excess lead **in** the palm of your hand with your hand in a fist leaving no excess. The leash should never dangle from your hand.
- Always keep one eye on the judge.
- Answer the judge clearly and politely.
- If you don't understand a command, ask the judge to repeat it.
- Don't talk with those in front or back of you or someone outside the ring.
- Dogs may be baited to get their attention if the judge allows bait. Remember not to disturb other dogs in the process.
- Avoid fidgeting.
- Stay focused on your dog and the judge. Keep your dog stacked unless the judge tells you to relax. If a foot moves, correct it right away.

Preparing Your Dog

The dog must be freshly bathed, be clean, have no matted fur, dirt, or parasites. Coated dogs must be brushed thoroughly and regularly to prevent matting. No artificial coloring is allowed. (You may use grooming powder, but it must be completely brushed out.) Nails may be cut regularly to prevent the quick from growing too long. They may not be sharp, rough, or touching the ground. If they are too long, they will affect foot position or movement. Be sure to trim the hair between pads.

Teeth, ears, and eyes must be clean. Clean teeth often to prevent tarter buildup. Keep ears clean to prevent infection. Whiskers, if trimmed, must be done neatly.

Grooming should be done throughout the year. All breeds, even the shorthaired ones, require some trimming of their coat. Ask your leader, 4-H specialist, a groomer, or your breeder about breed specific grooming.

You and your dog are a team. Make sure your dress follows the 4-H dress code. Your outfit should not distract the judge nor take away from the appearance of your dog.

Choosing a Show Lead

It is possible to use your obedience leash and collar for showmanship, but it is not a good idea. If you always use a showmanship lead, your dog will learn the behavior that goes with that equipment.

There are several different kinds of show leads. The main difference between them is the amount of control they give you. All of the leads are okay for any breed, although some are more commonly used than others. Be sure to use a lead that you can hide the excess length in your hand.



Slip Lead and Martingale are leash and collar combinations. These leads give a fair amount of control and usually are the best choice for a small to medium dog. They also work well on some big dogs. These leads come in various lengths and colors. On some Martingales, the collar section may be

made of chain. This gives even more control. When you buy a martingale lead, make sure that when the leash is pulled tight, the two metal rings do not touch.

Collar and lead have two separate parts, the collar, and the leash. The collar is a slip collar similar to those used in obedience. It usually is made of fine chain or nylon. Leads come in different lengths and are made of nylon or thin leather. This combination is the best choice for a medium or large dog.



Humane Choke or Snake Chain is a collar that can be used on hard to handle dogs. It is used in combination with the leashes mentioned above. It pulls and releases equally well from both sides.

When you choose your leash and collar, try to match the color to the dog. A hot pink or electric blue leash and collar will distract the judge from watching your dog.

Basics of Showmanship

As discussed, know your dog's breed. It is important to present your dog in a manner that is considered proper breed presentation.

The handler is being judged on their skill in presenting the dog. The judge will note how you execute ring procedures.

The appearance and conduct of the dog and the handler will also be noted by the judge. Work as a team in the ring. Use your hands and voice to command and reassure your dog. Do not use your feet to position or control your dog. Never reprimand your dog physically for disobeying you.

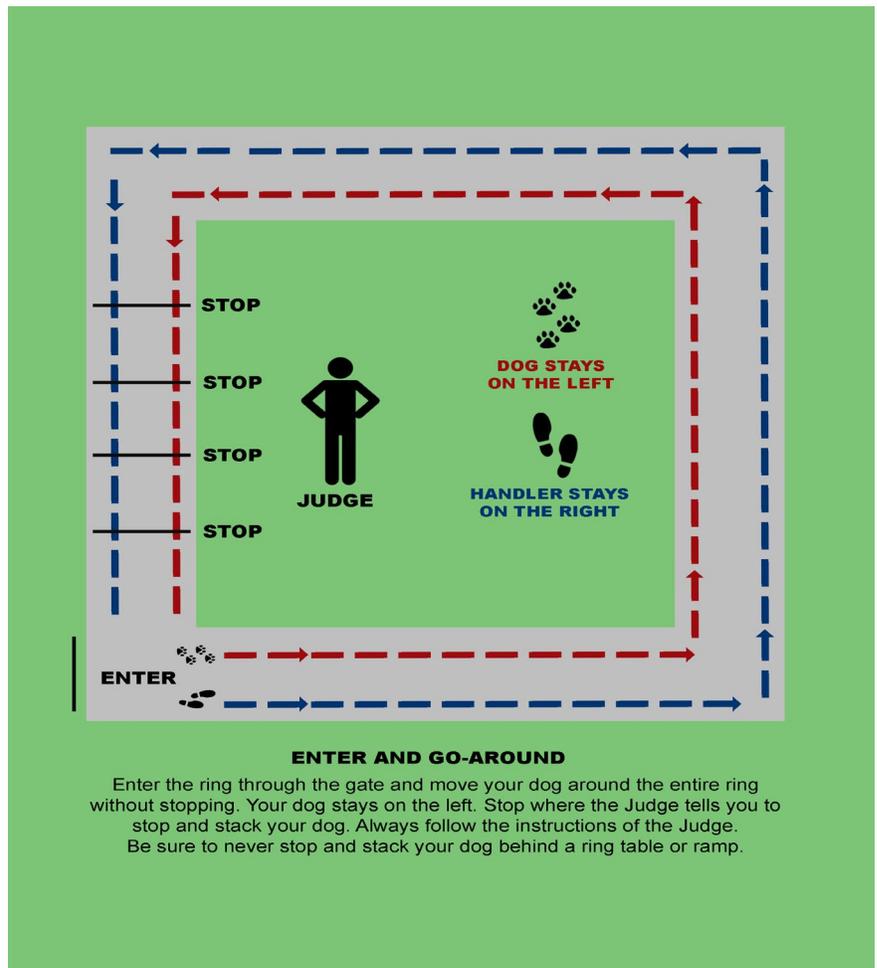
As you practice, the use of mirrors to become aware of how you look with your dog stacked and gaiting can help you become an expert.

Entering the Ring

The ring steward will direct you and your dog into the ring. Normally, you will enter the ring and go around the ring counterclockwise gaiting your dog. Stop near the entrance and stack your dog. Avoid stacking your dog behind the table or the ramp. This may hinder the judge's

ability to fully see your dog. Be sure to keep at least a dog length distance between you and the handler's dogs around you. Do not crowd others. If you are the first person in the line, ask the person behind you if they are ready to move in group gaiting.

Listen carefully for the judge's directions. He or she may have the entire group move their dogs again as a group, may walk up and down the line of dogs, or may start individual examines.



Tips

- Keep a positive attitude. The outcome of each competition reflects that judge's opinion on that day only. If things didn't go well, focus on ways to improve, and look forward to the next time.
- Do not take out your disappointment on your dog!
- HAVE FUN out there.

Individual Examinations

The judge will ask you to move into position to have your dog's individual examination. This will take place on the floor, ramp or table depending on the breed of your dog. Be sure to practice stacking where your dog will be examined.

You can find out where your dog will be examined on page 15 or discuss this with your trainer, leader, or specialist.



The judge will examine the dogs one at a time. He or she will be checking to see how you stacked your dog and how the dog is groomed. Dogs should be clean, freshly bathed, and be groomed to the breed standard. Poodles do not have to be shown in a show clip. Dog toenails should be trimmed, and the hair between the pads should be trimmed.

The judge will examine your dog by touching it. Practice having people touch and go over your dog. If the dog or judge moves a foot out of place, be sure to replace the foot in the proper place.

Gaiting

Dogs should move at a brisk trot, not walk, or break into a gallop. Puppies as young as five weeks may start this training. After the puppy is accustomed to wearing a soft collar, take him outside (if possible), fasten a show leash to the collar, and let him go where he wishes at first. If he balks, try putting a dish of food five feet away and walk him toward it. When you start

to move, give him an upbeat command such as, "Let's go!" "Gait!" or "Trot!" Do not use the obedience command "Heel!" Remember, you do not want your dog to be confused. Likewise, if you always use his show collar and leash in showmanship practice, he will eventually learn the behavior that goes with the equipment. Teach him to gait on either side of you. If he breaks into a gallop, give a quick command and leash correction. As soon as he is back under control, say, "Good gait, "Good boy (girl)!" Remember, the most

important in any dog training is praise. Soon your dog will be moving proudly, with head up on a loose leash. There is more to gaiting than to simply take off running. To make it less complicated, let's look at each aspect of gaiting.

Currently, there are over 200 recognized dog breeds by AKC in seven groups. Know the AKC group to which your dog belongs. Are they in the Working, Sporting, Hound, Nonsporting, Terrier, Toy, or Herding Group? The judge may also ask you about the characteristics or purpose of your dog's breed. What was the purpose your dog was bred for? You can study about breeds at AKC's website www.akc.com.

Ring Courtesy

Never do anything that may distract other dogs or handlers. Don't make sudden movement or noises. Pay attention to the judge, pay attention to where you are stepping, gaiting, standing, and looking. Use eye contact with the judge, but don't ignore your dog. Recognize what the judge is doing and try to decide what he or she is looking for. Look confident. Do not look bored or inattentive to your dog. Help the judge by listening and following the directions of the judge and ring steward.

Stacking Your Dog

Whenever you stop in the ring, you will pose or stack your dog. There will be many times you will be expected to "hand stack" your dog. Place the dog into position by moving his legs. There will be times that free stacking can be used. Teach the dog to walk into the proper position and stand still without having his or her legs touched. The control of the dog's head is the key to a proper stack. Always stack your dog on the inside edge of the mat. Make sure your dog remains on the mat.

Keep in mind that either in hand stacking or free stacking the appearance and outline of the dog presented to the judge should be the same. Different breeds may stack in various manners, so be sure to study what the breed standard may indicate.

Dogs are hand stacked for the judges' exam. Breeds are stacked either on the floor or a ramp and table depending on the AKC Breed Model. Where they are shown is determined by the breed of your dog. Ask your leader if you are not sure for your breed of dog.

Stacking on the Table

Most small breeds are stacked on the table. Be aware that some judges may want you to wait to table your dog until told. The judge should let you know ahead of time if this is the case.



Practice tabling at home. Before you even pickup your dog, practice squatting and standing several times. Then practice picking up your dog in one of two ways.

After squatting, reach over your dog. Place the palm of your left hand under the chest of your dog. With your other hand, support the bone structure of the lower jaw. Bring the dog in toward your

body and pick him up. After squatting, scoop the dog up in your **arms** by placing one arm around the rear legs, the other around the front, and scoop him up into your arms. Carefully place the dog on the table.

After the dog is on the table,

stack him about one inch from the front edge of the table closest to the judge's side.

To remove your dog from the table, pick him up in the same manner you lifted him onto the table. Carefully place him on the ground. Here we will discuss hand stacking your dog. When you stop, say, "Stand", and gently slide your hand in front of the dog's stifle.

Stacking Tips

- It takes a lot of training to get a dog to stand or stack. Practice every day, gradually increasing the amount of time your dog stands.
- Give your dog a stay command every time you place a foot. This way your dog knows he **must** stay, and you can correct your dog if he doesn't.
- Reward your dog with a tidbit after he has stood awhile. This will keep your dog happy.
- Place the lead or collar above the throat, but behind the jaw and directly behind the ears.
- If your dog is stands correctly, do not move the legs.
- Practice stacking your dog-side, front, and rear-in front of a mirror or picture window.

Placing The Legs

This might seem easy, but if you do not do it correctly, you will lose points. If the judge is standing in front of you, position the dog's front feet first, starting with the front leg on the judge's side.

To position the front leg, hold the leash with your right hand at the point where it joins the collar. Pick up the front left leg at the elbow, never the toes or pastern, and place it straight down so the toes point forward. The leg should be directly under the shoulder blade.

Then put the leash in your left hand, holding it at the point where it joins the collar. At this point, you can push the dog slightly to the side to shift his weight away from you so you can easily stack your dog's inside front leg (closest to you).

To position the rear legs, grasp the leash where it joins the collar with your right hand. Use your left hand to place the rear leg on the judge's side. First, grasp the leg either by the stifle or hock, never the toes or pasterns. Place it so the hock is straight and the toes are pointing forward. Do the same with the inside rear leg (closest to you). Make sure the hocks do not turn in or out. Different breeds require different stacks. Study your

Free Stacking

Teach your dog to stop with his legs in the correct position for the breed. This is called free stacking. The judge may ask you to move and stop in a free stack. Do not touch your dog. Teach your dog to stand naturally with a command. You may wish to use "stand stay" or what works for you. Also, in a free stack, teach your dog to look at you. Commands such as "look at me" may be used. A free stack should also be used when you finish gaiting back to the judge and going around the ring.

Sometimes the judge may ask you to gait your dog half way around the ring and stop in a free stack so practice, practice, practice!

Baiting

Most dogs enjoy being baited, and if done properly, baiting can put the finishing touch on your performance. Baiting is done at the judge's discretion. This means the judge has the final word as to if bait is allowed in the ring. Always ask the steward if you have the question before you enter the ring. Some commonly used baits are soft-baked liver, hotdogs, and cat treats. When baiting, stand in front of your dog. If the judge is on the left side of your dog, hold the bait in your right hand and the show lead in your left hand (reverse if the judge switches sides). Use the bait to keep your dog attentive and animated. Don't distract the judge by waving your arm around while baiting. Never throw bait. Be courteous to other exhibitors and be sure your baiting does not distract other exhibitor's dogs.



More Tips

- Bait the dog to get its attention and show that he or she is alert to you. Bait may be tiny pieces of a favorite food, a small squeaky toy or other noise. Do not disturb other dogs in the process.
- Even if your dog has conformation faults, you should attempt to stack him correctly. You will be judged on your effort.
- Make sure the leash and collar are on the same side of the dog's head as you are.

Gaiting Tip

- Do not lean over your dog as you make turns. Teach your dog to follow you. Practice walking on both sides.



Gaiting Speed

Your dog must move at a fast trot. This is the gait at which the dog looks its best. Each handler must work with his dog to determine how fast he must move. Remember, the bigger the dog, the faster you must go. With a small dog, you can walk. It is helpful to have someone watch you gait your dog and tell you which speed your dog looks best. If you go too fast, your dog will gallop (run); too slow and he will pace (legs on the same side moving together). At the proper speed, your dog will move smoothly with little bounce, his legs reaching forward efficiently.

The next step is to get your arm in the proper position. The leash is always held in the hand closest to the dog. Gather

the leash so that it goes in a straight line to the dog's head, make sure the excess lead is hidden in your hand. Do not hold the leash so tight that it chokes the dog. Work with your leader and club members to develop a natural arm position that looks good for you and your dog and keeps your dog slightly away from you.

When you gait your dog, he must stay in the proper position, away from your body and slightly ahead of you. Usually, holding your arm out from your body is enough to keep the dog away from you. If your dog crowds you, reach down with your free hand and push him away. You are allowed to do this in the show ring. Many dogs do not like to trot fast and will lag. This makes it look like you have a tight lead.

Even More Tips

- Remember the judge will be watching you (and your dog) while the dog is moving and when he stops.
- If you can attend AKC dog shows, watch how your breed is shown. Watch the open classes in Junior Showmanship for handling tips.
- If you can enter Junior Showmanship at fun matches, do so. Mixed breeds may be able to compete. It's great practice.
- Good sportsmanship is very important.
- A simple "thank you" is appropriate.

Patterns

After you enter the ring and go around, the judge will direct you to perform a pattern gaitting your dog. Described here are the common patterns the judge may ask you to do. They are as follows:

Down and Back

The Triangle

The “L” Pattern

The “T” Pattern

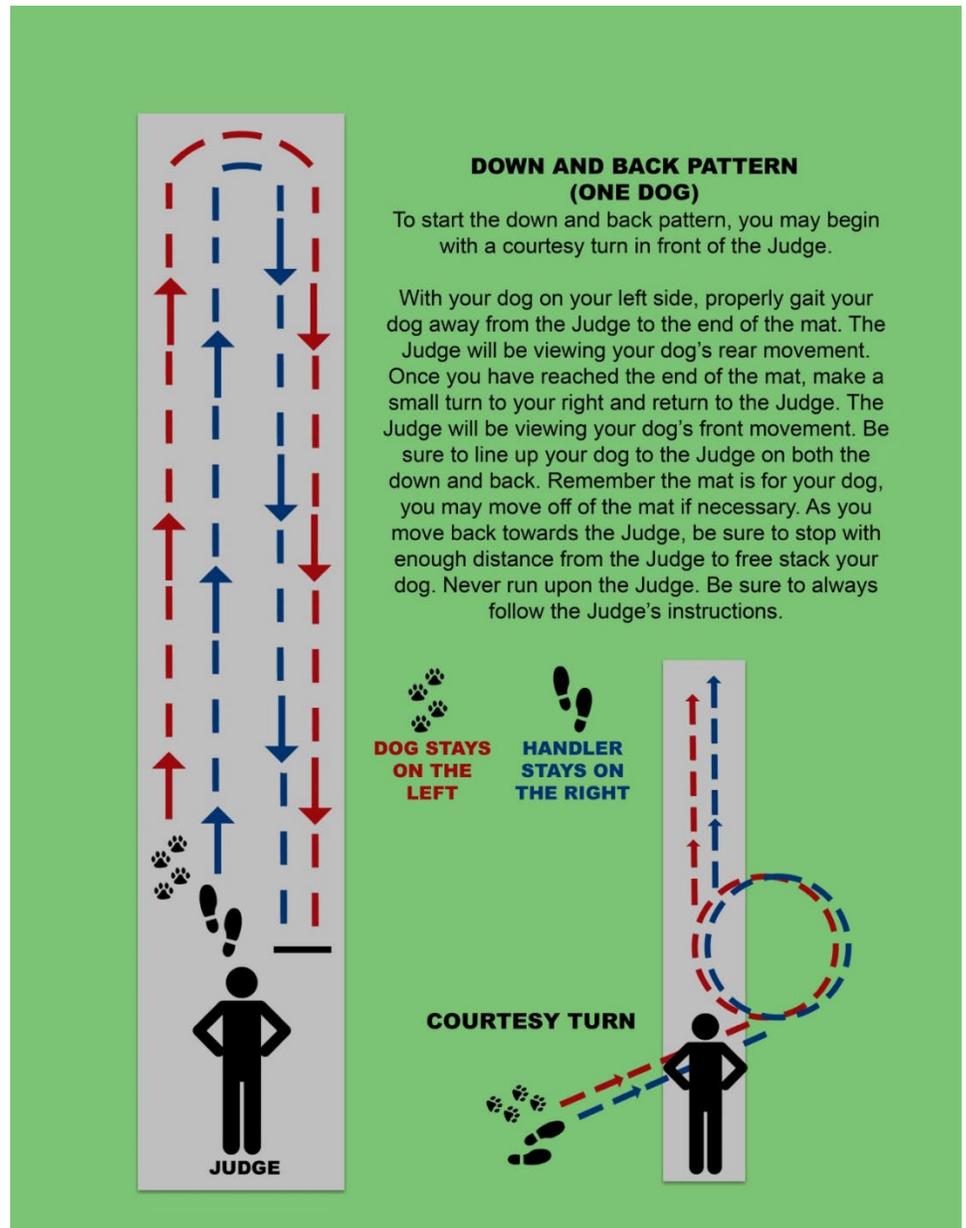
The Two Dog Down and Back

Courtesy Turns

Before the exhibitor does the pattern, he may do a courtesy turn in front of the judge by making a circle to the right, with the dog on the left. This helps to line up the dog for the pattern and move the dog into proper gait. Smaller dogs should always use a courtesy turn. Practice your courtesy turn. However, if a courtesy turn is cumbersome and awkward to begin the pattern, it's better to proceed without it.

Hand Changes

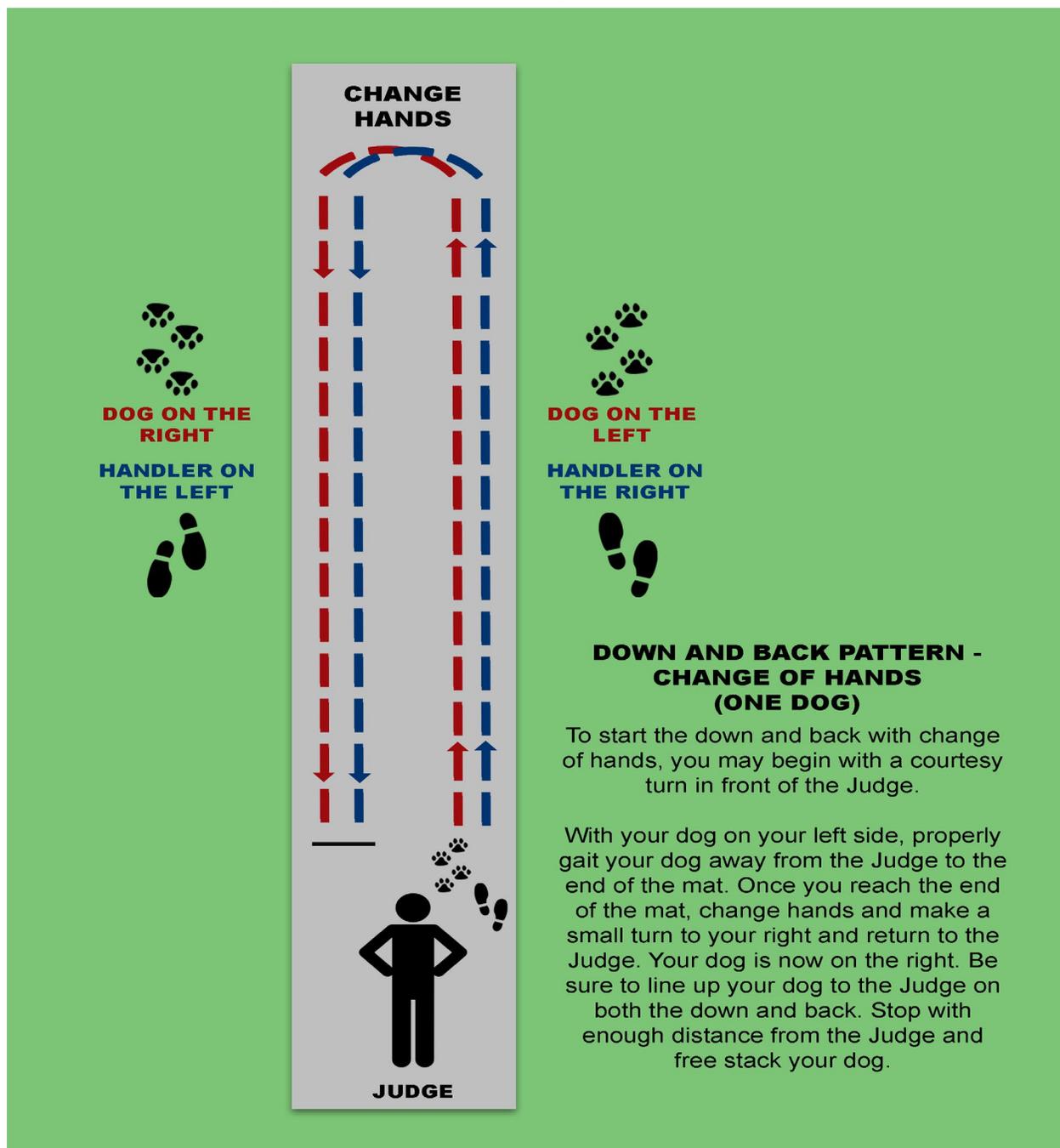
The rule of showmanship is to keep the dog between you and the judge, except on the down and back. This means if you change directions while gaitting, or if the judge moves, you must change to the other side of the dog. Most dogs are accustomed to staying on your left side because of obedience training. You should practice gaitting your dog on your right side so he will get used to it. When he gaits equally well on either side, you are ready to start learning hand changes.

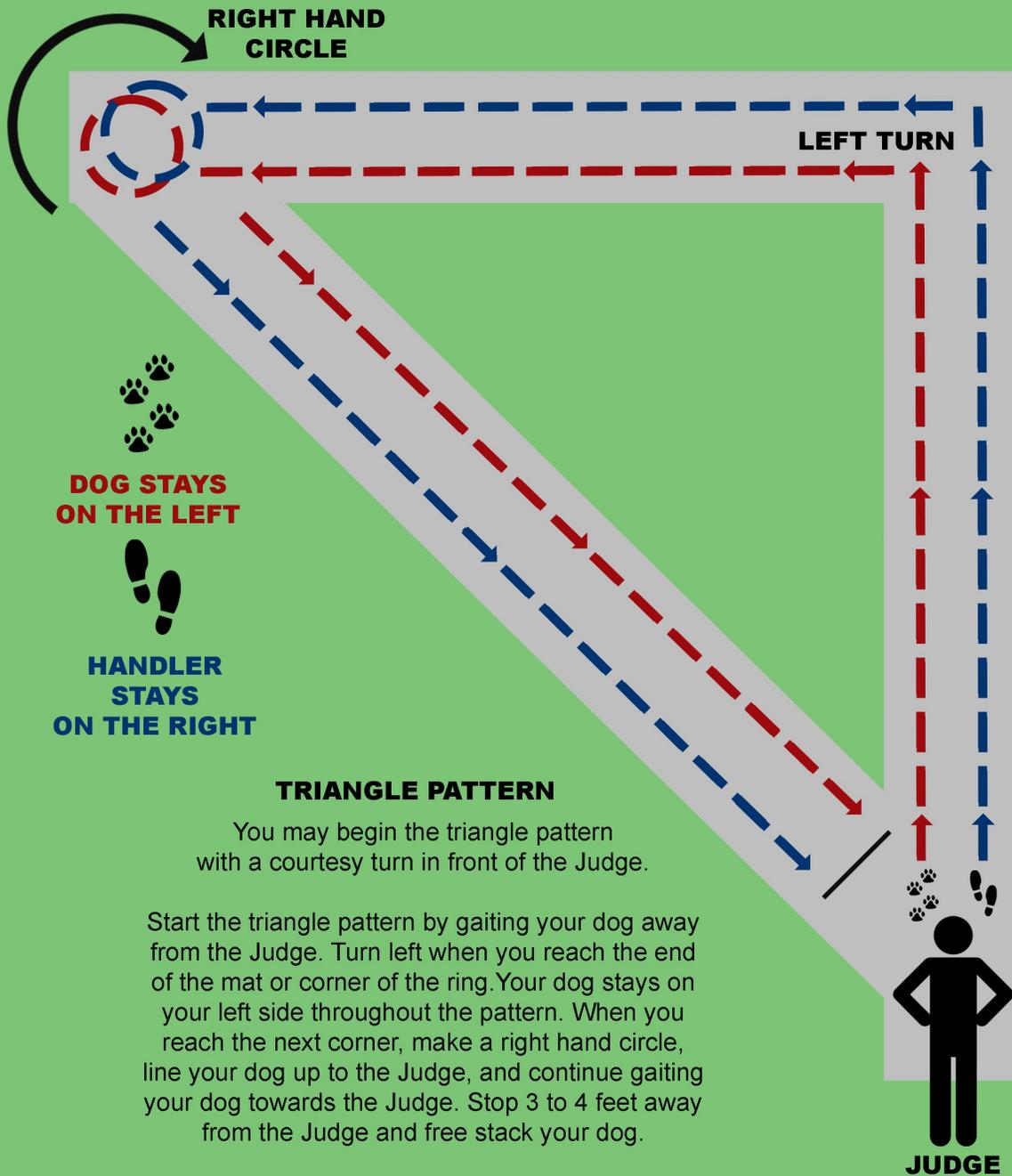


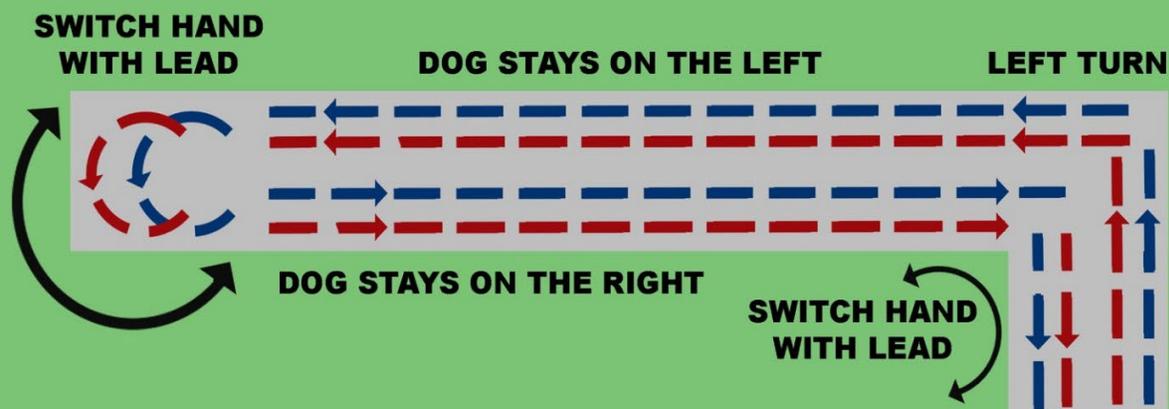
Hand Changes continued

There are two methods to get to the other side of your dog. First, when you change directions, reach across in front of your body and take the leash in your free hand as you slow to a stop. Turn toward your dog (and the judge). Make sure your dog's head **turns** toward you. Move out in the new direction. Do not worry about your dog; he will turn on his own as the lead tightens.

Secondly, when the judge moves and the dog is in front of you, change hands by stepping around behind your dog. Change hands about halfway around. Your dog should keep trotting straight ahead. Most dogs want to turn with you when you move. If your dog tries this, push his head away and say, "No." If the judge is behind you and you must change sides (for example: turning of corners), turn towards your dog, pass in front of the dog to the other side, face forward, and continue around the ring. Never step over your dog. Do not pass the leash behind your back.







L PATTERN

You may begin the L pattern with a courtesy turn in front of the Judge.

Start the L pattern by gaiting your dog away from the Judge. Keep your dog on your left side and turn left when you reach the corner of the ring or end of the mat. When you reach the next corner, turn toward your dog and transfer the lead to your right hand, complete the turn and face the direction from which you just came. Your dog should now be gaiting on your right side. When you reach the the next turn, switch the lead back to your left hand so your dog is once again on your left side. Stop 3 to 4 feet away from the Judge and free stack your dog.



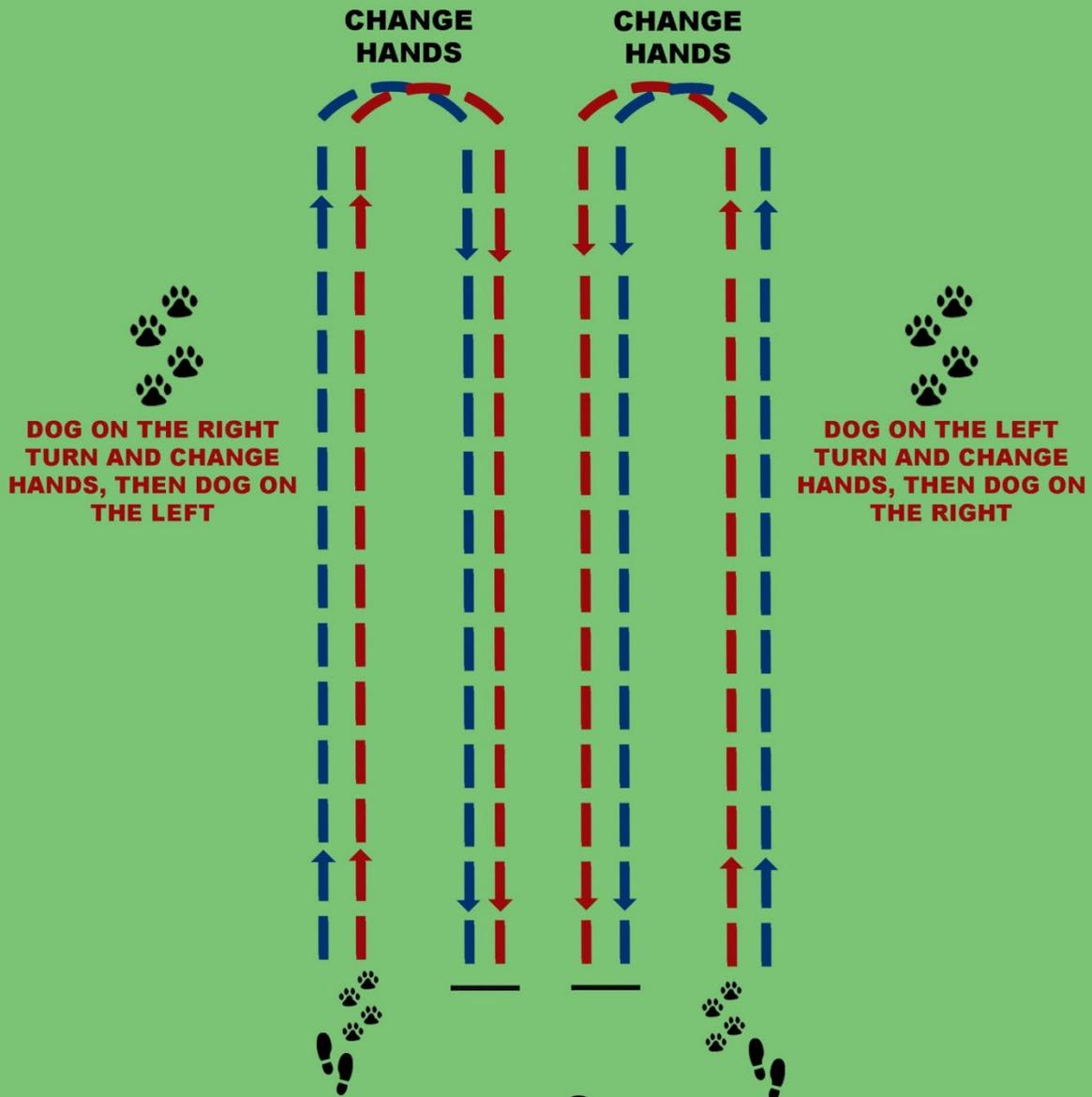
DOG STAYS ON THE LEFT, SWITCHES TO YOUR RIGHT, THEN SWITCHES BACK TO YOUR LEFT SIDE



HANDLER STAYS ON THE RIGHT, SWITCHES TO LEFT, THEN SWITCHES BACK TO THE RIGHT SIDE



DOWN AND BACK PATTERN TWO DOGS

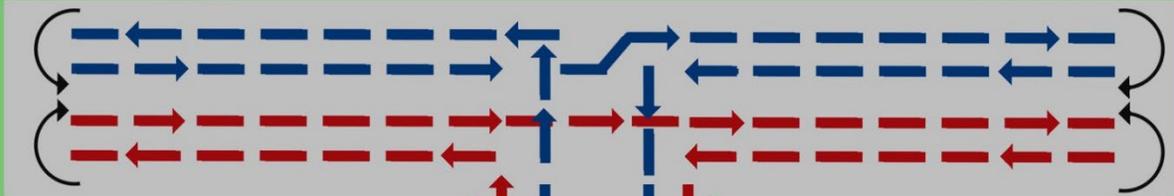


The down and back with two dogs and two handlers begins with the handlers stepping off at the same time with their dogs. Handlers are on the outside and the dogs are in the center of the ring.

When the handlers reach the end of the mat, they each turn towards their dogs, switch hands and return towards the Judge. Both then stop and free stack their dogs.

SWITCH HAND

SWITCH HAND



T PATTERN

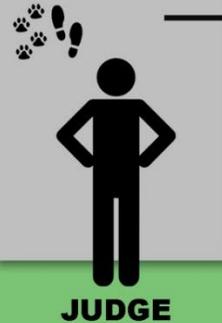
Move your dog away from the Judge. Turn Left at the corner. Switch your lead hand as you and your dog turn into or toward each other and walk to the end of the mat or ring. Your dog should be on your right side. Switch your lead hand again as you and your dog turn into or towards each other and walk to the corner. Turn and walk towards the Judge. Stop and free stack your dog to the Judge.



DOG STAYS ON THE LEFT, SWITCHES TO YOUR RIGHT, THEN SWITCHES BACK TO YOUR LEFT SIDE



HANDLER STAYS ON THE RIGHT, SWITCHES TO LEFT, THEN SWITCHES BACK TO THE RIGHT SIDE



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB TABLE and RAMP BREEDS

SPORTING

COCKER SPANIEL
ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL
NEDERLANDSE KOOIKERHONDJE

HOUNDS

BASENJI
ALL BEAGLES
PETIT BASSET GRIFFON VENDEEN
ALL DACHSHUNDS
PORTUGUSE PODENGO PEQUENO

WORKING- NO WORKING BREEDS ON TABLE

TERRIERS

ALL TERRIERS **on TABLE, EXCEPT** those noted below are examined **on the GROUND:**

AIREDALE TERRIER
AMERICAN STAFFORDSHIRE (or Ramp)
BULL TERRIER
IRISH TERRIERS (or Ramp)
MINI BULL TERRIER (or Table or Ramp)
SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER (or Ramp)
STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER (or Ramp)

TOY - ALL TOY BREEDS ON TABLE

RAMP OPTIONAL BREEDS

At the discretion of the judge:

AMERICAN WATER SPANIEL
BOYKIN SPANIEL
ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL
FIELD SPANIEL
NS DUCK TOLLING RETRIEVER
WELSH SPRINGER SPANIEL
GRAND BASSET GRIFFON VENDEEN
WHIPPET
(Misc.)
GERMAN PINSCHER

STANDARD SCHNAUZERS
AMERICAN STAFFORDSHIRE
IRISH TERRIERS
MINI BULL TERRIER (Ground/Table)
SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER
STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER
FINNISH SPITZ
AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG
ENTLEBUCHER MOUNTAIN DOG

FINNISH LAPPHUND
ICELANDIC SHEEPDOGS
MUDI (or Table)
NORWEGIAN BUHUND
POLISH LOWLAND SHEEPDOG
PULI (or Table)
SPANISH WATER DOG
BASSET FAUVE DE BRETAGNE
NORRBOTTENSPETS (Misc.)

BREEDS THAT MUST BE JUDGED ON RAMP

Applies to all conformation competition associated with AKC conformation dog shows or at any event at which an AKC conformation title may be earned.

CLUMBER SPANIEL
BASSET HOUND
BULLDOGS
KEESHONDEN

LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO
CIRNECO DELL'ETNA
CHINESE SHAR-PEI

SUSSEX SPANIEL
KERRY BLUE TERRIER
CHOW CHOW

Breeds not listed above are to be judged on the ground.

NOTE: Ramps can be used in emergency situations to judge any breed. See next page for additional information.

NON-SPORTING

ALL AMERICAN ESKIMOS
BICHON FRISE
BOSTON TERRIER
COTON DE TULEAR
FRENCH BULLDOG
LHASA APSO
LOWCHEN
MINIATURE POODLE
NORWEGIAN LUNDEHUND
SCHIPPERKE
SHIBA INU
TIBETAN SPANIEL
TIBETAN TERRIER
XOLOITZCUINTLI (Toy and Miniatures)

HERDING

CARDIGAN WELSH CORGI
MINIATURE AMERICAN SHEPHERD
MUDI (or Ramp)
PEMBROKE WELSH CORGI
PULIK (or Ramp)
PUMI
PYRENEAN SHEPHERD
SHETLAND SHEEPDOG
SWEDISH VALLHUND

MISCELLANEOUS BREEDS

DANISH-SWEDISH FARMDOG
LANCASHIRE HEELER
PERUVIAN INCA ORCHID (Small and Medium)
RUSSIAN TSVETNAYA BOLONKA
TEDDY ROOSEVELT TERRIER

You Make the Difference

Effort may be the most important and the hardest point to display while participating in dog showmanship. Always keep trying and never give up! You can continue to do your best job of handling even when your dog is uncooperative. If your dog is well trained to the point that it appears "steady as a rock," reposition it occasionally. When the dog does it all, leaving nothing for the handler to do, competing is no longer a challenge. You must appear to be working, but as calmly and as effortlessly as possible. If you end up on the losing end of the line, remember that it is you, not your dog, who has been judged. Your placement is not your dog's fault. Remember you make the difference.

Walking Your Dog Before the Ring Time

Be sure to exercise your dog before your ring time. Try to get your dog to go potty. Although in Showmanship, it is not a disqualification, it is heavily penalized in both Obedience and Rally. Dog who have to go often do not walk or act as they should even if they do not defecate in the ring. Train your dog to go on the leash and upon command. This is something to practice ahead of time. Always carry potty bags to make sure you can clean up

Dress for Success in the Ring

At the dog show, you must follow the Colorado State 4-H Dress Code. You want to dress in a manner that complements your dog. For example, if you have a black dog, as a handler, do not wear black pants as your dog will blend into your outfit. Contrasting and complementary colors are the best to look professional.

You Are a Team

It is said, "Team work makes the dream work." This is very true when it comes to showmanship. **The more you work with your dog and develop that connection, the better you will be come in showmanship.** Great dog handlers understand this as an essential part of training. Make yourselves a dream team.



Have fun and make sure it is fun for your dog. Practice does make perfect.



Resources



The Dog Resource Handbook can be ordered on-line. All dog participant families should own a copy of this resource (one time purchase).

<https://shop4-h.org/products/4-h-dog-resource-handbook>

Dog record books and other dog project information is available from Colorado State University Extension and your local county 4-H specialist.

My Showmanship Notes

Colorado 4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

Colorado 4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together

4-H Pledge

I pledge.....

My head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
My health to better living
for my club, my community,
my country and my world.

Promesa 4-H

Prometo usar mi mente para pensar con más claridad,
mi corazón para ser más leal,
mis manos para ser más servicial,
mi salud para cuidarme más,
por mi club, mi comunidad, mi país y mi mundo.

4-H Motto

“To Make the Best Better.”



Colorado4h.org