

Heelwork to Music Marking Criteria

Replace Regulation 17.a, 17.b and 17.c with the following:

Content

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1. The programme content conforms to the definitions for Heelwork to Music or Freestyle and should be varied with no excessive repetition of movement and content being appropriate to the routine.
2. Movement should be appropriate to the structure and conformation of the dog.
3. The movements of the dog should have a greater impact than those of the handler.
4. Degree of difficulty of movements should be taken into account.

Accuracy and Execution

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1. Movements including heelwork are accurately and smoothly executed.
2. The dog should work in a natural and willing manner.
3. The dog should respond promptly and appropriately to cues given (including use of props).
4. Bearing and deportment of the handler is appropriate and should be appropriate to the routine; dog and handler should work as a team.

Musical interpretation

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1. Interpretation of the rhythm, phrasing and timing should be apparent; the choice of music should suit the team.
2. Choreography should be apparent, flowing and not a series of disjointed moves. The routine should include balance, structure and making best use of available space.

3. Primary emphasis of musical interpretation should be on the dog's movements although the handler should/may be expressive.
4. Handlers' dress and any props used should be suitable and applicable to the interpretation of the routine.

To be included in the Judges' training seminars and in the Guide for Heelwork to Music Judges:

Explanatory notes – Content

1. Moves should not be used which may be viewed as harmful or injurious to the dog. For example a very large dog jumping/walking for a long time on its hind legs may not be beneficial to its structure and conformation. Likewise, a dog being carried on the handler's back and being asked to jump off at head height may be viewed as not appropriate to the dog's structure and conformation if landing could cause injury. The floor surface should be taken into consideration.
2. Heelwork routines must comprise of two thirds heelwork. These proportions should be reversed for freestyle routines. A routine that, in your opinion, contains little, if any, heelwork in a HTM routine, or too much heelwork in a freestyle routine does not conform to the class definition and must therefore be marked down accordingly.
Note – it is not possible for a judge to know exactly how much heelwork/freestyle is in a routine – this will be down to your personal judgement. Heelwork routines must have two thirds heelwork and vice versa for freestyle.
3. Repetition is obviously going to take place in a routine, as a judge you should down mark a routine that includes excessive repetition for example the routine consists solely of the dog spinning and weaving and nothing else. Spins and weaves may be appropriate in several parts of a routine, but one or two moves should not predominate.

Content refers to what the team has used to demonstrate /explain the routine, how they move through the music, what steps are taken to illustrate the phrasing/timing etc, of the music. This means it would not be appropriate for handlers to throw in a series of moves for the sake of

it. There needs to be some reasoning behind a move. Either that it goes with the rhythm, the theme, the words, or the feel of the music

Note- heelwork cannot be deemed repetitious in a HTM routine as it must be an integral part of the programme. A team may choose to do 100% heelwork and not include any freestyle moves at all. However you can look for (level dependent) a variety of heelwork positions, change of pace and direction. It may be acceptable in your opinion as a judge for a starter's routine to have one or two heelwork positions, but you may require more than that for higher classes.

4. Although the emphasis is on handlers and dogs working as a team, dogs should play a primary role – one's eyes should be drawn to the dog. The dog should not be overshadowed by the handler. For example, if a handler decided to leave a dog in the sit position whilst they somersault around the ring. The part of the routine you should be focusing on is the dog sitting and you may then deem that to not be enough content.
5. Degree of difficulty may be class dependent, dog shape and size dependent etc. As a judge you will have knowledge of working and training a dog. You will have observed dogs in the ring, and gained knowledge of how various breeds/type of dogs move and perform. It may not be possible to fully understand how difficult a move is to a particular dog. For example some small breed/types are on their hind legs quite naturally, whereas a large type of dog may find that move very difficult.

Note -A move should not be included if, in your opinion it appears the dog finds it difficult.

Difficulty can refer to where the move is performed. Facing handler, away from handler, distance from handler, whilst handler is being distractive, degree of cues etc. As a judge you will make a judgement on the degree of difficulty.

General content notes

What was included? Was it in context?

Did the team perform with enthusiasm; with the dog moving willingly? Was there confidence in their performance?

Explanatory notes – Accuracy and Execution

1. Accuracy refers to the how, when and where the move takes place. A spin is a full rotation not a half hearted attempt. A paw lift is a paw off the ground, not a hesitant indecisive move where the dog is not really lifting its paw.
Heelwork accuracy must be taken into account: position of the dog, how it is moving, and what the handler is doing to maintain the dog's position.
For example, a handler that is cupping a dog's nose with their hand, or holding the dog's collar, or using a hand to restrain the dog to maintain its position is not performing heelwork accurately or smoothly.
2. The dog should be happy to perform the move, it should not look worried or hesitant, it should move freely and its body language should show it is not working under duress.
3. The dog should respond when told, either by hand signal, body language or verbal communication. If the handler continually repeats a command then this will affect the accuracy. If a handler has to touch the dog by pushing, moving, pulling etc, this affects accuracy.
4. A dog that is not moving appropriately with the handler, i.e. a dog that is moving slowly when the music obviously denotes speed, or a dog that is trying to move away from the handler, leave the ring, stop to sniff, scratch etc is to be down marked accordingly as should a handler continually bend over the dog, stopping the movement of the routine etc. It does not show good bearing or deportment and is not demonstrating team work. Dogs anticipating moves and working ahead of cues will also be down marked accordingly.

General notes – Accuracy and Execution

Did they perform with enthusiasm; with the dog moving willingly? Was there confidence in their performance?

- Clear spatial awareness. Is the handler aware of where the judges are?
- Clear and accurate timing in relation to the choreography and structuring of the routine.
- Clear and appropriate focus between handler and dog.
- Technique (quality of movements).
- The judge must determine whether the movements were in keeping with the character/theme of the music.

Explanatory notes – Musical Interpretation

Musical interpretation means an understanding and feeling of the music and interpreting the meaning in the choreography.

1. The dog, handler and music should work in harmony. This is the one sport where handlers have choices; choice of music, props and costume, therefore music chosen should suit the team. The interpretation of the music should include an awareness of rhythm (if appropriate) and music changes.
2. Routines should flow and not be a series of disjointed movements. A routine that, for example, is set around one move and the rest of the time the routine is simply waiting for that move is not flowing. Routines should try to incorporate, different speeds, rhythms (if appropriate), and should make use of the ring; this means not sticking to one side of the area, or moving one or two steps left then changing to one or two steps right.
3. The movements of the dog are the ones judges should take greater notice of – this is linked to content. An example would be where a handler may not only add physical content themselves (somersaults), they may in addition, be very expressive with their hands, voice and movement in interpretation. The handler alone does not add musical interpretation if the dog does very little, if it sits, looks bored, yawns, scratches, moves without vigour – then the handler's musicality cannot take precedence in the marking.

However, handlers are an important part of the team and should be expressive (where appropriate) and work with the dog to demonstrate the interpretation.

Judges eyes should not be drawn away from the dog to watch the handler solely.

4. Costume is NOT mandatory and a smartly dressed handler may not feel the need to dress in costume. However, this is a spectator sport and dress should be appropriate. Costume should not bring the sport into disrepute, or adversely affect interpretation.

Props can aid a routine, the expression, the timing, and the interpretation of a theme. Props should be appropriate and not used to simply gain a content move, or to keep a dog's attention.

General notes – Musical Interpretation

Did the team perform with enthusiasm; with the dog moving willingly? Was there confidence in their performance?

The judge must assess the rhythmic interpretation of a routine. This reveals the capacity for the artistic choreography and the musical involvement of the dog and handler.

The choreography should show the character of the music and the routine.

- Does the team sell their routine to the audience?
- Choreography will be evident in the appropriate, imaginative and translation of ideas into a routine that suits the dog and the music.
- Appropriate and imaginative use of ring space available.
- Appropriate and imaginative choice and use of music.
- Clear expression of the musical theme or style, rhythm and phrasing.
- Originality (or appropriate adaptation of) and manipulation of movement through choreography.
- Translation of the music with appropriate use of action, dynamics and space.