



Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

Musical Freestyle - Advanced

PURPOSE: This badge demonstrates teamwork between dog and handler, while performing a complex 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. The Musical Freestyle – Intermediate badge is a prerequisite for this badge.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must demonstrate novel dance moves as required, going beyond what was required for the intermediate badge. The required behaviors for this level of badge are complex and build on what was learned for the intermediate level badge. The dog must be attentive to the handler and must quickly respond to cues given by the handler. The dog must be able to perform behaviors as required on all 4 sides of the handler’s body. At this level all behaviors must be performed off leash.

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 creative and coherent themed dance routine that is performed to the music. It should be clear that though has been put into the theme, and the handler should be able to speak to why the theme was chosen. The routine must include a complete costume for the handler, some type of fancy collar for the dog, and at least one prop. Handler & dog should be moving to the beat of the music and utilize changes within the music to highlight specific moves. The routine should make good use of the space available. All cues must be quietly spoken to the dog or artistic in nature so that the routine does not resemble an obedience sequence. All required behaviors must be choreographed into the routine.

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 and must use the prop in a novel way in the routine. The prop used must not be out of place with the theme of the routine and the music.

During the routine, the handler should wear some type of complete costume that fits the music and the dance concept. It should be clear to the evaluator that some thought went into choosing the costume and matching it to the theme of the music. At this level the dog must wear some type of fancy collar or ruff.

PROCESS: The evaluator needs to be able to clearly see that the dog understands and can perform all of the required behaviors on cue. 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:

- A routine that includes more than one dog (both must meet the requirements to earn the badge)
- Creativity – including the required behaviors and other known behaviors into the routine.

NOT ALLOWED:

- Continued repetition of cues that call into question whether or not the dog actually knows the required behaviors
- Any behavior that puts the dog in physical danger or failure to read the dog appropriately and respond to his emotional needs
- Cues repeated several times without response or those spoken loudly; luring the dog