

Approved Breed Mentors

The National Shiba Club of America (NSCA) and the Judges Education Committee appreciate your willingness to contribute your time and expertise to educate individuals that aspire to judge the Shiba Inu at American Kennel Club (AKC) shows. Ringside Observation and mentoring provides prospective judges an opportunity to interact with multiple breed experts. The aspiring judge has the opportunity to learn ringside while judging occurs about the nuances, traits and distinguishing characteristics of the Shiba Inu through the eyes of those that have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to our breed. While long term mentoring still occurs, the main opportunity to mentor aspiring judges is through formal Ringside Observation at the National Specialty.

To assist prospective judges and our NSCA Approved Breed Mentors, the Judges Education Committee will maintain a file for each aspiring judge that participates in our programs. Mentors are to report to the Judges Education Committee the name, date, and show they mentor any judge.

This allows us to provide Judges with duplicate copies if originals are lost and provide verification to AKC of judge participation.

We thank you for your willingness to contribute to this worthwhile endeavor!

Rules and Regulations for Mentors

Once you have been approved to be an NSCA Approved Breed Mentor, you must follow these Rules and Regulations.

1. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor must be a member in good standing of the National Shiba Club of America (NSCA). If your membership lapses or your eligibility to participate at AKC events is suspended or restricted, you will be removed from the NSCA Approved Breed Mentor.
2. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor must be fully versed and understand the AKC Standard for the Shiba Inu.
3. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor will follow and keep abreast of all current rules, regulations, requirements and restrictions for Approved Breed Mentors established by the AKC or the NSCA Judges Education Committee Approved Breed Mentor program.

AKC up to date requirements: <http://images.akc.org/pdf/MJ0026.pdf>

4. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor must maintain appropriate records. Mentors will verify completion of all forms before signing the form. Mentors will retain a copy of each Ringside Observation and Mentoring/Tutoring Form completed by them. Mentors will provide a copy of the completed Ringside Observation form to the Judge, AKC and the NSCA Judges Education Committee.

Note: Prospective judges being mentored may request consideration for sweepstakes assignments and other enrichment activities. Please include this information to the Judges Education Committee with the completed forms. The list will be made available to the National Specialty Committee and NSCA Regional Clubs upon request.

5. The NSCA Approved Mentor should be willing to fulfill the role of Designated Ringside Mentor at the NSCA National Specialty, Regional or Independent Specialties. Given the restrictions on showing we understand this is a sacrifice and appreciate your willingness to contribute to the education of prospective judges. The committee welcomes your participation and hopes that you will participate whenever possible.
6. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor understands that as representatives of NSCA they will conduct themselves according to the AKC Code of Sportsmanship and refrain from any questionable or negative behavior when acting in their capacity as an Approved Mentor.
7. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor understands that as representatives of NSCA that they will dress appropriately when mentoring prospective judges. At Specialty shows where ringside mentoring is provided, the Mentor requirements are Business Casual unless the event calls for suggested dress at a higher or more formal level.
8. The NSCA Approved Breed Mentor **shall not**:
 - Exhibit in any breed to any individual they have mentored for four months after the mentoring experience.
 - Exhibit to an individual they have mentored following approval to judge the Shiba Inu for four months after approval. This a separate restriction not continuous including non regular as well as regular classes.
 - Provide ringside mentoring in any class where they are exhibiting.

Note: The terms “Exhibit”, “Exhibiting” and “Entry” are interpreted in the most restrictive sense and are defined as follows: The Approved Breed Mentor as well as anyone in their household may not exhibit to the judge. This includes dogs that are owned and co-owned. The Approved Breed Mentor may not provide ringside mentoring in class where a dog that they or anyone in their household own, co-own or is listed as handler or agent.

9. Ringside Observation forms may only be completed at National or approved Regional Specialty shows. Do not complete these forms for any other events. If you are in doubt or have a question whether the event qualifies for Ringside Observation, please contact the Judges Education Committee for clarification.

Guidelines for Mentors

Once you have been approved to be an NSCA Breed Mentor, please follow these guidelines.

1. Honor your commitment to mentor. You must be there on time and for the entire judging if you need to leave your mentoring assignment, please ensure that a substitute mentor is available. If you would like to exhibit a dog at a National or Regional Specialty where you have agreed to serve as a Designated Ringside Mentor, please contact the Judges Education Committee Chairman with the request. The Chairman will try to accommodate your request.
2. Be fully versed in the AKC Shiba Inu Standard and bring a copy with you to the mentoring session.
3. The Judges Education seminar was designed to provide prospective judges with an understanding of the ideal characteristics of the breed as defined by the Shiba Inu Breed Standard. Try to focus on the strengths of the dogs you are observing by pointing out excellent examples of specific Breed traits.
4. The AKC encourages judges to refrain from fault judging. Please do not focus on pointing out the faults of each dog you are observing. Talk about how you would evaluate a dog against the Shiba Inu breed Standard. Take time to point out the nuances of Breed type by highlighting the strengths of the Shiba Inu in each class you observe.
5. Provide your ringside opinion on how you would place dogs, or discuss the order with the aspiring judge. This is where they learn how a breeder prioritizes virtues and faults.
6. At the National Specialty aspiring judges are provided an opportunity to experience a hands-on session with several dogs. If you are providing a ringside observation at a Regional Specialty show, If possible, ask some of the exhibitors if the person you are mentoring can go over their dog and discuss in more detail after the judging. (This is not a requirement for the Ringside Observation, but a good learning experience nonetheless.)
7. Conduct ringside mentoring as if you are a judge seeing the dogs for the first time - what you would think of the dogs and how you would place them, and for what reasons. It's really important to give the reasons for your placements. Don't try to second-guess the judge or criticize the judging – you are not seeing things

from ringside the same way the judge does, but both you and the person learning have the same view of the dogs, so give your perspective from your mutual viewpoint.

8. Don't discuss breeding issues or history of a particular dog or exhibitor. Also avoid discussing health issues, breeder personality issues, or anything other than if you were a judge seeing these dogs for the first time that day.
9. Potential judges will be in all stages of learning when they ask for ringside mentoring. Sometimes they're just about ready to apply to judge Shibas and are pretty well versed in the breed. Others may never apply for the breed, but are approved to judge Best in Show and want to know more in case they ever get one in the BIS ring. Or they may just be starting to learn and have never even been to a seminar. You need to tailor your discussion to the level of the aspiring judge. You can gauge that level pretty quickly, and then take them to the next level.
10. Being an NSCA Breed Mentor does NOT license you go up to a judge after judging the Shiba Inu to berate the judging. If you are concerned about the fitness or education of a judge in a particular situation, contact the NSCA Judges Education Chair.
11. Mentoring takes time out of your day. Only volunteer to do this if you are willing to take the time to mentor, either at the specialty shows or at home.
12. As an NSCA approved breed mentor, the NSCA has given you their vote of confidence that you can convey the essence of the Shiba to the people you are mentoring. Remember that everything that you do and say in this role reflects on the NSCA. We are relying on the considerable knowledge that you already have. Just express it to someone who is eager to learn. It is your responsibility to make sure that future judges of our breed know what they're doing when they walk in the ring.

Habitual deviation from agreed to guidelines will be disciplined as follows,
Upon signed complaint made to the committee and investigation as valid
will be sent to the NSCA Board to issue a warning.

Second infraction a suspension of 6 months.

Third infraction removal from the NSCA approved mentor list.

Signing the Mentor application means you agree to the rules.