

# The Confusing Role of Emotion When Judging Dog Dancing

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# When SHOULD We Listen to Our Emotions?

- Bias vs. sensitivity in judging
- The difficulty of evaluating artistry:
  - Visualization of concept – do I understand it? Does movement vs costume/prop vs music feel contradictory? Does it matter? Is it me or the routine...?
  - Appropriate handler movement – does it feel too much/irrelevant/overshadowing – or does it bring out the dog or at least not take away from the dog's spotlight? What is my feeling based on?
  - The routine reflects the emotions of the music – can I feel the emotions match or contradict? WHY?
  - How much are the judges' tears worth? I.e. how much points can I award for a touching performance/routine?

# What About Other Categories?

- Wow -factors in presentation: flow, co-operation, responsiveness, accuracy, speed (fast or slow), signalling (or it's "absence") – which ones do I judge, why and what are they worth?
- How do I feel about mistakes in presentation? How strongly do I feel about barking? How about nervous handlers?
- Content: structure of the routine, variation between building suspense and highlights, innovative moves/combinations/variations – how delighted of being surprised can I be?
- Partnership and Well-being:
  - Do I feel the bond in partnership? Why/why not?
  - Do I feel the dog is struggling? WHY?

And our scores: how does 6,5 feel compared to a 6,8 compared to 8,5...?

# Clarifying Muddled Waters

- A lot of things can award points if well used - but less so if they just exist (like the demeanour of the dog, the atmosphere of the music etc.)
- What did the team DO to cause reaction X? How big is this element, i.e. how much is this worth?
- Avoid “miscarriage of justice”
- What DO we judge:
  - Planning!
  - Execution!
  - Great understanding of dog, music, performance
  - Innovation in tricks, choreography, idea etc.

**Aiming for fairness AND appreciation!**

# Tricky Situations

- Dog's demeanour: hectic, slow, expressionless, serious... Which ones are hardest for me to read?
- Choreography related to cultural phenomena I don't know
- Scandalous themes?
- Quiet music and loud commands
- Handler's emotions throughout the routine – nervous, hectic, angry, hyper, high energy, scared, exhausted...?

# Combining Subjective and Objective in a Fair Way

- 1) Is this emotion related to an element that is a judging criteria or not?
- 2) If not → focus evaluation on other elements
- 3) If yes → how much was it worth?
- 4) Check for fairness!
  - If I score XX is it enough to appreciate what was achieved – but not too much to be unfair to other competitors (especially ones with similar merit)?
  - If unsure go back to the regulations and see how many elements go into the category being evaluated right now – how much does the element seen affect the performance overall?
  - It's a lot of work, just train and do your best. There is a reason why there's always more than one judge...

# Main Points of the Proposed Para Dog Dancing Regulations

**STILL A DRAFT, NOT YET APPROVED**

# Participation

- Each country may enter one para-athlete to HTM and one to Freestyle and name a reserve for both of them.
- To qualify, the handler has to obtain a written statement from a doctor. The statement should include at least the following information:
  - statement of disability
  - information about aids needed (wheelchair, walking aids, cane (for visually impaired), personal assistant (see more in paragraph 5).
  - mobility restrictions: walking restrictions, running/jumping restrictions, balance restrictions etc.
- The NCO is primarily responsible for evaluating the participant's eligibility to enter para dog dancing classes.
- A handler may only enter in dog dancing world championships or para dog dancing world championships during a specific year, not both. A handler is allowed to move back to regular classes in later years after competing in para dog dancing championships.

# Organization & Aids

- The organisers will provide a venue accessible with a wheelchair or with other mobility restrictions.
- While considering the surface of the ring the organisers will work on finding an ideal balance between the dogs' and the para-athletes' requirements and will share information of the surface well in advance
- Preferably, the para dog dancing world championships should be arranged together with the other classes of the dog dancing world championships and not as a separate event.
- A separate event may nevertheless be considered when both championships are not possible to arrange together
- Necessary mechanical aids (like wheelchair, cane, hearing air etc.) are allowed but the handler must bring their own
- A personal assistant can set up props or help the handler enter and exit the ring but must not handle the dog and must exit for the duration of the routine.

# Scoring: Major Changes

Points are awarded in the same categories mentioned in the FCI Dog Dancing regulations. There are some subcategories where we wish judges to adjust their scoring for the para-athletes – mainly by emphasizing the handler's movement less and focusing on clever use of the dog in the routine

## Presentation:

**Flow:** some discontinuation allowed due to lack of balance/mobility

**Presentation on the day:** Less emphasis on the handler's performance

## Content:

The handler is allowed to use a smaller area of the ring than usually.

**Variety of moves:** less position+direction combinations required/expected in HTM

## Artistic Interpretation:

**Handler movement less emphasized** in punctuation, handler movement and emotional interpretation – the dog's role quite significant.

.Para Dog Dancing Regulations will be re-evaluated and developed further after two years in use (once approved). Feedback from judges applying them will be important to develop them further.