



Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

Musical Freestyle - Beginner

PURPOSE: This badge demonstrates teamwork between dog and handler, while performing a dance routine set to music. The team should work together fluidly, moving from one move to the next without stopping between moves and starting again.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must demonstrate basic dance moves, including forward heeling, spins, leg weaves, backing and jumping. At least some of these behaviors should be taught specifically for this badge. If the dog already knows all of the behaviors, the handler must find a way to increase the difficulty of at least one known behavior. The dog must be attentive to the handler and must quickly respond to cues given by the handler.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: Handler must understand the concepts of operant conditioning and shaping. The handler must be able to read the dog well to see when the dog may be tired and/or overwhelmed, and stops the training session accordingly. The handler can choose music appropriate for the team and can put the required behaviors together into a coherent dance routine that is performed to the music.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: The handler must provide his/her own music in a format that is appropriate for the evaluator (if the evaluation takes place in person). This could be a digital format or CD depending on the sound equipment the evaluator has.

The handler must choose a prop appropriate for the routine if the jump is choreographed as a part of the routine. The prop should not be anything that would be out of place in a routine, like a standard agility jump. There is no specific height requirement for the jump, but it should be high enough for the evaluator to clearly see that the dog understands that he is jumping an “unusual” object and not just stepping over it. Therefore, the height should be higher for a large dog than it is for a small dog.

During the routine, the handler should wear some type of costume that fits the music and the dance concept. This could be something simple like a t-shirt or something much more elaborate. It should be clear to the evaluator that some thought went into choosing the costume. The dog should not be in costume but may wear some type of fancy collar, ruff or bandana.

PROCESS: The evaluator needs to be able to clearly see that the dog understands and can perform all of the required behaviors on cue, even if they are not all choreographed into the routine. If when performing the routine it is unclear that the dog knows or performs the required behaviors, the evaluator may ask those behaviors to be repeated once the routine is finished.

ALLOWED:

- Demonstrating behaviors outside of the performance of the routine
- A short leash or tab attached to the dog's collar
- A routine that includes more than one dog (both must meet the requirements to earn the badge)
- Including behaviors that are not required in the routine

NOT ALLOWED:

- Any behavior that puts the dog in physical danger
- Failure to read the dog appropriately and respond to his emotional needs
- Continued repetition of cues that call into question whether or not the dog actually knows the required behaviors
- Luring the dog (as with food) to complete the required behaviors