**GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB OF AMERICA**

**NATIONAL SPECIALTY JUDGE SELECTION PROCESS**

Over the past several years, the GRCA Board of Directors has initiated multiple processes to help shoulder some of the responsibilities placed on a local club hosting the GRCA National Specialty. Despite our best efforts, GRCA was not able to find a club willing to host a National Specialty beyond 2022. The decision was made that GRCA would assume the responsibility of hosting the GRCA National Specialty starting in 2023. *(Res NS20-76)*

As part of this process, it became clear we needed to adopt a fair method for selecting conformation judges for the National Specialty similar to what many other National breed clubs do. This judge selection process allows GRCA members to have a voice in their choice of conformation judges. To avoid the administrative cost of printing, mailing and counting ballots to over 4,500 GRCA members and to initiate a plan for NS2023 judge selection, an electronic voting platform was selected at nominal cost to GRCA. This platform more than satisfies our requirement for a user-friendly, secure election.

**Ballot Procedure**

In August each year, GRCA members will be emailed a link to an online ballot asking them to nominate their choice of conformation judges for a future GRCA National Specialty. This alphabetical list will be purchased from AKC by the NS Chairman on an annual basis. It will contain the names of all judges approved by AKC to judge Golden Retrievers and edited to conform to the criteria outlined in the *Conformation Judges Eligibility Criteria* paragraph below.

In August 2021, the selection of judges will be for both NS2023 and NS2024. For future Nationals, the selection of conformation judges will be voted on by the GRCA membership three (3) years prior to the National Specialty.

Voting can only be done electronically (cell phone, iPad or personal computer) using an online voting platform that GRCA has subscribed to. There will be no mail-in ballots. Each individual GRCA member will receive one ballot via the official email address on file with the GRCA Membership Administrator. Family memberships will receive two ballots provided there are two separate email addresses on file with their membership.

There will be two separate rounds of voting for conformation judges.

1. **ROUND ONE:** GRCA members may select up to 20 judge names. There will also be an option to write-in up to five (5) names for international judges not included in the AKC-approved list of Golden Retriever judges. Once the emails with ballot information are sent out, members will have seven (7) days to cast their ballot.

2. **ROUND TWO:** After these results are tabulated, a second ballot will be emailed to GRCA members listing the 20 judges who received the majority of votes. In the second round of voting, GRCA members will then select their top six (6) choices. A separate section will be included on this second ballot giving the option to write-in up to five (5) names as suggestions for possible Sweepstakes judges. Once the emails with ballot information are sent out, members will again have seven (7) days to cast their ballot.

3. It will be the responsibility of the GRCA Administrative Assistant to serve as Voting Manager to receive the certified ballot results from the online voting platform and submit them to the National Specialty Committee (NSC).

**NOTE:** Results are strictly confidential and no one from GRCA or the NSC will have access to see how any individual member voted. The Voting Manager will only be able to verify whether a GRCA member has, or has not, cast a ballot.

**National Specialty Committee Procedure**

For the 2023 and 2024 National Specialties, the National Specialty Committee will contact judges in the rank order determined by the final ballot results. The judge receiving the most votes will be contacted and offered the Best of Breed assignment for 2023. If that is not accepted, the Best of Breed assignment for 2024 will be offered. The second-place judge will then be contacted and offered the Best of Breed assignment for the available year. With subsequent placing judges, the dog or bitch classes will be offered until the six (6) judging assignments are filled for the 2023 and 2024 National Specialties. A judge not available for a 2023 assignment, will be offered the assignment in 2024.

For the 2025 National and beyond, the procedure will remain the same. The electronic ballot for the 2025 judges will be sent in 2022, three years prior to the event. The judge receiving the most ballots will be contacted and offered the Best of Breed assignment. With subsequent placing judges, the dog or bitch classes will be offered until the three (3) judging assignments are filled.

All conformation judges accepting assignments to judge the National Specialty must sign a contract and agree to not accept a Golden Retriever judging assignment in the US or Canada for twelve (12) months prior to the National Specialty. All sweepstakes judges accepting assignments to judge the National Specialty must sign a contract and agree to not accept a Golden Retriever judging assignment in the US or Canada for six (6) months prior to the National Specialty.

**Conformation Judges Eligibility Critieria:**

To be eligible to judge the Dog, Bitch or Best of Breed regular and non-regular classes, a judge must meet the following criteria:

* Must be an AKC licensed judge of Golden Retrievers; provisional/permit judges are *not* eligible.
* Judges who have judged at a Golden Retriever National Specialty within eight (8) years of the scheduled date of the future National are *not* eligible for consideration.
* Must be approved by AKC (or other internationally recognized licensing body) to judge Golden Retrievers a minimum of five (5) years prior to the assignment. (*International judges will need AKC approval if selected.)*
* As a minimum, judge must have judged two (2) Golden Retriever specialties or have experience with judging large entries at two or more shows.

**Sweepstakes Judges Eligibility Criteria:**

Puppy, Veteran and Gundog Sweepstakes judges will be selected by the National Specialty Committee. The Committee can review the list of write-in names suggested by GRCA members.

To be eligible to judge **Puppy or Veteran Sweepstakes**, a judge must meet the following criteria:

* Candidates must have judged at least two (2) Golden Retriever Sweepstakes at a regional or independent specialty.
* Candidates who have judged Sweepstakes at a Golden Retriever National Specialty within eight (8) years of the scheduled date of the future National are *not* eligible for consideration.
* Candidates have bred/owned/or shown in the Sporting Group.
* Candidates have bred/owned/or shown Golden Retrievers.

To be eligible to judge **Gundog Sweepstakes**, a judge must meet the following criteria:

* Candidates must have judged at least two (2) Golden Retriever Sweepstakes at a regional or independent specialty.
* Candidates who have judged Sweepstakes at a Golden Retriever National Specialty within eight (8) years of the scheduled date of the future National are *not* eligible for consideration.
* Candidate has owned and handled a Golden Retriever that earned a field title (Hunt Test, Field Trial, WC/WCX).
* Candidate has bred/owned/or shown Golden Retrievers.

**Selection of Junior Showmanship Judge**

The National Specialty Committee will select the Junior Showmanship Judge from the AKC list of approved judges.

**Selection of Performance Judges**

All performance event judges (obedience, rally, field trial, agility, WC/WCX, hunt test, tracking, etc.) will be selected by the appropriate committee that will chair the event in any given year.

**Selection of CCA Evaluators**

All evaluators for the GRCA Certificate of Conformation Assessment (CCA) will be selected by the CCA Committee that will chair the event following the GRCA guidelines established for the program.