

Contracts and things

by Lavina Diamanti

Unlike paid employment, volunteering as a secretary for an organisation can be a bit like playing 'pin the tail on the donkey'! Unless you have had a good mentor or have worked alongside a good secretary sometimes it can be a bit of a stab in the dark, especially when it comes to contracting judges. And similarly, from a judge's perspective, especially if you are inexperienced, then knowing what you can or can't (or should or shouldn't) do can be a bit daunting. This edition is dedicated to the wonderful secretaries throughout the country who give up their time to run shows and do the many hours of 'behind the scenes' work that goes into a successful show. The following is a list of 'best practice' which I hope will be of help to both secretaries and judges alike.

For secretaries:

- Plan early. You can contract your Champ Show judges a year or two ahead.
- Research your judges. Know what other appointments they have had here before you contact them. It will save you time. The Australian dogsonline.com.au website has a list of both Australian and New Zealand judges and what appointments they have completed throughout Australasia. It is 90% accurate, although it doesn't include NZ Open Shows. Dogs New Zealand also has a database of all judge's appointments at Championship Show level. This can be found under the 'Judges' tab on www.dogsnz.org.nz.
- Please give new judges an opportunity, especially at Ribbon Parade and Open Show level. This is their training ground.
- Have a back-up plan in place. Have a reserve judge on standby or contracted. This saves a lot of heartache if a judge is unable to fulfil an appointment due to illness or some other situation.
- Make sure you are using the latest version of the judge's contract. This includes a declaration regarding JBO for Championship Shows and can also be found on the Dogs NZ website.
- When you send a contract to a judge, you are sending them an 'offer' only. You do not have an agreement to judge until that contract has been completed and signed by the judge, returned to you, and you have then conveyed your acceptance of their conditions to them. This must be done within 14 days of the contract being returned to you. You do not have to accept their conditions. For example, a judge may request that they are accommodated in 5-star hotel with 3-course meals and a \$500 per day judging fee. Your club is well within its rights to decline that contract, or you may come to an agreement which is acceptable, and the contract is amended. In all cases, what is on the signed and accepted contract is what both parties are bound to.

- Wait until you have a signed contract returned and you have accepted it before booking flights.
- Communicate with the judge before finalising flights. Not everyone wants to fly in last thing at night on a Friday, judge a full weekend and then take a return flight at 6:00am on Monday morning with a 3:00am start. Sometimes a judge prefers to book their own flights and will pay for any difference in fare themselves so they can have some extra time to relax, some extra leg room or even make it part of a holiday.
- Be prepared to pay for travel insurance, or at least book a fare that offers a refund. Sometimes this is covered if the judge books the flights themselves as certain credit cards provide free travel insurance. Things do go wrong. Flights get cancelled due to weather, people get sick, accidents happen. The club needs to be able to get a refund if needed. If one of your judges gets sick or injured during the assignment, it can be a costly exercise.
- Good communication is always appreciated so keep in touch with your judge(s). Ideally, they will want to know where they are staying, who is picking them up from the airport plus any other plans. And don't forget to send them a copy of the reporting sheet.

For judges:

- Please respond promptly to invitations to judge. A club doesn't want to wait for weeks for you to reply and return the contract.
- Communicate with the club and follow their guidance if you are booking your own flights. You should pay for any upgrades you want for your comfort.
- Be clear on your contract what your requirements are, and don't be afraid to specify. Some clubs put on their contract what they are offering, others don't and leave it to you to complete. If your minimum requirement is return airfare from A to B, motel accommodation, airport parking, transfer from the airport and all meals, then put this on the contract. You don't want to find when you get to the appointment that you are staying with a committee member, sharing a bathroom with their teenager and their dogs normally sleep on the bed you are allocated and don't want to give it up! If the club doesn't agree with your requirements, then they do not need to accept your contract.
- Finally, keep a record of your past judging appointments (an Excel spreadsheet is ideal), recording the details of each assignment including the breeds you judged and the numbers. This is useful if you are invited to judge beyond Australasia

Happy judging. 🐾

Important Dates

21 March 2023 **Theory exams**

15-16 July 2023 **North Island Practicals**

29-30 July 2023 **South Island Practicals**