

# Dogs Can Dance Challenge Judging Guidelines



[DogsCanDance.com](http://DogsCanDance.com)

## Table of Contents

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Classical Freestyle Division</b>	<b>3</b>
Beginning Level	3
Intermediate Level	9
Advanced Level	15
<b>Entertainment Division</b>	<b>21</b>
Opening Act	21
Feature Presentation	27
<b>Music Interpretation Division</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Scoring Deductions</b>	<b>39</b>

## **Overview**

Once a handler has passed the Entry Level, they have the opportunity to begin earning points toward Division Titles and ultimately Championships. A handler will enter the lowest level within the chosen division and earn points toward mastering that level. Once a handler has earned 100 points in that level, they may enter the next level.

A handler may enter any class of their choice. The judge's scoring for each division level will depend on the class the handler and dog have entered. A judge will use the score sheet for that Division Level that corresponds to the performance class. For example, a Junior Handler or handler of a young dog may participate through the Junior Class. The Junior Class is the only class where points are restricted.

This reference guide contains the score sheets for each class within a division level, followed by a description of the scoring procedure.

Five judges will evaluate each routine. The highest total score and the lowest total score will be discarded. The remaining three judge's scores will be combined for a total point score for the performance in that event.

Judges have the right to participate in any event as long as they are not part of the judging panel for that event. No contractor or employee of Dogs Can Dance who has access to the database will be eligible to participate.

# Classical Freestyle Division

## Classical Freestyle – Beginner Level

### Beginner Level – Junior Freestyle Class

Possible score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

#### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music & choreography - award points 1–5**  
Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?  
Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?  
Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
- 2. Clarity of floor pattern design - award points 1 – 5**  
Were the floor patterns visible and clear?  
Was the ring space used creatively?  
Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?  
Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
- 3. Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center - award points 1-5**  
Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?  
To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions?
- 4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-5**  
Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?  
Did the team display any synchronization when moving?  
Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?  
Was the handler a supportive team player?  
Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

*Classical Freestyle, Beginning Level – Junior Freestyle Class Con't.*

**5. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-5**

Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

**6. Artistry: Dog and Handler have demonstrated an artistic axial movement phrase, along with creative demonstrations of right work, heel work, and center work – award points 1-5**

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that honored and featured the dog?

Did the team demonstrate creativity in heeling, right work, and center work?

## **Beginner Level - Open Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music & choreography – award points 1 – 10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?
  - Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
  
- 2. Clarity of floor pattern design - award points 1 – 10**
  - Were the floor patterns visible and clear?
  - Was the ring space used creatively?
  - Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?
  - Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
  
- 3. Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center – award points 1-10**
  - Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?
  - To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions?
  
- 4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler show the dog with sensitivity?
  
- 5. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**
  - Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?
  - Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?
  - Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

*Classical Freestyle – Beginning Level Open Class con't.*

**6. Artistry: Dog and Handler have demonstrated an artistic axial movement phrase along with creative demonstrations of right work, heel work, and center work – award points 1-10**

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that honored and featured the dog?

Did the team demonstrate creativity while heeling, right work, and center work?

## **Beginner Level - Honor Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

1. **Showcasing the dog's strengths, music & choreography – award points 1 – 10**  
Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's and the team's strengths and minimize the team's weaknesses?  
Did the music selection enhance the dog's performance?  
Was the music selection appropriate for dog and the choreography of the performance?
2. **Clarity of floor pattern design - award points 1 – 10**  
Were the floor patterns visible and clear?  
Was the ring space used creatively considering the Honor Class?  
Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?  
Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
3. **Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center – award points 1-10**  
Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?  
To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions considering the disability?

*Classical Freestyle, Beginning Level Honor Class*

4. **Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance as much as the dog was able?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler show the dog with sensitivity?
  
5. **Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**
  - Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?
  - Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?
  - Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?
  
6. **Artistry: Dog and Handler have demonstrated an artistic axial movement phrase along with creative demonstrations of right work, heel work, and center work – award points 1-10**
  - Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that honored and featured the dog?
  - Did the team demonstrate some creativity while performing heeling, right work, and center work?



# Classical Freestyle Intermediate Level

## Intermediate Level - Junior Freestyle Class

Possible score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

1. **Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1 – 5**  
Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?  
Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?  
Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
2. **Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design - award points 1 – 5**  
Were the floor patterns visible and clear?  
Was the ring space used creatively?  
Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?  
Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?  
Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?
3. **Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center - award points 1-5**  
Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?  
To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions?
4. **Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-5**  
Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?  
Did the team display any synchronization when moving?  
Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?  
Was the handler a supportive team player?  
Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

*Classical Freestyle, Intermediate Level Junior Class Con't.*

**5. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-5**

Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-5**

Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?

Was the use of that contrast effective?

Were the choices of axial movement phrases and locomotor movement phrases well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?

Did the team demonstrate creativity in heeling, right work, and center work?

## **Intermediate Level – Open Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?
  - Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
- 2. Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design - award points 1 – 10**
  - Were the floor patterns visible and clear?
  - Was the ring space used creatively?
  - Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?
  - Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
  - Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?
- 3. Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center - award points 1-10**
  - Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?
  - To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions?
- 4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?
- 5. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**
  - Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?
  - Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?
  - Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

*Classical Freestyle, Intermediate Level Open Class Con't.*

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-10**

Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?

Was the use of that contrast effective?

Were the choices of axial movement phrases and locomotor movement phrases well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?

Did the team demonstrate creativity in heeling, right work, and center work?

## **Intermediate Level – Honor Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

1. **Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1-10**  
Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog and the team's strengths?  
Did the music selection honor the dog?  
Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
2. **Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design - award points 1 – 10**  
Were the floor patterns visible and clear?  
Was the ring space used creatively considering the disability?  
Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?  
Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?  
Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?
3. **Precision – shows clean positioning of Heel, Right, & Center - award points 1-10**  
Were all three positions shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?  
To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the three moving positions considering the disability?

*Classical Freestyle Intermediate Level Honor Class Con't.*

**4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**

- Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
- Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
- Was the dog a willing partner in the performance as much as the dog was able?
- Was the handler a supportive team player?
- Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**5. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**

- Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?
- Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?
- Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-10**

- Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?
- Was the use of that contrast effective?
- Were the choices of axial movement phrases and locomotor movement phrases well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?
- Did the team demonstrate some creativity in heeling, right work, and center work?

# Classical Freestyle Advanced Level

## Advanced Level - Junior Freestyle Class

Possible score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### Scoring Points:

- 1 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

**1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1 – 5**

Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?

Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?

Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?

Did the music accompaniment provide contrast?

**2. Choreography - Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design – award points 1 – 5**

Were the floor patterns visible and clear?

Was the ring space used creatively?

Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?

Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?

Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?

**3. Technical Merit and Precision – award points 1-5**

Were all movement phrases shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?

To what degree would you rate the effectiveness of the pace change?

To what degree would you rate the technical merit of performance when it comes to precision?

*Classical Freestyle, Intermediate Level Junior Class Con't.*

**4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-5**

- Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
- Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
- Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?
- Was the handler a supportive team player?
- Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**5. Handler Presentation – award points 1-5**

- Attire: Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?
- Attire: Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?
- Attire: Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?
- Aesthetics: Were the choreographic choices aesthetic and honoring to both the handler and the dog?
- Cuing: Rate the degree to which the handler's cuing related to the path and movement of the dog.
- Cuing: Rate the degree to which the handler's cuing enhanced the dog's performance.

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-5**

- Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?
- Was the use of that contrast effective?
- Were the choices of axial movement phrases, locomotor movement phrases, and pace change well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?
- Did the team demonstrate creativity in the use of freestyle movement behaviors and phrasing?



## **Advanced Level – Open Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1 – 10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the music selection match and showcase the gait of the dog?
  - Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
  - Did the music accompaniment provide contrast?
  
- 2. Choreography - Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design – award points 1 – 10**
  - Were the floor patterns visible and clear?
  - Was the ring space used creatively?
  - Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?
  - Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
  - Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?
  
- 3. Technical Merit and Precision – award points 1-10**
  - Were all movement phrases shown with clearly defined static and moving positions?
  - To what degree would you rate the effectiveness of the pace change?
  - To what degree would you rate the technical merit of performance when it comes to precision?
  
- 4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Did the team display any synchronization when moving?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**5. Handler Presentation – award points 1-10**

Attire: Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Attire: Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Attire: Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

Aesthetics: Were the choreographic choices aesthetic and honoring to both the handler and the dog?

Cuing:

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-10**

Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?

Was the use of that contrast effective?

Were the choices of axial movement phrases, locomotor movement phrases, and pace change well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?

Did the team demonstrate creativity in the use of freestyle movement behaviors and phrasing?

## **Advanced Level – Honor Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport.
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport.
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths, music selection in relation to dog and choreography - award points 1 – 10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the music selection support the dog and the handler team?
  - Was the music selection appropriate for the choreography of the performance?
  - Did the music accompaniment provide contrast?
  
- 2. Choreography - Axial and Locomotor (traveling floor pattern) design – award points 1 – 10**
  - Were the floor patterns visible and clear?
  - Was the ring space used creatively?
  - Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?
  - Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?
  - Was/were the axial movement phrase(s) positioned to showcase, honor, and present the dog?
  
- 3. Technical Merit and Precision – award points 1-10**
  - Were all movement phrases shown with clearly defined static and moving positions considering the disability?
  - To what degree would you rate the effectiveness of the pace change?

**4. Teamwork Effectiveness - award points 1-10**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Did the team display any synchronization when moving?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance in relation to the disability?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**5. Handler Presentation – award points 1-10**

Attire: Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Attire: Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Attire: Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

Aesthetics: Were the choreographic choices aesthetic and honoring to both the handler and the dog?

Cuing: Rate the degree to which the handler's cuing related to the path and movement of the dog.

Cuing: Rate the degree to which the handler's cuing enhanced the dog's performance.

**6. Artistry: Elements of Contrast / Musicality - award points 1-10**

Did the team employ the use of contrast within the routine?

Was the use of that contrast effective?

Were the choices of axial movement phrases, locomotor movement phrases, and pace change well placed in relationship to the accompaniment?

Did the team demonstrate creativity in the use of freestyle movement behaviors and phrasing?

## Entertainment Division

### Entertainment Division – Opening Act

#### Opening Act – Junior Class

Possible Score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

#### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 Needs significant improvement
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

**1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-5**

Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious?

Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?

Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?

Did the music enhance this theme?

Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?

**2. Showcasing the dog's strengths – award points 1-5**

Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?

Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?

**3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-5**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

*Entertainment- Opening Act Junior Class con't.*

**4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-5**

Did the team perform Heel work, Right work, and Center work?

How would you rate the technical precision of moving in Heel, Right, or Center?

How would you rate the clarity of position?

Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?

**5. Axial Movement Phrase – award points 1-5**

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a creative manner?

Was the axial movement phrase placed well within the accompaniment?

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that showcased the dog?

**6. Opening and Closing Picture – award points 1-5**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?

## **Opening Act – Open Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 – 2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done, impressive
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

- 1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-10**
  - Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious?
  - Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?
  - Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?
  - Did the music enhance this theme?
  - Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?
  
- 2. Showcasing the dog's strengths – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?
  
- 3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance
  - Was the handler a supportive team player
  - Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?
  
- 4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-10**
  - Did the team perform Heel work, Right work, and Center work?
  - How would you rate the technical precision of moving in Heel, Right, or Center?
  - How would you rate the clarity of position?
  - Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?
  
- 5. Axial Movement Phrase – award points 1-10**
  - Was the axial movement phrase presented in a creative manner?
  - Was the axial movement phrase placed well within the accompaniment?
  - Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that showcased the dog?

*Entertainment – Opening Act Open Class con't.*

**6. Opening and Closing Picture – award points 1-10**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?



## **Opening Act – Honor Class**

Possible score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 – 2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done, impressive
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

**1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-10**

Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious?

Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?

Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?

Did the music enhance this theme and appropriate for the dog?

Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?

**2. Showcasing the dog's strengths – award points 1-10**

Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's and the team's strengths and minimize the team's weaknesses?

Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?

**3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-10**

Did the team perform Heel work, Right work, and Center work?

How would you rate the technical precision of moving in Heel, Right, or Center?

How would you rate the clarity of position?

Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?

*Entertainment Opening Act, Honor class con't.*

**5. Axial Movement Phrase – award points 1-10**

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a creative manner?

Was the axial movement phrase placed well within the accompaniment?

Was the axial movement phrase presented in a manner that showcased the dog?

**6. Opening and Closing Picture – award points 1-10**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?

# Entertainment Division - Feature Presentation

## Feature Presentation - Junior Class

Possible Score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 Needs significant improvement
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

#### **1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-5**

Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious throughout the entire performance?

Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?

Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?

Did the music enhance this theme?

Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?

#### **2. Showcasing the dog's strengths – award points 1-5**

Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?

Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?

#### **3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-5**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance

Was the handler a supportive team player

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

#### **4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-5**

Did the team perform Heel work, Right work, and Center work?

How would you rate the technical precision of moving in Heel, Right, or Center?

How would you rate the clarity of position?

Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?

*Entertainment- Feature Presentation Junior Class con't.*

**5. Special Effects Final Presentation – award points 1-5**

Did the video editing enhance the theme in a creative manner?

Did the video editing enhance and further showcase the dog's performance?

If no editing was applied, did the handler use other special effect such as setting or other means adding to the impact of the viewer's enjoyment of this entertainment performance?

Was the camera angle considered throughout the choreography and presentation of the performance in a manner that enhanced the movement design?

**6. Opening and Closing Picture and Emotional Impact – award points 1-5**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?

To what degree did the end product evoke an emotional impact?

## **Feature Presentation – Open Class**

Possible Score per judge: 60 points  
Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

- 1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-10**
  - Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious throughout the entire performance?
  - Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?
  - Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?
  - Did the music enhance this theme?
  - Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?
- 2. Showcasing the dog's strengths – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?
- 3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?
- 4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-10**
  - Did the team perform Heel work, Right work, and Center work?
  - How would you rate the technical precision of moving in Heel, Right, or Center?
  - How would you rate the clarity of position?
  - Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?

*Entertainment- Feature Presentation Open Class con't.*

**5. Special Effects Final Presentation – award points 1-10**

Did the video editing enhance the theme in a creative manner?

Did the video editing enhance and further showcase the dog's performance?

If no editing was applied, did the handler use other special effect such as setting or other means adding to the impact of the viewer's enjoyment of this entertainment performance?

Was the camera angle considered throughout the choreography and presentation of the performance in a manner that enhanced the movement design?

**6. Opening and Closing Picture and Emotional Impact – award points 1-10**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?

To what degree did the end product evoke an emotional impact?

## **Feature Presentation – Honor Class**

Possible Score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following area:**

- 1. Performance Theme, Music, & Choreography – award points 1-10**
  - Was the theme/concept of the performance obvious throughout the entire performance?
  - Was the theme/concept honoring to the dog?
  - Did the theme/concept have audience appeal?
  - Did the music enhance this theme?
  - Was the music appropriate for the honor class considering the disability?
  - Did the choreography uphold the theme/concept?
  
- 2. Showcasing the dog's and team's strengths – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the team's strengths or were the team's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the handler make wise choices of attire which showcased the dog yet still upheld the theme?
  
- 3. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?
  - Was the dog a willing partner in the performance in relation to the disability?
  - Was the handler a supportive team player?
  - Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

*Entertainment Featured Presentation, Honor Class con't.*

**4. Technical Merit & Precision – award points 1-10**

Were all movement phrases shown with clearly defined static and/or moving positions considering the disability?

Were the floor patterns clean and clear? Could you draw them on paper?

**5. Special Effects Final Presentation – award points 1-10**

Did the video editing enhance the theme in a creative manner?

Did the video editing enhance and further showcase the dog's performance?

If no editing was applied, did the handler use other special effect such as setting or other means adding to the impact of the viewer's enjoyment of this entertainment performance?

Was the camera angle considered throughout the choreography and presentation of the performance in a manner that enhanced the movement design?

**6. Opening and Closing Picture and Emotional Impact – award points 1-10**

Did the opening and closing picture draw your attention?

Did the opening and closing picture relate to the overall theme?

Were the opening and closing picture positioned in a manner that clearly showed the design?

To what degree did the end product evoke an emotional impact?



## Music Interpretation Division

The team will select a genre within which to create a performance routine. The same scoring system will be used for all three performances, each created to a different genre. One of the three must be the International Genre.

**Frequent Flyer** status is awarded when 100 points has been earned within the first chosen genre.

**International Flyer** status is awarded when 100 points has been earned within the second chosen genre.

**World Traveler** is awarded when 100 points has been earned within the third chosen genre along with having earned the Musical Interpretation Title (DCD-MI)

### Music Interpretation Junior Class

Possible score per judge: 30 points

Total possible combined score: 90 points

Handlers are allowed to have food or toy rewards hidden on their body, which are only visible to the dog or the judges when delivering the reward. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

#### **Scoring Points:**

- 1 Needs significant improvement in this aspect of the sport
- 2 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 3 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 4 Well done, impressive
- 5 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths and choice of music – award points 1-5**  
Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?  
Did the music match and showcase the gait of the dog?  
Was the selection of the represented genre appropriate for this dog?
- 2. Choreography – award points 1-5**  
Was the choreography reflective of the music?  
Did the presented style of the choreography express the genre?  
Did the team demonstrate creativity within the choreography?

*Music Interpretation, Junior Class, con't.*

**3. Clarity of floor pattern design – award points 1-5**

Were the floor patterns visible and clear?

Was the ring space used creatively?

Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?

Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?

**4. Precision – shows clean positioning throughout the performance – award points 1-5**

Were all positions clearly defined when static or moving, no guessing involved?

To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the performance, was it clean and precise?

Did the dog perform the cued movements?

**5. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-5**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Did the team display any synchronization when moving?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

**6. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-5**

Did the chosen handler's attire enhance the feel of the genre?

Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

## **Music Interpretation Open Class**

Possible Score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

**1. Showcasing the dog's strengths and choice of music – award points 1-10**

Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's strengths or were the dog's weaknesses apparent?

Did the music match and showcase the gait of the dog?

Was the selection of the represented genre appropriate for this dog?

**2. Choreography – award points 1-10**

Was the choreography reflective of the music?

Did the presented style of the choreography express the genre?

Did the team demonstrate creativity within the choreography?

**3. Clarity of floor pattern design – award points 1-10**

Were the floor patterns visible and clear?

Was the ring space used creatively?

Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?

Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?

**4. Precision – shows clean positioning throughout the performance – award points 1-10**

Were all positions clearly defined when static or moving, no guessing involved?

To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the performance, was it clean and precise?

Did the dog perform the cued movements?

**5. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Did the team display any synchronization when moving?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog with sensitivity?

*Music Interpretation, Open Class con't.*

**6. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**

Did the chosen handler's attire enhance the feel of the genre?

Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

## **Music Interpretation Honor Class**

The Honor Class should be scored from the mindset that the dog or handler is not capable of performing at the Open Class level. Scores should be reflective of the effort and heart put into the creativity and performance of the routine and not be compared to the quality of an Open Level performance. Rewarding is allowed in the Honor Class. Toy or food rewards should be hidden on the handler's body, not seen by the dog or the judges until delivered. Physical contact is also permitted as a reward. Rewarding should not disrupt the continuity or integrity of the performance as much as possible.

Possible Score per judge: 60 points

Total possible combined score: 180 points

### **Scoring Points:**

- 1-2 Needs significant improvement
- 3 Has potential, continue to focus on training this aspect of the sport
- 4-5 Adequate for this level, keep striving higher
- 6 Well done
- 7-8 Very impressive
- 9-10 Exceeds expectations at this level

**Based upon the above scale, rate the performance for mastery in the following areas:**

- 1. Showcasing the dog's strengths and choice of music – award points 1-10**
  - Did the handler make wise choices which showed the dog's and the team's strengths or were the team's weaknesses apparent?
  - Did the music showcase the of the dog?
  - Was the selection of the represented genre appropriate for this dog?
  
- 2. Choreography – award points 1-10**
  - Was the choreography reflective of the music?
  - Did the presented style of the choreography express the genre?
  - Did the team demonstrate creativity within the choreography?
  
- 3. Clarity of floor pattern design – award points 1-10**
  - Were the floor patterns visible and clear?
  - Was the ring space used creatively?
  - Could you trace on a piece of paper the path of the dog and handler?
  - Was the floor pattern designed in a manner that featured the dog when considering the camera's viewpoint?

*Music Interpretation – Honor Class con't.*

**4. Precision – shows clean positioning throughout the performance – award points 1-10**

Were all positions clearly defined when static or moving, as much as the team was able?

To what degree would you rate the technical merit of the performance considering the disability?

Did the dog perform the cued movements?

**5. Teamwork Effectiveness – award points 1-10**

Did the handler and dog perform as a united team?

Did the team display sensitivity to each other when moving?

Was the dog a willing partner in the performance?

Was the handler a supportive team player?

Did the handler showcase the dog in an honoring manner?

**6. Handler Attire is respectful and showcases the dog – award points 1-10**

Did the chosen handler's attire enhance the feel of the genre?

Did the dog stand out against the handler's attire?

Did the dog blend into the handler's attire and disappear?

Was the handler's attire distracting to the dog or to the viewer?

## Scoring Deductions

When submitting a video performance, it will be assumed that the quality of the performance represents the team's highest level of ability unless submitted to the "auditions class" where feedback for improvement is the goal. Because of the ability to re-film before submitting a performance, the following scoring deductions will be upheld:

**Barking** – Dogs Can Dance Challenge takes into consideration two different attitudes of vocalization by the dog. If the barking is a natural expression of joy and does not interrupt the flow of the performance, it will not cause a deduction in the scoring of the performance. If, on the other hand, the barking is determined to be one of "protest or lack of patience by the dog", or from obvious overstimulation, a five point deduction for every session of excessive barking will be applied to the team from each judge. If the barking halts the dog's performance in any manner, the same deduction will result. ***These deductions will be applied in the scoring of teamwork.***

**Leaving the Ring** - Dogs Can Dance Challenge will deduct five points per judge if the dog exits the indicated performance area once the actual performance music has started. ***This deduction will be applied in the scoring of precision or technical merit.***

**Music Length** – If the music does not fit within the time guidelines, the routine will not receive a score. No leeway of time is permitted. Time begins at the start of the first audible note of the song and ends with the last audible note. ***General comment no scoring follows.***

**Music Vocals** – If a judge feels the wording content within the song is inappropriate and does not honor the dog, the routine will not receive a score by that judge. Note: Judge's discretion will be permitted. ***General comment no scoring follows.***

**Handler Corrections** - Any physical or verbal correction by the handler that inadvertently affects the performance of the dog, will result in a ten point deduction from each judge per each incident "perceived". This deduction will be applied to the handler's teamwork score. More than two "perceived" handler corrections will result in a zero applied to the handler's score from each judge. ***This deduction will be applied in the category of Teamwork.***

When handling "On Leash", a tight leash without a handler's correction will be a 1 point deduction per incident from each judge. ***This will be applied to the precision or technical merit score.***

**Use of Rewards as a Lure** - No food or toys may be visible during the performance except when rewarding briefly in the Junior Freestyle Class or the Honor Class. *Food may be hidden in the mouth or pockets in the two above mentioned classes.* The use of rewards as lures will result in a deduction of five points per incident in the Junior Class or the Honor Class per judge in the handler's scoring. ***This deduction will be applied to the Showcasing the dog's/team's strengths score or Precision / Technical Merit score, choice of the judge.***

**Lack of Control of the dog** – A dog who appears to be out of control will be scored as a five point deduction for each incident per judge. ***This deduction will be applied to the teamwork effectiveness score.***

**Pauses of Movement** – Pauses are a great choreography asset, however, any pause lasting more than five seconds where neither the dog or the handler is moving, whether planned or unplanned, will result in a 1 point deduction per additional second over five seconds from each judge. ***This deduction will apply to the artistry/choreography score.***

**Inappropriate Attire or Movements** – Attire over shadowing the dog, except in the Entertainment Class, will result in a five point deduction per judge. Movements by the handler that are determined as unflattering or not honoring to the dog, in any division will result in a five point deduction per judge. Note: Judge's discretion will be permitted. ***This deduction will be applied to the artistry score.***

**Neglect of following guideline procedures** – Any neglect to follow the written guidelines set forth in this guide, live or video performance instructions, or premium list, whether intentional and unintentional will result in a deduction of 5 points per judge. (Example: Neglect to introduce/honor the judges or thanking your dog post performance) This includes neglect to indicate ring boundaries and markers except for Entertainment Division. ***This deduction will be applied to the score in the “other” category.***

*Note: These guidelines may be updated. Be sure to download the newest version of the guide and the judging guidelines prior to creating and submitting any performance in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge™.*