



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

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Performance Events

To: All Spaniel Breed Clubs

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Subject: **SPORTSMANSHIP**

One of the great traditions of our field events is sportsmanship. Indeed it can be argued that good sportsmanship is a factor that has contributed to the sports long term strength and popularity. Recently an increasing number of participants have expressed concern about what is happening to the culture of sportsmanship. It is worthwhile to periodically re-visit the importance of sportsmanship to the future of the sport.

Sportsmanship is expressed in the nature of one's conduct while associated with a sport. Good sportsmanship includes not only abiding by the rules but also conducting oneself with proper consideration for fairness, ethics and respect for other participants, officials, and those hosting the event, as well as respect for the traditional conventions of the sport. Good sportsmanship expresses an aspiration that the sport should be enjoyed for its own sake.

Sportsmanship is closely related to character. Character refers to one's dispositions, values and habits that determine the manner in which a person responds to desires, fears, challenges, opportunities, failures and successes. A person with a strong, positive character will usually conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.

There is an additional, more subtle side to sportsmanship. Studies refer to it as "full commitment to participation." This means more than just running your dog. It means embracing the sport in a broader sense through a willingness to contribute time and effort to the sport's success. We all know individuals who participate but never contribute. They are often the first to complain when something goes wrong. This is a subtle form of poor sportsmanship.

Good sportsmanship contributes to the pleasure one experiences at an event and helps build support for the sport in general. The lack of sportsmanship works to undermine support for the sport. The experienced participant realizes the vagaries of an event may sometimes result in a less than desired performance. Never the less, if he feels he was given a fair chance and was treated respectfully, he will leave anxious to try again another day. If a participant leaves feeling he was not treated fairly or with respect, he will question if he should enter that event again.

For the enjoyment of everyone involved and the future interest of the sport, please consider the importance of sportsmanship and demonstrate it through your actions and words. We would all do well to remember the words posted in the clubhouse at Branched Oak, Nebraska – "To brag little, to lose well, to crow gently if in luck, to pay up, to own up, to shut up if beaten. These are the virtues of a sporting man."
Oliver Wendell Holmes

Sincerely,

Doug Ljungren