



American Sighthound Field Association

Judges Handbook

In honor of

Susan Weinkein



JUDGES HANDBOOK

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Forward

The act of judging at lure field trials is simultaneously both an objective and subjective exercise. While the framework for making judging decisions is spelled out in the rules and procedures of the American Sighthound Field Association (ASFA), the actuality of making judging determinations relies greatly on a judge's ability to make rapid, subjective decisions. These decisions are based on an awareness of judging guidelines and a knowledge of sighthound running styles that is grounded in a degree of experience of actually observing sighthounds in pursuit of a lure.

In this Judges Handbook, veteran sighthound fancier, lure coursing enthusiast, and lure coursing judge Susan Weinkein brings together a compilation of thoughts and reflections on the art of judging lure coursing. The author bases her writings on her own experiences, as well as those of many other judges. Using both informal and empirical research, Ms. Weinkein provides current and prospective judges with a tool that is informational, educational, and thought provoking. The discussion of sighthounds and their running styles is particularly informative.

The Judges Handbook should be must reading for all enthusiasts considering applying for licensure, as well as those who have grown long in the tooth while standing in the middle of a field marking score sheets.

Frank Zaworski, President
Lure Coursing Judges Association

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Susan Weinkein

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We wish to thank off those who contributed to this publication . . . with a very special thanks to Susan Weinkein, without whose hard work, dedication, and tireless efforts this publication would not be. Indeed, much of what ASFA is today in large part is due to Susan's devotion to the fancy and the sport of lure coursing. Susan coursed for over 20 years, and served on the ASFA Board for 12, lending her expertise, levelheaded opinions and fun-loving presence to us all. For this, and much more, we are all grateful . . .

--The ASFA Board of Directors

So you want to be an ASFA judge . . .

by Katie Kaltenborn, Past Chair, Judges Licensing Committee

Here are some tips and helpful hints to help you get started.

First, get an ASFA rulebook and read it, cover to cover. Then read it cover to cover again. Then read it again. You can't be too familiar with the rules. As a judge, you should have a very strong working knowledge of all ASFA rules, but particularly those that apply to your assignment.

Next, get a copy of the ASFA policies and read them. You guessed it, read them again.

Look at a Judge's Sheet and start to think through how you want to weigh the various categories (enthusiasm, follow, speed, agility, endurance). Some judges treat the categories fairly equally, some judges weigh speed, agility and endurance more heavily than follow and enthusiasm. Either practice is fine, just be consistent with your method.

Now you need to think about your scores. Most judges pick an average score from which they can add and subtract points based on the run for each dog in a course. Pick an average that you are comfortable with and just sit on the sidelines at a trial and try to apply your average to the different runs you watch. At first you may want to start out choosing one dog in a course to watch, then progress up to two and then three. This way you'll work through a progression on how you will apply your scoring to actual runs. This will speed your judging when you start to apprentice.

Once you get more comfortable judging all three dogs in a course, think through how you will sort the dogs out in cross-course judging. How do you cross-course judge speed? Are tight turns enough to reward agility if the dog has no speed? How great was the course where only one dog of the three actually ran and the lure was run solely for that hound? Does the dog that finishes hard and slides on its head at the finish have more endurance than the dog that slows slightly at the end, knowing the course is over? Are there significant differences in follow between the yellow dog in the first course and the blue dog in the fourth? Do you apply enthusiasm in both positive and negative ways?

What's an average course for the various breeds? Do you weigh all of your categories the same with all of the breeds or do you expect the Field Champion Whippets to follow better than the Field Champion Borzoi and Rhodesian Ridgebacks?

We've all seen courses that were less than stellar. For example, what will be your personal policy on incomplete courses? When does a dog deserve a qualifying run for an individual course? Does a dog deserve to qualify for the day with only one qualifying run? Keep this in mind when you pick a score for the prelims. It will help you in the long run. Believe me, I've judged with many judges who like to be more critical in the finals than in the preliminary runs. That's fine, but be aware that Fluffy's owner will remember that Fluffy ran more in the finals than in the prelims and will be confused why the final score was worse than the prelim score. To you, both courses were less than stellar.

What about behavior that is naughty? What is your personal policy on behavior that might cause you to excuse, dismiss, or disqualify a dog? Do you excuse a hound that fails to run? What do you do with a dog that courses another dog? What constitutes interference in your mind? Does the dog that was minding its own business have to react to the offending dog for you to consider the other dog's behavior worthy of a dismissal. What behavior will earn a disqualification from you?

Lastly, practice, practice, practice. You won't ever be consistent if you don't practice. You don't have to be judging the particular trial you are attending. You can practice from the gallery as a spectator. Of course, that's tough to do if you only watch your dog's course or your breed's stakes and go back to the car until it's your turn again.

Just remember, there is no "right way" to judge. It's all about your opinion. Some will agree and some won't, but if you are consistent in what you do, most clubs will be interested in asking you back as a judge.

– JUDGES HANDBOOK –

CONDUCT. American Sighthound Field Association (ASFA) judges are official representatives of lure coursing and are expected to exhibit respectable conduct at all times. Judges are ambassadors of the sport and should reserve opinions on anything other than their specific judging obligations, exercising diplomacy and fairness in all areas of contact with entrants and field committees.

ACCEPTING THE ASSIGNMENT. Once a judge has accepted a judging assignment, it is considered to be a binding agreement or contract between the host club and the judge. Both parties should keep a written copy of the agreement on file.

WALKING THE COURSE. Each judge is required to walk the course before beginning his assignment and verify with the field chairman that the approved course plan is properly staked. To fairly judge a course, it is necessary to know the terrain and be aware of changes to the surface (e.g., turf or sand, rough or slippery, dips and rises). Judges should check for dangerous holes within the normal course pattern, for fences, trees, and other obstacles that might interfere with the course. Visualize the course pattern in reverse, since reversing the course can markedly change the degree of safety and level of performance. The angles of the turns should not be hazardous. Courses should be designed so that turns do not result in the hounds becoming easily unsighted. Two situations should be avoided: sharp turns followed by too short of a straight for the hounds (especially the lead hound) to recover before the next turn, and turns on or near the crest of a hill or ridge. Generally, there should be a minimum 20- to 30-yard straight following a sharp turn of approximately 90 degrees; and a 50-yard straight following two corners that combine for an extremely acute turn of 70 degrees or less. However, an experienced lure operator can often overcome a poor corner design(s). It's often helpful to walk the course along with the lure operator so any concerns can be addressed directly with him or her.

LOCATION OF JUDGES. Judges should stand in a location that enables them to have the best view of the course. Most judges prefer to use the middle of the field. Some judges prefer a location, if the visibility is adequate, within hearing distance of the lure machine. Being able to hear the machine can provide an objective standard for judging the speed of the lure. Other judges prefer to view the field from the same location as the handlers. Regardless of where you choose to view the courses, care should be taken to set up in a location that will not interfere with the course of the hounds in either direction. During the running of the trial, the area where the judges stand should be restricted to judges, apprentice judges and appropriate members of the field committee. When two judges are used, they must stand apart during the running of the course. They shall not converse during the running of the course, nor shall they discuss anything pertaining to that course, except to state "no course," until the score sheets have been turned in to the field clerk or his representative.

Although it is not a rule, it is advised that all judges judge from the same general vicinity. Courses often look quite different from different perspectives. If judges choose to stand too far apart their placements often will not agree.

Never allow a course to begin until you are in proper position. However, you should make every effort to avoid causing course delays which result from your inattention or being out of proper position. You should be on the field, and ready to proceed when each course you are scheduled to judge is called up. You should not delay the trial by using more time than is reasonable in scoring a course, but neither should you be hurried by the huntmaster into less than a thorough evaluation of each hound's course.

TEST DOG. Judges should be present and watch the test dog or pilot run(s). Judges can request that the course be run in both directions before preliminary judging begins if they have questions or concerns about the course layout.

According to ASFA Operational Policy #33, a judge can decree a limitation on calling to hounds in a course. However, the judge must tell the huntmaster to announce this decree prior to each preliminary run. If you prefer owners not to yell at their hounds during the course such as, "go," "turn," or saying the hound's name loudly, all you need to do is ask the huntmaster to inform handlers during the huntmaster speech given before each preliminary run.

Although certainly not required or even suggested, it is advisable to avoid looking at or identifying handlers prior to each run. It's very easy to focus on the hounds and block out the handlers. Judges are human and, in spite of their best efforts, may be tempted to pay more attention to the scoring of a particular hound if they have identified its owner. They may also inadvertently adjust their expectation of how the hound "should" run based on previous judging assignments.

OFFICIAL JUDGING FORMS. Although most clubs generally complete the upper section for their judges, there are some clubs who simply hand the judge a stack of blank Judging Forms. Judges should be able to correctly complete the upper section of the forms. Judge #1 and Judge #2 are assigned based on alphabetical order by last name. All forms must be signed and the judge must initial any changes or corrections made in the scoring section.

Although it is not required, it is good practice to draw a line through the scoring section if there was no yellow, pink or blue dog in a run.

TAKING NOTES. Judges are encouraged to make notes on a separate paper as to outstanding qualities or failures of each hound in each course. A variety of forms and techniques can be used. Pluses and minuses can be noted in each category for each hound. The course can be mentally divided into sections and the judge can note the order of the hounds in each section.

Note taking should never divert attention from the course in progress. When this occurs, notes are no longer an aid, but a hindrance. Notes are useful in refreshing your memory should a handler question you about a specific course. They are also conducive to consistent scoring since you can refer back to them to see just what score you gave a

hound in a previous course who only completed a portion of the course, returned to its handler halfway through the course, or ran a similar course.

It is also helpful to note your overall impression of the placements of the hounds immediately following the course. Once you have recorded your placements, you can fill in the actual category scores accordingly. This method is also a big help in avoiding blanket color errors.

AVERAGES. History has indicated that the majority of judges score their average-running hounds within the 70 to 75 point range. While this does promote consistency when the judges are changed for the various breeds, it does not mean that every judge need conform to this average. Judges should select the judging technique and range for scoring that best serves them to accurately rank the hounds judged on a given day and be consistent with that technique throughout the day.

Most experienced judges maintain a relatively narrow point spread between hounds that complete the course. In a full stake, for example, the point spread may only range between 70 and 75 points. Very large point spreads, with the exception of hounds that fail to complete courses, can have negative effects on the overall judging. If one judge has a very narrow point spread and the other judge has a wide point spread, the judge with the wide point spread can completely negate the other judge's scoring. Also, very wide point spreads can have the effect of weighing a preliminary or final run so high or so low that the hound will either win or lose almost regardless of the quality of its other run.

Some judges have in mind an average hound's ability and judge all courses against the same standard. Some judges find it easy to use the first course as a standard to which all other courses of the day are compared. Others prefer to use as a standard their "ideal hound" of the breed. Some mental standard is needed so that the outstanding hounds, or the substandard hounds, are judged consistently. Whichever standard you decide to use, you should consistently use that standard and not switch back and forth. A hound within a specific breed on a given day is being judged in relation to all other hounds in that breed on that day.

"One last question to be asked when scoring is, did that hound deserve championship points?"

"I actually judge more along the line of how I think/know they could/should run."

"Top scoring hounds are easier to score than below average hounds. The lowest scored hounds generally take longer to score. Avoid delay when scoring below average hounds as these hounds probably will not place."

SCORING. Placing of winners shall be decided on the basis of qualities evidenced by enthusiasm, follow, speed, agility, and endurance in scoring the hounds. Judges shall score in whole numbers only and shall be governed by the following system:

Category	maximum points	suggested average
Enthusiasm	15	10
Follow	15	10
Speed	25	20

Agility	25	20
Endurance	20	15
TOTAL	100	75

Except for arithmetical or blanket color errors, judges may NOT change their scores on the Official Judging Form once it has been turned in. However, a judge may change his or her decision (e.g., excuse, dismiss, disqualify). A judge may not change his or her score or decision after a trial is concluded.

"I hope speed and agility will be strongly emphasized as that which is to be most highly rewarded by an ASFA judge - worth half the points and most definitively the deciding factor among good hounds, followed by endurance in the case of a tie in speed and agility. Follow and enthusiasm are simply 'extra' categories used to separate out average or below average lure coursing hounds that are not intent on their work."

"Although follow is only a 15-point category, the name of the game is lure COURSING. If the hound is not coursing the lure, then it's not playing this game. Speed and agility must be shown IN PURSUIT OF THE LURE."

"The laws of physics apply to running dogs (with the possible exception of a few Salukis) just as they do to anything else. Acceleration and turning are more difficult for large objects than for smaller ones because of momentum. Length of stride at full speed, however, is greater for taller dogs and the smaller ones must work harder to keep up. Follow is greatly influenced both by speed and agility."

"At times, poor or misguided lure operation can prevent a hound that is exhibiting superior performance from adequately demonstrating that superiority. To the extent possible, this should be compensated for in scoring."

Enthusiasm: Lively, single-minded interest, showing great eagerness and determination in regard to the lure after the "tally-ho" and until the lure passes the marked finish for the course. It is easy to recognize a really unenthusiastic hound. For instance, one that never leaves the starting line, or that wanders off and does not finish the course. It is much more difficult to recognize extra or unusual enthusiasm, since hounds may exhibit it in individual ways. As an example, one hound may be nearly uncontrollable while waiting for the tally-ho, while another may freeze into quivering immobility. The first looks more enthusiastic from a distance, but is not necessarily so.

Enthusiasm is the most difficult category to address by course design; however, there are design features that can make a course more interesting for the hounds - make them "think" - thereby increasing their enthusiasm. These include:

- Turns, especially those that significantly change direction, provide interest and help keep the hound's attention. Sharp turns can also test a hound's enthusiasm - does the hound really put an effort into making the turn, or just ease through it? On the other hand, a good running hound can be really put off by extreme turns when the hound is not given enough lead into the turn and is "buried" in the corner.
- Physical features including terrain relief and obstacles such as vegetation, water, or even man-made features, can add interest and challenge. With terrain you can witness the hound's willingness to put out the extra effort required to go up hills.

- A good, long straight can provide the judges with an opportunity to see which hounds are really “pushing” the lure, not just following it. A slight jiggle (for instance, two pulleys offset a yard or two apart) in the middle of a really long straight can bring the attention of the hounds back to the lure and let the judges see which hounds are really paying attention.

“The fifth category - enthusiasm vs. overall ability. This is where I like the AKC system better. I find that I use enthusiasm most often in the negative - docking dogs that quit, etc. Overall ability, on the other hand, is a great category for splitting the dogs that ‘worked’ the bunny from the rest of the group. As I prefer to add to my average score, rather than subtract (don’t be a fault judge), I wish we could do something with ‘enthusiasm.’ ”

Follow: Chasing with the intent of taking the lure while maintaining a path in reasonably close proximity to the lure’s course. Consider the relative positions of the hounds to the lure and to each other. Keeness is exhibited when the hound reacts immediately to any change in the motion of the lure. The trailing hounds may reasonably be expected to cut a corner to some extent. Such cutting, so long as it clearly results from an attempt to follow the lure, should not be penalized. A hound that continues to follow the path of the string to the pulley, even though it could have seen the lure turn earlier, is not really following the lure, but the string.

Unfortunately, in many breeds, hounds that have coursed for some time become “lure wise” and anticipate which way the lure will go, sometimes cutting off much of the course. Although this is a commendable indication of both the hound’s intelligence and its interest in catching the lure, at some point it forces a significant scoring penalty, since it becomes impossible to compare the cutting hound’s abilities against those of the hounds that are at least approximately following the lure.

A hound that becomes unsighted for some good reason, and yet attempts to find the lure again, should not be severely penalized. In fact, depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to rerun the course, or one or two hounds from the course. In this context, the height of the terrain and vegetation with respect to the hound’s eye level should be kept in mind. If a hound becomes unsighted in a situation where it should have had no trouble following the lure, the degree of penalty should depend on how hard it works at trying to find the lure again, and how soon it does so.

“Follow is totally an individual animal characteristic . . . not breed specific.”

“I feel that there are differing styles of good follow among the different breeds. I expect a Whippet, a Greyhound and an IG to follow fairly directly behind the bunny. I expect three Borzoi to split and then cross over at turns - sharing the workload much like a bicycle team. I expect the Rhodesian Ridgeback, Pharaoh Hound, Sloughi and Azawakh to flank the bunny, running with their head turned toward the bunny, rather than directly behind it. REACTION DETERMINES FOLLOW; NOT POSITION RELATIVE TO THE BUNNY. Unfortunately, follow is the easiest category to determine. It is also the category most affected by lure operation.”

“All breeds should follow. Unfortunately, ‘follow’ has been wrapped up in ‘running style of the breed,’ and has come to mean being ‘right on the line.’ It is not. Follow simply means the hound is running directly at (pursuing) and reacting to each movement of the

lure, with the intent of catching it. Some run right on the line, others run just off it, some run 10 yards off it - but that is not enough difference to always 'separate' hounds out in judging. This is a category overemphasized, overused and abused by most ASFA judges, I think. A dog should lose follow points only if it is NOT looking at and reacting to each movement of the lure, or it is hedging/cheating/cutting noticeably to gain advantage. To dock a dog in follow simply because it's five yards further away from its cohort running right on the line is silly, and not what the category intends, but it's done weekly by lure coursing judges, unfortunately. More importantly - which dog is faster, more agile? Being right 'on the line' is no advantage over being five yards off the path of the line - provided both dogs are running 'at' the lure."

If we think of the lure as the game, being fifteen feet "off the path of the line" can be a very distinct disadvantage. Unless the lure turns virtually right in front of the hound's face, or the hound cuts, it has little or no chance of actually catching the lure or game. The speed and agility of the hound is used to position itself closer to the lure in order to catch it.

"I think that ranking follow is the hardest because some of the breeds tend to hunt together even though they have never met. This is particularly true when watching Borzoi, Ridgebacks, Sloughi, and sometimes, Ibizans. One hound will peel off while another stays on the lure, only to switch positions as the third 'drives' the lure to one or both of the first two. How many times have we all thrown our hands up in the air and asked, 'How can I judge that?' Actually, all three should be rewarded because they would be the most efficient team to catch the prey. Many new judge prospects don't realize this and when it's pointed out they see immediately what is happening."

"This is a category very subject to interpretation. The definition in the rulebook says, 'the relationship between the running of the hound and the movement of the lure.' I do not expect different breeds to run the same with respect to the lure. That does not mean they do not have follow. However, Borzoi and Irish Wolfhounds, because they hunt by heading game, are less likely to run along behind it than to run along side it. They also are more likely to flank the lure. That does not mean they are not following it. On the other hand, there usually are a few Whippets who have learned to stay to the inside of the course throughout and thus to gain an advantage on their competitors. What I love to see is a dog that watches the lure and reacts to every change, even slight bumps in the ground that sometimes bounce the lure. A dog that has learned to run ahead and "ambush" the lure is good training for lure operators, but can be a danger to other dogs. Rhodesians and Ibizans tend towards that mode of operation, although I've seen it in Borzoi and Irish Wolfhounds as well."

"Follow . . . each breed has a different hunting style and if it includes 'honoring' then follow becomes subjective."

"All dogs should follow. The Afghan Hound, Basenji, Ibizan Hound, Irish Wolfhound, Italian Greyhound, Pharaoh Hound, Rhodesian Ridgeback and Scottish Deerhound tend to be much slower than some of the breeds so there is no excuse for not being pretty much right behind the lure or just off the line (within 10 yards), directly pursuing it."

Speed: Speed is defined as rapidity in moving, the rate of motion or progress; the hound's overall speed and acceleration in coursing the lure. Credit the hound that levels out low, stretches and really drives. Since timing is not used to measure speed, the hound's manner of "putting out" is an important means of assessing its ability to cover ground. However, some hound's running styles are deceptive, in that they look either faster or slower than they actually are. A comparison of the relative speed of the hounds in a single course can usually be done well, as long as they are all running the same line. Comparison of speed across courses is much more difficult and must be done with great care. Even in a single course, comparisons can be deceptive since the hound that is closest to the judge will appear to have covered more ground than it really did in comparison to an outside hound. A go-by on the outside is normally a clear indication of superior speed as long as the lure is kept well in front of the hounds.

Some hounds will slow down if they get close to the lure. Some will run alongside it and some will attempt a take. Slowing down, but not attempting a take, does not show a lack of speed, but a lack of enthusiasm (or possibly endurance). A hound attempting a take frequently penalizes itself by losing its stride and momentum thereby requiring an extraordinary effort to regain its former place. Some hounds can make an attempt and do not miss a stride. Others may do a shoulder roll and come up running. Usually, attempted or actual takes happen when the lure operator allows the hound to get too close to the lure.

"If the lead hound is fairly close to the lure, it will be watching for changes in direction, whereas the following dog(s) can push harder."

Lure coursing is not simply a test of speed. All facets of a hound's performance must be judged.

Be careful not to confuse rapidity of stride with speed. Often a hound with a very long open stride will look slower when it is actually covering more ground than the hound with a shorter stride, but faster leg movement.

"I believe different breeds' agility is related to a size/speed ratio . . . so all is related to SPEED. Endurance is also a factor of the speed. Therefore, the sprint breeds (Whippets, Greyhounds, etc.) are prone to use their total available energy expenditure in a shorter amount of time than the distance breeds (Saluki, etc.) that run at less than maximum speeds for early parts of the chase and therefore have more available energy longer."

"The definition of speed includes two aspects, speed and acceleration. They are not necessarily the same thing. Greyhounds, Whippets and Salukis all are able to do both pretty well. A first-rate Saluki can do it best, but the average Saluki does not outrun a Greyhound on the straight. Borzoi, for their size, accelerate very well, but Ibizans have the advantage of very long legs and light weight. Wolfhounds and Deerhounds do not accelerate as well, but once they get up to speed they can be very fast indeed. Also, both are capable of short bursts that can catch a lure operator unaware. Italian Greyhounds can be very impressive for their size - they simply do not have the stride that the taller dogs have. They certainly can accelerate, though! Basenjis not only have short legs, but they do not have the acceleration one would expect of a hound that size. Let us just say that the difference between an IG and a Basenji shows that size is not everything."

"Speed - can be quite illusionary. Low slung hounds appear to move faster ... "

"The best place to judge speed is on the run-up from the start to the first turn. After an even start, the dog that runs faster reaches that turn first. If you have any influence on course design, a long initial straightaway gives faster dogs an opportunity to show off and judges an opportunity to see that clearly. Once dogs start negotiating turns, judging their speed becomes harder. Several factors complicate judging speed in mid-course. Some can be downright deceiving.

"Complication #1. If one dog gets to a turn first and is buried in the turn and the others go through it smoothly, the one that got to the turn first is disadvantaged. This may also influence the running and judging of speed in the following straightaway.

"Complication #2. Getting buried handicaps a dog in the turn and the following straightaway. That's because it had to slow down more than dogs that had adequate warning of the turn. It slows down enough to make a nearly square turn or even to come back to the course. In doing that, it goes farther than dogs that turn going into the turn and can take the turn smoothly. They can take a shorter route along a smooth curve at a speed limited by their agility. A buried dog enters the next straightaway behind and going slower than the others that it beat to the turn.

"Complication #3. If one dog enters a straightaway ahead of another, it will appear to be going faster along that straightaway than the other, even when it may not be. Let's digress from dogs to a simpler illustration.

"Suppose you're standing on a bridge, holding a golf ball over the edge in each hand. They're absolutely identical except one is orange and the other one is white. Then you drop them a split second apart, the orange one first. We know from high school physics that they will take the same elapsed time between being released to striking the surface below the bridge, and their speed will be equal at every point along the way down, too. It just won't look that way. The orange ball will appear to be going faster all the way down. That's because it starts picking up speed first. At the moment before you release the white ball, the orange one is already moving. It will pull ahead while the white one is still in your hand. And, since both accelerate all or most of the way down, it will always be going faster and keep pulling farther ahead. The white ball will reach each place at the same speed that same split second after the orange one. By then the orange ball will be going faster yet. It's hard to see that both are going the same speed when they pass the same point. All an observer can see is the orange ball pulling away from the white one.

"The same happens when two dogs enter a straightaway a moment apart. The first one accelerates while the second is running slower in the turn, and it will be going faster as long as they're accelerating on that straightaway. The faster the breed, the more noticeable and deceptive this is. Slower breeds may reach their top speed before reaching the next turn, so an apparent difference in speed after that is true. Faster breeds may accelerate the whole length of the straightaway, so their appearance of speed will be deceptive the whole way. If the distance between them is no longer opening, or is even closing, the second dog is actually going faster. You may be able to judge speed by whether the second dog closes the gap when it enters the next turn, if it doesn't cheat. If it stays on about the same line as the leader and closes up to about the same gap that was between them when they started that straightaway, then it ran about the same speed. If

it follows well and still closes the gap, it probably ran faster. If the gap is longer after both are slowed back down, you can tell that the front dog ran faster.

"Something not related to speed may also happen on straightaways. If the normal pattern just described suddenly changes and the gap opens or closes toward the end of a straightaway, you may be seeing a difference in endurance, not speed."

Agility: The most common means of testing agility is through the use of turns of approximately 90 degrees or less. Terrain can also be used to test agility. It is more difficult to run on uneven ground or across a sloping hill than on smooth, flat surfaces.

Agility is the ability to move quickly and easily; nimbleness in negotiating terrain (i.e., recovery from difficult terrain that may cause a hound to slip or slide); turning without going wide, cutting or breaking stride.

Two hounds that are approximately equal in speed and agility will tend to exchange places at each corner (with good lure operation). The lead hound going into the pulley will have less warning that the lure is turning and of necessity goes wider in the corner. If the lure is not unusually far ahead of the hounds, a hound that comes into a sharp corner first and is still first going out of it is demonstrating superior agility.

A hound that falls in rough terrain or on slippery ground but makes a really good recovery probably should not be penalized. A hound that falls where the footing is good, with no complicating circumstances, may deserve an agility penalty. A few hounds learn that a deliberate fall may be the fastest way to get through a difficult corner. A hound that can do this and use it to its advantage certainly should not be penalized.

"Agility is only - ONLY - shown at speed. This cannot be emphasized enough. A slow breed (or dog) cannot 'show' agility and gain an 'agility point' no matter how 'quickly' it turns a corner."

" 'Nimbleness; the ability to move quickly and easily, negotiating the terrain and turns and recovering from falls.' I put the Saluki one up on the Whippet for this only because they are so impressive for their size. I haven't seen many Salukis recover from falls because I have seldom seen them fall; yet somehow they make turns at speeds I would have thought impossible. Whippets are, however, a very close second, if second at all. They are particularly adept at recovering from falls without ever taking their eye off the lure. Some of them even intentionally seem to tumble into a turn in order to make a fast change in direction. IGs seem to be very like Whippets in running style. Afghans also make some outstanding turns for their size. That may be partly due to the fact that they are not running as fast as some of the other breeds. I'm pretty sure that is the case with Pharaoh Hounds. The speed at which Greyhounds travel certainly seems to hurt their turning ability. I think a great many of them have bad feet, making it painful to make sharp turns. Borzoi and Ibizans seem to be either very good or very bad and it may be a matter of trying. They are at a disadvantage because of their size. Rhodesians, Deerhounds and IWs also have the problem of trying to get a large mass turned and consequently often do not have agility. There are certainly exceptions, however, and they are not necessarily the smaller dogs. I have seen a very large Wolfhound jump over another Wolfhound when the latter had cut in front of him."

"Agility ... long hounds give the appearance of more agility, while the square ones, i.e., Basenji, can appear 'unbending' "

Endurance: Endurance can be tested by both distance and terrain. Although the minimum distance for an ASFA course is 500 yards (600 yards recommended), for a course on a fairly level field, 800-1,000 yards is required to truly provide a test of endurance. Terrain, especially relatively steep terrain, or a significant difference in elevation of 30 to 40 feet or more between high and low points, can increase the test of endurance and shorten the distance required to provide an adequate test.

Endurance is the lasting quality, stamina of physical and mental concentration. Credit the hound that does not fade, pull up or slacken. In cool weather, on relatively short, flat courses, it is usually hard to adequately compare endurance (although there is the occasional hound that simply runs out of steam on the final course). However, a hound that lacks endurance will usually show degradation in running style as the course progresses. A hound lacking in enthusiasm will most often just quit or go off to explore the field. Lure-wise hounds frequently will slow down on the very last portion of the course knowing that the lure will stop before it reaches the machine.

"Borzoi, Whippet, Saluki, Azawakh, Sloughi - all these breeds should easily be still together at 500-600 yards, with the Whippet having a slight edge in the first 300, the Borzoi coming on at 200-400, the Saluki, Azawakh, and Sloughi kicking in at 250-300. Now, at 800-1000 yards, that's where endurance will start to show."

"This category can be thought of like this: if all the breeds started to run a 1500-yard straight, what would be the order of finish?"

"Endurance usually is more conditioning than anything when it comes to lure coursing. In open field coursing you see more opportunities to evaluate endurance."

" 'The physical stamina of the hound.' Frankly, one seldom gets to see a test of this in our area ... I rank Whippets high because they so often are involved in multiple runoffs and never seem to get tired. When you think of the number of strides an IG takes to get around the course, I think they're pretty tough, too. Salukis, because I've watched people chase so damn many of them around fields for very long times, ranked high. Most of the rest are ranked about the same, meaning I have not seen their endurance tested. Irish Wolfhounds, Borzoi, and Scottish Deerhounds are very large dogs and are susceptible to overheating. They also tend to 'spell' each other when running together as if saving some of their energy. I ranked Basenjis over the giants because those that do run have to make a great many more strides to get around the course."

"Endurance can have so much to do with the condition of the dog, and this can be reflected in the amount of coursing a dog does."

"Endurance . . . our courses are too short to test for endurance in the real sense."

PRE-SLIP PENALTY. It is the huntmaster's responsibility to notify the judge(s) of any pre-slips immediately at the end of each course. However, if the huntmaster fails to notify the judge(s) of a pre-slip, then for all intents there has been no pre-slip. Seek confirmation from the huntmaster when a pre-slip is suspected but not called. When a pre-slip occurs, the judge must levy a penalty of 1 to 10 points, subtracted from the total score of that

hound for that course. The pre-slip penalty is not carried over in the case where a no-course is called on the course in progress. When a no-course is called, the hounds are restarted at the start line. A pre-slip may be called at the beginning of the course and/or during a mid-field continuation of the same course. The pre-slip penalty will carry over in the case of a mid-field continuation.

The amount of penalty given should relate to the amount of advantage the pre-slip gave the hound. Whatever penalty is levied, the judge should strive to be consistent across all courses of the day, levying a similar penalty for a similar advantage.

COURSE DELAY PENALTY. Hounds that delay their course or hounds whose handlers delay the course may be penalized by subtracting 1 to 10 points by each judge, or may be excused for the day. Hounds should not be penalized for staying at the lure or actively showing signs of trying to retrieve the “rabbit” upon completion of their course. The course delay penalty is carried over if a no-course is called on the course in progress. Course delay penalties may be assessed for delays caused by handlers who delay the start of the course, hounds that break away from and avoid their handlers prior to the request “Are you ready?” and hounds that avoid their handlers after the command, “Retrieve you hounds.”

Again, it’s important to be consistent. The penalty should be proportionate to the amount of time the trial is delayed.

EXCUSAL. A judge may excuse, for the day, a hound that stays with the handler or returns to the gallery and does not run, is unfit to compete, courses other hounds rather than the lure, has handlers or owners who interfere with the judges or officials, or delays the course. The huntmaster and lure operator are required to notify the judge(s) of any occurrence at the beginning or the end of a course that might be grounds for excusal. Appropriate action shall be at the sole discretion of the judge(s). The judge should notify the huntmaster of an excusal immediately. Hounds that are excused in the prelims do not count when calculating points; hounds that are excused in the finals do count.

DISMISSAL. A judge may dismiss, for the day, any hound that interferes with the course of another hound. “Interference” in a course means to hinder or impede progress. A hound cannot be dismissed for intent. Actual interference must take place. Growling and/or barking in and of itself does not constitute grounds for dismissal. A judge must notify the huntmaster of a dismissal immediately.

The huntmaster and lure operator are required to notify the judge(s) of any occurrence at the beginning or the end of a course that might be grounds for dismissal. Appropriate action shall be at the sole discretion of the judge(s).

“A MATTER OF HONOR. Lure coursing seems to be the only dog sport that doesn’t pay much respect to the concept of ‘honoring.’ Honoring is the behavior of one dog to another who has pointed, retrieved, or taken game first. Honoring the point is an important aspect of canine behavior when working two dogs on upland game. In open field coursing, dogs will not generally contest a jack that has been taken or claimed by another animal.

“In lure coursing, some dogs will defend the lure at the end of a course. They will growl, bark or snap at other dogs who run in and try to take the lure out of their mouth or pick it up from where it lies between their legs. I’ve seen many judges over the years dismiss the dog who is defending his captured prey. Rather, should judges penalize the dog who fails to honor the kill?”

DISQUALIFICATION. A judge may disqualify an aggressive hound for fighting on the field. It is often difficult to determine which hound initiated an altercation. It is usually correct to assume that the hound that first turns its attention from the lure to the other hound is the aggressor. A hound that turns its head, bites, barks and growls while actively interfering with the course of another hound is doing so deliberately and should be disqualified. This is in contrast to the hound that is so intent on the lure that it accidentally collides with another hound and barks. Upon occasion, hounds may come in and both go for the same bag, one or both hounds may inadvertently grab a hound or handler instead of the bag. Aggression cannot be assumed, it must be demonstrated. However, a hound that attacks another is to be disqualified, even if the victim does not defend itself.

The huntmaster and lure operator are required to notify the judge(s) of any occurrence at the beginning or the end of a course that might be grounds for a disqualification. Appropriate action shall be at the sole discretion of the judge(s).

Both judges must disqualify a hound for the penalty to count as a disqualification. If one judge disqualifies and the other judge dismisses the hound, then the hound is dismissed.

The reason for any of the actions listed above must be marked in the appropriate area located at the bottom of the Judges Form.

NO COURSE VS. MID-FIELD CONTINUATION. You may call a no-course at any time if any of the following occurs:

- (a) A hound has been interfered with or disrupted,
- (b) A piece of the lure falls off and a hound reacts to it,
- (c) A hound touches or catches a portion of the lure,
- (d) A hound becomes entangled in the string,
- (e) The lure operator fails to maintain the 10-30 yard limit and you cannot fairly score the course, or
- (f) Anytime you determine a course to be unjudgeable.

If a no-course is called, you must immediately inform the huntmaster. If either judge calls a no-course on one or more of the hounds in a course, both judges will score the re-run.

Mid-field continuations would also be allowed for items (a) through (e) above. Many times, mid-field continuations are used when the course is over half completed. Judges are cautioned to be consistent in their decisions to call a no-course vs. utilize a mid-field continuation. Courses that are broken by mid-field continuations tend to be scored lower.

On the other hand, it makes no sense to restart a course from the beginning if the reason it is being rerun is that one or more hounds cut across the field and trapped the lure. Restarting from the beginning will simply result in a repeat of the same procedure.

Note that the rules do allow you to score some hounds in a course and rerun others, or to score hounds which do not complete the course. These provisions can be helpful when there is a problem with hounds catching the lure and stopping the course.

HOUNDS THAT FAIL TO COMPLETE A COURSE. Any hound that receives a zero score from both judges, or a judge when only one is used, in the preliminary run, is automatically excused for the day. It will also not be counted as having been in competition for the purpose of computing points. Consequently, you should normally give at least some small positive score to any clean running hound that puts in some effort in the preliminary course. Hounds that do not receive a score of at least 50% of the total possible points are not considered to have performed well enough to deserve recognition and thus do not receive points or official placements. Therefore, you should be careful to award at least a 50% score to any hound whose performance you consider adequate for the breed. On the other hand, any hound that does not do a credible job should receive less than 50% of the total score. You must determine for yourself what you consider “adequate,” but a couple of common precepts are:

- (a) “A dog that does not do half the work does not deserve half the points.”
- (b) “If that had been a real bunny, would the hound have eaten tonight?”
- (c) “Was that run deserving of points toward a title?”

The effect of giving high scores to undeserving hounds is to lessen the value of the ASFA Field Champion and Lure Courser of Merit titles and to discourage the entrants who have especially good hounds.

Breed running styles

The ideal sighthound will “virtually explode out of the slip, fly down the straightaways, easily negotiate turns, never faltering on rough or uneven terrain and lock their jaws on the lure at the finish.” Although this statement was written by Connie Sullivan to describe the ideal Afghan Hound run, it aptly describes an ideal run for any of our sighthounds.

The following comments and quotes describe typical attributes of the breeds. Bear in mind that there will always be exceptions - tremendous speed or awesome agility shown in a breed not noted for it. The opposite will also occur - a lack of speed or agility in a breed noted for it. Adjust your judging accordingly. But always remember that you are judging lure coursing, not conformation. It is possible that the hound with the worse conformation and breed type will be the best lure courser. Heart can overcome many faults.

“In certain regions of the country, the dogs in [a particular] breed [may come] from the same lines and they may represent the breed differently than others. For example, the [breed name] that have always run in this area are not very fast, but will follow like they are tied to the line. For the last 15 years, they have all come out of this line.”

“In particular, I believe that a major part of the reason for the generally poor performance of Irish Wolfhounds, Scottish Deerhounds, and Borzoi in endurance, speed, and agility (and enthusiasm), is due to lack of proper conditioning ... I also don’t think that

there is a whole lot of difference between Azawakhs, Ibizan Hounds, Pharaoh Hounds and Sloughi. The Pharaoh might have a slight advantage in agility because it's a bit smaller."

"If we are not pretending to be hunting, then why penalize the string chaser . . . ? After all, he is playing the game. I don't think there is any way to avoid comparing lure coursing to hunting in the open field, or jungle, or desert, or wherever. I have lots more questions than answers for this sport we have enjoyed for so long."

"I think that within each breed there are those who love games of any kind (I know this to be true of Afghans and Salukis). These dogs adapt to our rules because of their love of a game. Others who may even be littermates have a much more serious approach to life and will only hunt for live game and see no humor in plastic chasing. Some of these will do it just to humor us. The heightened sense of humor, or lack thereof, filters through their whole life."



"In speed, the Afghan Hound is comparable to the Ibizan Hound, but not as fast as the Borzoi, Greyhound, Saluki, or Whippet. They excel in agility and have a fair amount of endurance." (Breeder Marietta Forrester, Lure Coursing 1972-1989)

AFGHAN HOUND. "Historically, the Afghan Hound was used to hunt the high plains and rough mountainous areas of Afghanistan. The Afghan has unique features that are advantageous for this type of terrain. These include large feet with thick pads for good traction, very strong, well-muscled hindquarters with high, wide-set hip construction that allows for their great agility. An Afghan can easily be running at full speed, stop on a dime, wheel around, take off in the opposite direction, and jump a ditch or hurdle a clump of bushes. They also tend to recover very quickly from a run." (Connie Sullivan, *Lure Coursing 1972-1989*)

"I find the Afghan and the Ridgeback run very similarly in that they most times will fade to the side, but the head is turning constantly toward the lure."



"There are a lot of good Afghans running . . . but my overall impression of the breed is that they either follow pretty well or follow pretty badly."

"These ... run right 'at' the lure, just

off the line or on it."

AZAWAKH. The Azawakh is an African sighthound, whose original homeland encompassed the south Sahara and Sahel. They are the guardians, hunters, and

companions of the Tuareg and other ethnic tribes of the region. They are most noted for their incredible endurance.

BASENJI. The Basenji originated in the east-central part of Africa. While they were a favored palace dog to the Pharaohs, they were more important to the natives of the Zaire (Congo) - Uganda region as a hunting dog. The Basenji is a pack animal that lives in a very structured society. They hunt both by sight and sound.

"Basenjis have incredible peripheral vision so they often run wide. However, being wide doesn't mean they are 'off' the lure. Because of their wide field of vision, it is sometimes difficult for a judge to tell if a Basenji is actually chasing the lure or one of the other hounds. The end of the course will often make it clear.

"Basenjis should have endurance that goes on forever. In their native Africa they were valued for their ability to run all day. There is a myth out on the field that Basenji tails have to be uncurled if they are running full out. This is simply NOT true. Many Basenjis have a double curl that doesn't unroll, although the tail is still used as a rudder. If the field is rough, Basenjis will often 'bounce' to keep an eye on the lure. They can and should be agile. It is also critical for judges to watch closely when Basenjis finish a course. No looking down to score until the owners have all hounds under control.



"Basenjis can and do double suspend. Occasionally, a Basenji (usually a large male) will slow its speed to run with a slower hound (usually a smaller bitch) to make taking the rabbit more of a team event without being aggressive. Let's face it; the smart ones know it's a game.

"Basenji ears telegraph their turns and attention. For instance, if there is a hound behind them and their ear is always turned toward that hound, there may be an issue at the end of the course. A Basenji running full out will show it in the way their ears telegraph turns. The Basenji standard calls for 'hooded' ears and those ears are the ticket to understanding the coursing Basenji. They will run a one left, one right, and one up the center pattern when all three are good coursing dogs. The one driving up the center is trying to force the turn into one of the other hounds. Basenjis are silent when coursing. Due to their size it was an asset to sneak up on prey.

"A proper running Basenji should not be aggressive. In Africa, an aggressive Basenji was often put in the stew pot for dinner."

"Although the Basenji is the slowest of the sighthounds, they have the ability to corner better on a tight course. He is also blessed with incredible endurance. It is very typical of the Basenji to conserve its energy on the course unless it is challenged. It is also very common for Basenjis to repeatedly switch positions throughout the course due to their pack mentality.

"Since Basenjis originated in central Africa, they like hot, humid weather. Basenjis are noted for running slow. However, they are also noted for endurance. The more a Greyhound runs,

the worse it gets. The more a Basenji runs, the better it gets. A Basenji runs like a Basenji against other Basenji. In Best in Field, a Basenji runs faster when the competition is faster.”
“A pack animal, the lead will change at every turn, as when they are hunting.”
“Basenjis may have problems seeing the lure. They seem to either be right on the trail or no where near and their attention wanders easily.”

BORZOI. The Borzoi was originally bred for the coursing of wild game, primarily hare, fox and wolf, over moderate distances on more or less open terrain. They were hunted in packs. In the 17th century, the Russians had a problem with rabid wolves. They imported Greyhounds from Egypt to eradicate the problem. But the Greyhounds couldn't withstand the Russian winters. So they crossed them with a native collie-like dog and got the Borzoi. Borzoi means swift in Russian. The Borzoi coursed as a “troika,” which is three dogs coursing, usually two females and a male. The huntsman was on horseback. Original accounts from nineteenth century Russia refer to the breed characteristic of “thinking” where the game might go and attempting to head it off. It seems that the creativity of the Borzoi created a problem for the sport of coursing wolves in their homeland similar to what it does today for the sport of lure coursing.

“Good Borzoi follow, running on or just off the line. Bad Borzoi do not.”



“The characteristic that almost certainly causes the most problems for judges and lure operators in dealing with Borzoi is the breed’s follow. In evaluating Borzoi courses that might not be quite what we would like in the way of follow, we should distinguish between a lack of follow and ‘creative’ follow. Examples of a lack of follow would be the dog that heads out in some arbitrary direction paying no attention to the lure, the dog that races the lure, or runs ahead of it. By creative follow, I mean the dog that is paying attention to the lure and thinking hard about how to catch it, even if not following directly behind it.”

“Coursing Borzoi excel in speed and enthusiasm. Only the Greyhound is faster. Some are better than others in agility and most have ample endurance. Many quickly develop follow problems.”

The Borzoi is capable of excellent speed, ranking between the Greyhound and the Saluki. They have good endurance. However, they do tend to “hunt the lure” and have been attributed with the worse follow of all the sighthounds. It is common for them to run 5 to 15 feet to the side of the lure rather than directly behind it. However, they should be watching the lure and reacting to its turns. They have quick acceleration off the line.

“Many Borzoi are painful to watch as their front movement is very restricted. They have the heart and mind to run, but their body won’t do it. They also have the most unique

version of follow. They watch the lure, but are not always close to it. They believe in divide and conquer."

GREYHOUND. "Greyhounds are the consummate hunting hounds. Historically, they were bred to run down and catch their prey. The Greyhound is an apex lure coursing/hunting hound and should demonstrate those qualities that are in the Greyhound's remarkable heritage; that is, speed and agility!



"The running style of Greyhounds varies and because of this, it becomes a very difficult breed to judge. It is hard to typify a style when there are three types of Greyhounds: those retired from the track, those that are AKC show bred and those that are performance/show bred. The track retirees seem to burst out of the slip and show some stunning early speed only to get to a turn first and get 'buried' by the operator who either is not expecting the hound to be that fast or is trying to keep the group running together. That fast hound in this run may make some very fancy agile moves to get back into it or it may really cut off some of the course to catch up to the other slower, but following hounds. So, in this instance, which hound do you reward?

"We know that lure coursing judging is not based on whichever hound crosses the finish line first. There are four other criteria that we must consider besides speed. But a Greyhound's most outstanding feature is speed. I believe the most important aspect of any sighthound is speed. As a breeder of performance/show Greyhounds, I want my pups to have that stunning speed. Ah, but what is speed without agility? The answer: a pretty darn good straight racer!"

"Speed and agility together are what define a good coursing Greyhound. A slower Greyhound following behind the lure can be mistaken for an agile hound. Agility is when a fast hound gets to a turn and leans into it (much like a motorcyclist) and accelerates out of that turn."

"The Greyhound is a sprinter, possessing unsurpassed speed and acceleration. He has decent follow, but less than average agility and poor endurance."

There are NGA (registered with the National Greyhound Association), AKC and crosses of the two registries.

"Please don't forget that 'the Greyhound' has been used for deer hunting far longer than it has been used for hare coursing, or track racing."

"In rating Greyhounds, I was considering NGAs as that is predominantly what I have seen over the years. If I were ranking pure AKC Greyhounds (not NGA/AKC crosses which are often quite successful) my numbers in each category would have been significantly lower."

"Greyhounds and Whippets are the sprinters."

"Can burn dirt, but most of the retired track dogs have a very hard time turning corners."

"The 'race-bred' dogs run pretty much right on the line."

IBIZAN HOUND. "... the Ibizan Hound has been used for centuries just to hunt rabbit. Bred to hunt for hours on rocky terrain, they are a tough and wiry hound. Their pads are tough, used to scrambling over limestone rocks, and through scrub brush. They are thin, all the better to leap from a standstill to pounce on a rabbit hiding in the scrub brush. In some ways the Ibizan Hound hunts more like a cat than a dog, pouncing on the prey and forcing the prey to run. When the rabbit is out in the open, the Ibizan will pursue the prey, following the rabbit, turning and spinning when the rabbit turns and spins. If the Ibizan Hound has lost sight of the prey, it will leap up into the air just to catch a glimpse." (Sarah Martens, Lure Coursing 1995-2000)



"The Ibizan hound is a sight and scent hound. They are in the middle range in speed, but amount the best in enthusiasm. They have superior agility, very good follow and excellent endurance."

It is common for Ibizan Hounds to bark during the entire course. They are very strong in endurance, similar to the Saluki and tend to have average speed and agility. "Their speed is similar to that of the Afghan Hound, but they are not generally as agile." "Have a mind of their own, and most of the time go where they want to."

IRISH WOLFHOUND. "... the original purpose of the Irish Wolfhound: to run down a wolf and dispose of it in single combat. The most important element that comprises an Irish Wolfhound is the balance between speed and power. Too much speed could mean a compromise in its size (or power). Similarly, a hound of too great of size often sacrifices the speed necessary to catch a wolf. It is this perfect balance of speed and power that Irish Wolfhound breeders should strive to attain." (Mike Ferris, Lure Coursing 1995-2000)

The IW is not a sprinter. He is not as fast as a Greyhound or Whippet and he's not terribly agile. He should, however, have good endurance.

"IW's were not necessarily designed for speed."

"Most follow very good, but let's face it, they are HUGE dogs, and most tire due to the heat that we run them in."



ITALIAN GREYHOUND. “The pre-history of the Italian Greyhound is linked with the greyhound-like sighthounds by their common ancestor that arose in areas near the Mediterranean Sea. Possibly, the Italian Greyhound took shape as people selected the smaller individuals of the proto-greyhound as breeding partners. As murky as the prehistory is, there is no doubt the IG is a sighthound with strong connections to its larger cousins. This is reflected in the very first line of the standard, ‘... very similar to the



Greyhound ...’ but is also very much expressed in its sight-driven prey instinct and its athletic running ability. The history is much better established beginning in the Middle Ages through the Renaissance period and into Modern age in numerous tile works, tapestries, and paintings. The breed was generally connected to people of

wealth although this could be due to the fact that the artwork and goods that remain today as evidence were only available to those with the extra resources. There is no doubt that Italian Greyhounds were bred for companionship. But this does not preclude that they were used to hunt and kill small ground-dwelling animals. IGs regularly, with or without the approval of their owners, dispatch a variety of mammals including gophers, mice, and even the occasional squirrel. Until evidence is found announcing the intention of the first breeders of the Italian Greyhound, no one can really know the beginning role the IG played. But, one thing is certain, any person, whether they lived a thousand years ago or today, would thrill at the sight of their Italian Greyhound running full out in the middle of a field.

“Depending, of course, on the individual’s conformation, the Italian Greyhound has a very similar running style to the ‘off the track’ Greyhounds. An athletic IG has a head down, flat out, double suspension gallop. Many times they may vocalize before and during a run. This breed seems to be hot or cold with their drive. They either lure course with a frenzied passion or they don’t move off the start line. This could be due in part to the inexperience with training and conditioning for the sport by the members of the fancy. Endurance is always an issue with this breed. A properly sized IG is potentially smaller than a Basenji and, due to its all out ‘do or die’ running style, it can push the limits of even a well conditioned IG. Stride for stride with the big Greyhound, there is no comparison to what is asked of the IG’s endurance. This is why IGs must be in spectacular health and condition before they are ever asked to run. IGs with top drive will NOT stop when they tire and, in fact, they will hurt themselves before they will come off the line. The size issue and head down running style also causes the IG to be far more limited in its vision distance than would be expected as they are seen standing at the start by the lure operator. They can easily become unsighted in a seemingly small depression if the lure is not kept quite close.”

“The IG’s best attribute is follow. This may come from the fact that they are so small. They were possibly, and this is often debated, used for hunting very small game or as

'ratters,' although some say they were bred just to be companions. With their small size comes agility. IGs should have excellent cornering abilities."

PHARAOH HOUND. More than likely, the Pharaoh Hound is descended from the dogs pictured on the tombs of Egypt. However, it has not been proven whether the dog originated in Egypt or in Malta. The Pharaoh is both a scent and a sighthound. In Malta, the Pharaoh is used to hunt rabbits. Most hunting is done at night, preferably with a cooperating pair consisting of a dog and a bitch. The ground is rocky and treacherous and there is not always a full moon. Once the hounds have marked the scent to ground, they will set up a constant barking until their masters reach that spot. When the rabbit bolts, the lead hound catches and frequently kills the rabbit. If the rabbit escapes, the other Pharaohs are waiting to make the kill. [Sue Sefscik in the 1995-2000 ASFA Historical Book] This method of hunting and terrain would require great agility and follow, coupled with average speed. It is still common for the Pharaoh Hound to bark throughout the running of the course.

"Pharaoh hounds are endurance runners. They are not the fastest breed, but they certainly do have speed and quite a few demonstrate incredible intensity for the lure. One gets the impression that, even after the longest course, the Pharaohs are coming in for the kill and ready for that lure to start out again, as if to say, 'Okay, that's one rabbit caught, now I'm off to catch another six or seven!' Not all, but many Pharaohs will work the lure as a team. As with any breed that teams up on the game, one dog is often 'permitted' to kill, while the others stand back to some extent, honoring that kill."

"Very smart dogs. After the first course, they tell each other where the lure is going to go. This makes for a lot of not-too-good follow sometimes."



RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK. Ridgebacks tend to size up the field, figure out where the lure possibly can go (they understand tree lines and fences), plan ahead, and go out to waylay the lure. They will run out there with a lot of speed, sometimes jump up and down to make sure they have the bag sighted, and then take off on the shortest path to the goal. The first part of a course with good running Ridgebacks is best described as mayhem. Each dog is trying to position itself best for the take. Once the lure has made it around the first or second pulley, the dogs will settle in and actually make a huge effort to run down the lure. But they will not “follow” it from behind. They know perfectly well they will never catch it if they run along behind it. When you see the dog’s head turned toward the lure, even when running twenty or thirty feet off the line, that is Ridgeback follow.



“Not the fastest, but very intent.”

Speed can be gauged on a long straight. Ridgebacks do best on big, wide-open courses. This is not to say they have poor agility. Watch for the “sit-spin.” This occurs when they find themselves headed in the opposite direction of the lure. They will sit on their hindquarters and spin the forehand around to go in the right direction. It takes huge strength to do this at high speed given the bulk of the dog.

Ridgebacks are built for endurance and sprint speed. There has to be enough left at the end of a course to get the game. In lure coursing, experienced dogs will often be seen “loafing in” at the end. They know the game is over and the lure has stopped. Once the lure quits moving, they could care less. So they loaf. No expenditure of unnecessary energy!

“Rhodesian Ridgebacks these days come in two versions - not officially recognized, of course. You have the 100-pound monsters with big heads, broad back skull, short muzzles, great depth of lower jaw, heavy, heavy, heavy bone and maybe lots of angulation or maybe not. They are usually over the height and weight standard and there can be some very nasty temperaments. The big heavy dogs lumber along behind the bag, win because they have ‘great follow,’ and generally give the breed a bad name in coursing circles. Dog aggression is not uncommon.

“Then you have the sighthound type, built like a heavy Saluki, sometimes taller than long, narrower heads, long muzzles, not a lot of depth to the lower jaw, deep chest, lots of tuck-up, big inner thigh muscles, good length of loin, no exaggerated angulation. These dogs are lighter of bone, generally in the standard both height and weight wise, are good-natured, run well, and have some pretty good speed. They do get very creative on the coursing field, but almost always have their eyes firmly fixed on the lure. They are very

intelligent dogs and figure out the game very quickly. They are also African dogs and will not waste energy, especially in the heat, when it is not necessary. The standard for RRs says bitches are 24-26 inches at the shoulder and weight 65 lbs. Dogs should be 25-27 inches and weigh less than 90 lbs."

SALUKI. Salukis, in my opinion, are the most beautiful of all sighthounds when moving. That is due to their amazing agility. They often will drop their hindquarters to facilitate a pivot turn. Inexperienced lure operators are often not prepared for the speed the Saluki can have when, out of nowhere, they turn it on for an attempted 'take.' Salukis are also an endurance breed, long-winded and ready to run all day. They are distance runners who may not be as fast as Greyhounds. Yet they may take the speed ribbons once past the 500-yard mark. Salukis can be somewhat edgy when running with unfamiliar breeds, especially smaller or louder ones. A good running Saluki seldom seems to have four feet on the ground."

"I think some of them can turn on a dime and give you change back. Very good courser on the whole."



Salukis are not as fast as Greyhounds or Whippets, but they are extremely agile and have great endurance.

"Salukis, the long distance runners."

SCOTTISH DEERHOUND. "Deerhounds were specialized as sighthounds to take down the large Scottish Red Deer, an elk-sized animal, in rough country (the highlands of Scotland). Although agility would be of prime importance to a Deerhound, it is not the sort of agility



that is tested on the lure coursing field, where what is tested is the ability to make tight turns. Rather, the Deerhound would be required to dodge trees, rocks, holes, and other obstacles on the run. The occasional course includes a couple of very oblique turns - subtle shifts of direction more than turns, but the ability to change direction on a dime is not especially valuable to a Deerhound chasing his traditional quarry - the deer certainly can't do it. Speed is very important. The Deerhound may be released at

some distance from the deer, due to the difficulty of approaching closely, and if the deer makes it to cover, the chase is over. Thus, speed, especially early speed, is very important. More important, though, is endurance. However long the chase may be, at the end of it the Deerhound is faced with a quarry that outweighs him considerably, and which has

dangerous weapons (antlers and hooves) at his disposal. Endurance is difficult to judge on the lure coursing field, as most dogs recognize that the game is over, and many slow down as they approach the finish, not out of exhaustion, but in disappointment. Endurance may be best judged in the third quarter of most courses, when the unfit will begin to flag, rather than in the last quarter, when many recognize that the end is nigh. Follow is, in my experience, very variable in Deerhounds, and probably for good reason. Deerhounds would typically course deer in terms of two or three, often a dog and one or two bitches. The bitches were largely responsible for ensuring that the deer did not escape into cover, and, as such, spent their time staying between the deer and the trees rather than chasing the deer. The much larger dog (and in Deerhounds there typically is and definitely should be a significant amount of sexual dimorphism) would chase the deer, staying with the group until the time came to go for the kill, for which he, with the greater protection of his thicker mane coupled with his larger size, was more suited. If he truly lacked speed, the smaller bitches would be at the mercy of the deer, so speed was clearly a requirement, but endurance would have been at least as important.

"In summary, for the Deerhound, I would say that speed and endurance are the most important characteristics, then follow, and lastly agility. That said, on the coursing field, I like to see a dog dig in and drive through a turn rather than lope lazily around it. But I hate to see a tiny bitch rewarded for exceptional but uncharacteristic agility that would, in fact, have been of no use to her against her traditional quarry. Of course, if she has good speed and endurance, more power to her!"

"Deerhounds are large rough-coated Greyhounds, specifically bred for hunting big game (the red deer) in rough terrain, often in cool wet weather. They were expected to overpower their original prey by speed, agility and physical power as well as courage. Generally speaking, Deerhounds will show a rather typical bounding type of gait. Famed authors such as 'Stonehenge,' Walsh and Cassels confirm this. Whilst some Deerhounds, particularly the smaller more classic-sized hounds (roughly 29 inches) may show a running posture which is lower and similar to the working Greyhound, particularly when they are enthusiastic on the lure and well trained for this purpose, such as by track racing. When judging running Deerhounds, in the best evaluation when there are only two running on the field, this sort of style consideration is less meaningful. Confronted by a brace of good to excellent dogs at high speed, the eye really only has time to register 'work.' Agility is inversely proportional to speed and mass. Deerhounds are, comparatively speaking, tall and heavy dogs. They should not be expected to slow, turn and accelerate with the speed and agility of Whippets or Greyhounds. Course design should allow for this (as it, of course, should for all the specifics of all the other breeds). Course design should demonstrate what individual dogs/breeds 'can do,' not what they cannot do. Deerhounds are not expected to 'stoop to the kill' in the manner of a hare-coursing Greyhound, they should not be penalized for not (attempting) to pick up the lure, or for running with a 'high' posture. Deerhounds, like the sprint animal they were used on, and just as all true sighthounds, run at high speed for no more than a few minutes, classically speaking in the case of Deerhounds no more than 3-4 minutes maximum. Over-running that period results in completely exhausting the anaerobic capacity of the hound so that it will no longer have the sprint capacity or strength to overpower its prey - course designs of approximately 8-

900 yards do not of themselves test the endurance of a well-conditioned and enthusiastic Deerhound. They are more a test of a Deerhound's lure-desire - the longer the courses become the more they will generally demonstrate lure-fatigue."

"Some run very good. But the heat sometimes makes them smarter than their owners, as they mostly will not run in the heat."

"They should run equal to a Borzoi."

SLOUGHI. The Sloughi is the smooth sighthound of the Berber people. Its origins are to be found in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya). There, the Sloughi is an all-around working dog whose duties range from guarding the household and the herds of sheep or goats to hunting all kinds of game for its owner and occasionally himself. The



Sloughi hunt alone or in small packs. They hunt in open spaces relying on their keen vision to detect any movement of game and to chase it, but also on their keen sense of smell to flush game. In Africa, Sloughi were used to hunt various species of gazelle, desert hare, desert fox, jackals, hyenas, and ostrich. Today, Sloughi hunt mainly desert hare, desert fox, and jackals. This is a long distance running breed with speed and stamina and a keen

prey drive.

The running style of the Sloughi is a mix of power and agility. Good coursing Sloughi turn on a dime and are very fast on the straight. The running style should not be the upright gallop of the Azawakh. The Sloughi cannot flex its shorter back quite as much as the Greyhound. The running style is more tight and pulled together than that of the Saluki. In this breed the dogs can be quite a bit bigger than the bitches, resulting in dogs that excel in more open and wide courses, and bitches who do better on tighter courses with more turns.

Because Sloughi hunt in packs, they tend to turn their heads while coursing to check on the whereabouts of other dogs running with them. This should not be confused with interference. The Sloughi is just looking to see where the others are. Kennelmates have been observed to hunt the lure as a team, trading places behind the lure across the course making it sometimes difficult to judge. For this coordinated coursing to happen, the dogs have to check where the others are on the course.

The tremendous leaping power of some Sloughi make them an excellent breed for steeple chasing. The speed of this breed is also well documented on the racing track.

WHIPPET. "Whippets were traditionally bred to CHASE a lure. They are the only sighthound bred to do so. Keeping that in mind, I expect a Whippet to follow the lure more closely than a Greyhound or a Borzoi, Saluki or Afghan Hound."

One of the fastest and most agile of the sighthounds, the Whippet was created for lure coursing. They are sprinters. Their boundless enthusiasm for the lure can often be mistaken for endurance.



"Greyhounds and Whippets are the sprinters."

"When it comes to putting meat on my table, I will take the Whippet any day."

"The 'race-bred' dogs run pretty much right on the line."

"Whippets should have speed, agility and follow in that order. I think they already excel in enthusiasm and most have exceptional endurance . . . at least those whose owners keep them fit! There are some judges that don't seem to care so much about follow, thinking only the slow dogs have follow. This just isn't true."

NON-RECOGNIZED BREEDS. Chart Polskis, Cirneco dell'Etnas, Galgo Espanols, Magyar Agars and Peruvian Inca Orchids. All breed judges are licensed to judge non-recognized breeds. Provisional judges may judge non-recognized breeds. However, such judging assignments will not be considered as part of the licensing requirements for additional breeds.

JUDGING BEST IN FIELD. The descriptions of breed running styles will be most helpful in judging Best in Field. Here, your job is to choose the hound that is the best representative of its breed. Without some means of comparison and some knowledge of each breed's attributes it's very difficult not to resort to selecting the fastest hound showing the best follow, agility, endurance and enthusiasm.

"A dog's coursing ability should only be judged on its own merits compared to the other members of its own breed. Even when it comes to BIF, if I have an apprentice or provisional judge with me, I will tell them they cannot compare a Basenji to a Whippet, even if they are running side by side. You still must judge the Whippet's abilities compared to standard Whippet abilities and the Basenji's abilities compared to standard Basenji abilities. You cannot say that one breed is a better coursing breed than another breed."

"... Whippets and Greyhounds were bred for short sprints, to run along side of a hare, grab it by the neck and make the kill. Therefore, they are incredibly fast for short distances, and if they're not following, they're not getting the kill. Other breeds, i.e., Borzoi, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Scottish Deerhounds, and Irish Wolfhounds were bred to hunt in packs, to bring the prey to bay and hold it until the hunter got there. They can be a great deal slower because in a pack the lead dog trades off. While they have to be aware of where the game is, their follow is not at all like the Whippet and Greyhound."

"Anyone passing a Whippet or Greyhound one-on-one, gets points for speed."

"Knowledge of the different breeds, and what to expect from a below average, average and exceptional hound in that breed comes only by watching hounds run - not reading tables."

"Best in Field is not judged 'hound against hound,' but by how each hound is representative of its own breed."

OTHER ITEMS. While on the field during his or her judging assignment, no judge shall discuss anything relative to his judging assignment with any handler or agent. Questions or discussion that must be settled immediately are required to be handled through the Field Chairman. Judges are encouraged to discuss their scoring and answer any reasonable questions entrants may have after the completion of their judging assignments.

It is inappropriate for judges to review or copy any information from a Record Sheet or posting board relative to the assignment prior to completion of that assignment.

No alcoholic beverages may be consumed by any judge until the completion of the assignment. Your conduct should always be in good taste.

In order to judge a hound certification, a judge must be fully licensed for at least one breed. In order to judge a hound reinstatement a judge must be fully licensed for the breed being reinstated. A judge may decline to judge a certification or reinstatement run.

REQUEST TO JUDGE FORMS (SEC 04 rev 12-21). Although most clubs solicit judges via telephone or personal contact, all judges should receive a formal written request to judge from the host club. The request need not be on Form SEC 04, but can be a letter or e-mail from the host club. The request should contain any expense reimbursement arrangements you have with the club. It is imperative that you send a letter or e-mail of acceptance of the judging assignment to the host club. The letter or e-mail should clearly state the name of the trial, location, date(s), the breed(s) you would like to judge, and any breed(s) you will not judge. If you are planning on entering a hound(s), you should clearly note what breed(s) you will enter. It is advisable to keep a copy of the agreement.

Should a problem arise that requires ASFA Board review, no action can be taken without a properly signed letter of acceptance. Common problems that are often referred to the Board are judges assigned to judge a breed the judge planned to enter, failure of the club to reimburse the judge for previously agreed upon travel expenses, or the submission of receipts for reimbursement that were not agreed to by the host club. The letter of acceptance protects both the judge and the host club.

JUDGES REIMBURSEMENT (MEM 05 rev 12-01). This form provides host clubs with some options for judges' reimbursement. As a judge you should never accept reimbursement in excess of your actual expenses. Some clubs will offer a set dollar amount per dog arrangement. If you are coming from a short distance and staying with a friend, this arrangement can often work out to be more than expenses. It is your responsibility to accept no more than your legitimate expenses.

It is absolutely forbidden to accept free entries in exchange for judging.

FINAL THOUGHTS. Many different opinions and viewpoints are presented in this handbook. You will not agree with all of them. You will also not always agree with the other judge, if two judges are used. As long as you can justify your score and/or decision and you have not broken any rules, it's all right to disagree.

Views on Judging

by Les Pekarski

Originally presented at the 1998 Lure Coursing Judges Association Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the ASFA Annual Convention of Delegates in Sacramento, California.

Judges Objectives.

- A. Numerically evaluate what has happened in each course in each stake.
- B. Represent yourself as an ASFA official with fairness and without regard to who the dog or handler is.
- C. Have the best dog (in your opinion) leading in your score evaluation in the stake you are judging, i.e. the best dog should have the highest score, the worse dog, the lowest score in the stake. This is called cross-course judging.
- D. Make notes to correspond with your judging sheets - numbers don't necessarily make what happened on the field clear. You may be questioned about a course and without notes you may be in trouble with what happened 42 dogs ago. Remember, you are not simply judging the best of three at a time throughout the stake.
- E. Have a concern for the safety of the hound. This may include:
 1. Dismissing aggressive hounds. Note: most often it is better to keep the course in progress rather than stopping in the middle of the field when a dog's safety is concerned.
 2. Stop courses in progress when the lure operation is either unsafe or, in your opinion, not enabling you to truly evaluate all of the dogs properly.
- F. Dogs get positively scored when:
 1. They are truly in pursuit of the lure (trying to catch the lure).
 - a. Not racing the lure.
 - b. Always be looking at the lure.
 - c. Trying to figure out a shortcut and trap the lure.
 - d. Do not center surf.
 2. They have a legitimate go-by (passes the other dog while coursing the same path). This is not the dog passing another dog on the inside or on a diagonal.
 3. They do not fade or lose ground at the end of the course. Dogs that are not in shape tend to fade after 300-400 yards.
 4. Exhibit the desire to work hard throughout the course. These are the dogs that usually are in the lead and closest to the lure.
 5. Are able to set up and turn . . . dogs that are athletic and in condition. This is usually reflected in the agility category. Dogs that power out and round off and make wide turns show a lack of agility.

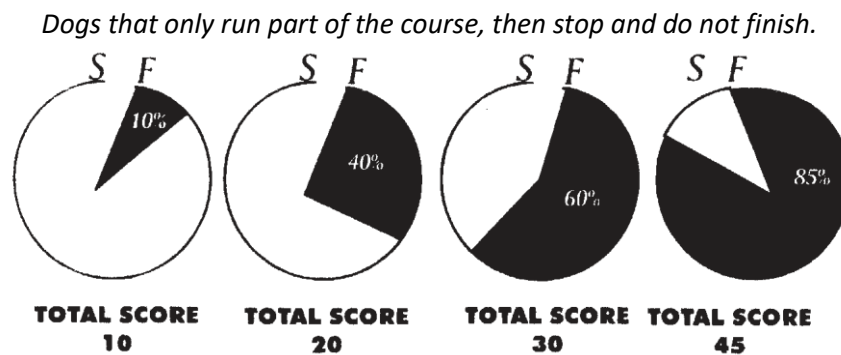
Center surfing. Center surfers are usually very experienced dogs that have learned that the lure turns after a certain number of yards. They often run with reserved speed and occasionally will exhibit bursts of speed when they are near the lure. They will tend to stray to one direction or another on long straightaways.

They tend to not go into the corners. They run what I call, "cute." They, however, are usually always in the right position to almost never make a wrong decision. These dogs often turn before the lure actually rounds the pulley, as if they read course plans and see the line.

My fault with these dogs is the fact that they never totally commit to anything during the course. It often appears that they are the faster dog because they usually pass on the inside.

If the field boundaries are well defined, out of the slips they tend to head for the center of the field.

If the course plan is 700 yards, these dogs will have probably only run 600 yards or less, because they tend to work the center ground.



Dogs that do not finish should not get qualifying scores.

Common judging mistakes.

- A. Making transcription errors.
- B. Mixing up your notes when you go to your judges forms.
- C. Not signing your judges forms.
- D. Scoring on the wrong judges forms.
- E. Addition errors.
- F. Know when to: excuse, dismiss, disqualify.
- G. Placing importance on one given area of the overall course - evaluate the overall course.
- H. Be careful to pay close attention to the course. Don't fall prey to stereotypes or what is "supposed to happen."
- I. Failing to know the running styles of the different breeds, i.e., a great running Basenji can run step for step with a very fast Whippet.
- J. Placing too much importance in the speed category (leg movement and number of steps doesn't make the fastest dog). I believe the speed dogs are traveling can be very deceiving, and in my opinion, almost impossible to evaluate when you are comparing Course 1 to Course 5 unless it is just obvious that one dog is superior without question or others fade during the course.

STAKE A W O P-1			P-2			P-3			P-4		
Y	P	B	Y	P	B	Y	P	B	Y	P	B
ON	CUT	SP+	ON	CUT	BGMW	ON	SLO	W TROUBLE	ON	SLO	W TROUBLE
1ST/20	CUT	GOOD COURSE	FDL	+SP	CUT	OV	W TROUBLE	W TROUBLE	FDL	+SP	W TROUBLE
			+AG		BETTER COURSE			W TROUBLE			BEST DOG? NO CLIP
13 Y-1P			P-2-13			P-3			P-4		
17 75-75			78-77-76			77-76			78-75		

Typical set of judge's notes.

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1} STAKE A WO P-1			P-2			P-3			P-4		
Y	P	B	Y	P	B	Y	P	B	Y	P	B
ON	CUT	SPT	ON	CUT	BAND CUT	ON	SLO	NO TRIBE WELL	ON	SLO	NO TRIBE WELL
55/10	CUT		FOL	+SP	+AG					+SP	FOL
		(GOOD) COURSE			BETTER COURSE			CUT AS GOOD			BEST POS? NO CLIP
P-Y-12 77-75-75			P-Y-13 78-77-76			P-Y 77-76			P-Y 78-75		

Typical set of judge's notes.