

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

Evaluators must be familiar with the whole range of the Golden Retriever breed, not merely as they appear in the conformation show ring. Dogs which earn scores of 75 or higher may be able to use that score to qualify for a CCA title, and dogs which earn scores of 65 or higher may be able to use that score to qualify for an Honorable Mention.

While desire for success in the show ring has produced certain “styles” of Golden Retrievers that are commonly seen at shows, other sorts of Golden Retrievers meet the AKC Breed Standard equally well (and sometimes better) in structure and type, but may be superficially different in appearance. Dogs primarily used for working or performance purposes may be leaner and more muscular, have different coloring, less furnishings, and other variances from what is commonly seen at conformation shows, but which are completely acceptable under the Breed Standard. They will most likely be casually groomed and handled; this is *absolutely acceptable* and they must not be penalized in the evaluation.

In any case, the evaluator is expected to assess the dog against the Breed Standard, and not in comparison to any other dogs that may be presented at the event. This is not a competition. The question for the evaluator is, “how does this dog compare to the ideal of the breed as described in the Breed Standard?”

Dogs should be evaluated in small groups (3 – 6) in order to observe their behavior and temperament in the company of other dogs and people. Each dog should be examined and gaited individually. A simple “down and back” pattern and a circle around to see side gait is preferred to more complicated patterns. Dogs should be observed in a natural stance whenever possible and moved on a loose lead at a normal “working trot”. Handlers may use bait (food or toys) at the discretion of the evaluator. However, do not allow baiting to interfere with other dogs or with the examination.

Procedure: If the three evaluators are using one “ring,” it is recommended that three (or six) dogs enter the ring together. The individual examinations are done with Evaluator A doing Dog 1, Evaluator B doing Dog 2, Evaluator C doing Dog 3. Then all shift to the next dog (A to 2, B to 3, C to 1), and in turn to the next (A to 3, B to 1, C to 2). When the 3 (or 6) dogs have been examined, each can be moved individually while all 3 evaluators observe. The evaluators may also decide upon other procedures which are expedient and which do not ask too much of what may be relatively inexperienced dogs.

The evaluator should assess each dog systematically in order of the score sheet topics, as follows:

1. General appearance: proportion, size, substance, condition. The Golden is to be a useful, practical hunting dog without exaggeration. The recommended height and weight call for a moderate dog, never massive, nor weedy. Balance and “retriever type” are of importance. Over-sized and undersized dogs are to be penalized, and disqualified if outside the allowed tolerance. Mark “Disqualified, size” in the Penalty area.

2. Head: includes the shape of the head (skull and muzzle); eyes, ears, teeth, nose, pigmentation, and expression. Don’t attempt to break the parts into separate scores; score the head as a whole. Outstanding virtue (or outstanding fault) may well affect the entire picture of the head. On the other hand, the absence of either virtue or fault is mediocrity, and should not be scored highly. Undershot or overshot bite is a disqualification. Mark “Disqualified, bite” in the Penalty area, and evaluate the rest of the head under the category for Head.

3. Neck, topline, back, croup, tailset and tail. Outline, strength, breadth, musculature of the area.

4. Body, including forechest, brisket, depth, spring and shape of rib, loin, coupling and tuck-up. Evaluators should use their hands, as well as their eyes, to confirm what is seen.

5. Forequarters: shoulders, upper arms, elbows, legs, pasterns, feet.

6. Hindquarters: thighs, second thighs, hocks, rear pasterns, feet.

7. Coat and color: texture, pattern, density, undercoat, length, furnishings. Depth and shadings of color should be noted for information. Over-trimming or stylization that prevents evaluation of natural coat quality should be penalized. White or off-color markings should be noted.

8. Gait: in profile (side gait), front view and rear view. A normal “working trot” is called for, not an exaggerated fast gait. The trot should be balanced and easy, methodical and in even cadence. Evaluators may also ask for the dog to walk (in addition to trot). “Coming and going” is equally as important as side gait. If the dog is lame, it should be excused. Mark the score sheet “NR – not rated; lame.”

9. Temperament: while this evaluation is not a temperament test, dogs that evidence undesirable temperament by their behavior during the course of the evaluation, in the company of other dogs and people, must be penalized. Indications of undue timidity, fearfulness, nervousness, or belligerence towards other dogs or people in what should be a “normal” situation, must receive some degree of penalty, even to the point of failure if warranted.

Any dog that snaps, bites, attacks or attempts to bite or attack any person must be disqualified. Mark zero in Temperament, and also mark “Disqualification” and the reason in the penalty area. Do not complete the evaluation; send the dog out.

Any dog that threatens the evaluator or any other person, and any dog that attacks any other dog must be scored zero in temperament and must be dismissed. The dog will be rated “NQ - Not Qualified – failed in temperament.”

Any dog which by reason of illness or lameness, that cannot be properly evaluated because of uncontrolled behavior or undue timidity, must be excused. The dog will be marked “NR – Not Rated.”

10. Overall impression: breed type, character, balance, fitness for purpose. How does this dog measure up as a *whole*: as a potentially useful and practical hunting companion for work over varied terrain, in cold and wet, and in the water (does it fit

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the purpose of the breed?)...and, very importantly, as a representative *Golden Retriever* (does it accord with the appearance and character of the breed)?

Scoring:

Rate the dog in each category with a score between 0 and 10 (10 being near perfection). Do not confer with your fellow evaluators; it is your opinion that should appear on the critique.

Sub-total the scores. If there is a penalty due to behavior or disqualification, mark that in the Penalty line and deduct it from the subtotal to reach the final score. A Not Rated (NR) dog will have no final score. Not Qualified (NQ) should be marked if the score is insufficient to qualify; also, circle the final score.

Appropriate comments, virtues and faults should be noted for the owner's benefit. Be specific: "poor head" is not nearly as informative as "Kindly expression, good pigmentation, but narrow in skull, and lacks depth in muzzle...." This written assessment is extremely important and is the primary reason many will enter. If time allows, evaluators are also encouraged to discuss their findings with the exhibitors in a positive and cordial manner. Be honest but also be kind. Always mention positive points.

Sign all score sheet copies and give all of them to the Event Secretary. The Event Secretary will return to you a copy of each score sheet for your records at the end of the event. Be willing to stay around for a while so that participants may have an opportunity to discuss their dogs with you if they so desire, and also for group photographs.

GRCA CONFORMATION ASSESMENT – SCORING

Explanation of the 10-point scoring system

(10 categories x 10 points = 100 points maximum)

The CCA passing score is 75 or above.

The Honorable Mention score must be between 65 & 74.

Evaluators may use ½ point increments

Scoring within each category:

- 10 Outstanding: as close to ideal as can be expected.
- 9 Excellent: very high in quality; probably not commonly seen.
- 8 Very good: obvious general virtue; any flaws are slight.
- 7 Good: Primarily virtue, although may have minor faults/flaws.
- 6 Fair: somewhat better than merely acceptable.
More merit than fault.
- 5 Acceptable: generally fulfills the basics but may be
(a) overall only > adequate in quality for that trait; or
(b) may be a balance of both virtues and faults in that category
- 4 Overall more flaws/faults than merit, in that category/trait.
- 3 Very obvious faults or unsoundness; strongly resembles trait of another breed.
- 2 -1 Almost wholly deficient in merit; trait present but seriously incomplete, incorrect, unsound.
- 0 Complete absence of trait; so unsound as to be useless.

Add the 10 category scores and enter in Subtotal.

Enter any penalty in the Penalty space (see below for examples)

Subtract any Penalty from the Subtotal and enter Final Score on that line.

If the Final Score is NOT a qualifying score*, for any reason, circle the Final Score to so indicate.

Final score 75 – 100* = qualifies toward a CCA

Dogs must earn 3 qualifying scores of 75 or higher under 3 different evaluators (at least two of whom shall be Category 1) to earn a CCA.

Final score 65 – 74* = qualifies toward an Honorable Mention.

Dogs must earn 3 qualifying scores of 65 or higher under 3 different evaluators (regardless of category) to earn an HM.

*A qualifying score for either CCA or HM, must have no category scored 0 – 2, and no two categories scored 4 or less, in addition to the required total score.

NR = Not Rated (can't examine due to misbehavior, unable to evaluate, dog ill or lame, etc.) Excuse the dog. *The dog will not be evaluated and will not receive a score. Note reason on score sheet.*

NQ = Not Qualified Any of the following:

Scored 0 – 2 in any category. Scored 0 – 4 in any two categories. Scored less than 5 in Temperament. Total score less than 65.

Dismissed: A dog which threatens or menaces, or gives the evaluator reason to believe that it may not safely be approached and examined, or which attacks other dogs, should be dismissed. Note "dismissed" on the score sheet and explain the reason. *Dog will not be evaluated and will not receive a score. Two such dismissals and the dog will be ineligible to enter any future CCA events.*

DQ = Disqualifying fault: Any disqualifying fault under the Breed Standard or under AKC rules (i.e., blind, deaf, changed in appearance by artificial means); *The dog may be evaluated and will receive a copy of the score sheet, but must be penalized heavily enough that the score will not qualify.*

DQ = Disqualified for: The dog attacked or attempted to attack a person. *Note the reason on the score sheet. Do not complete the evaluation process; disqualify the dog. The dog's owner should receive a copy of the score sheet with the appropriate notation re Disqualification.*

Note regarding the Penalty area: Example A: the dog has a number of broken incisors which make it impossible to determine whether the bite is acceptable. Other than that, the dog has a very good head. The evaluator chooses to score the Head as an 8, giving appropriate credit there, but penalizes the dog 3 points for the undeterminable bite in the Penalty area.

Example B: The dog proves to be blind or deaf, or shows evidence of having had surgery to correct entropion. These are AKC disqualifications. The dog may be scored, but should receive a penalty severe enough to render the score non-qualifying.