

Judge Amy Safdir

How long have you been judging the breed? Approximately 3 years **How many times a year do you judge German Shepherds?** 5-6 times

Are you an active breeder of German Shepherd Dogs? yes **Do you have a kennel name?**
Almanya

How long have you been in the breed? 17 years

When and how did you get started?

Had GSDs all my life. Started in obedience and the local club President gave me a show premium and told me to enter just for fun and oh wow it was history from there.

Do you judge both all-breeds and specialties? If so, which do you prefer?

Yes I do. I am definitely a breeder judge who loves judging specialties. But I also judge all-breeds. I prefer the supported entry all-breeds that provide large rings and areas away from the other breeds to see the lovely movement of our dogs. I am also provisional for Shetland Sheepdogs and Junior Showmanship and aspire to judge all the herding breeds and Group, but I prefer not to judge our breed in tiny postage stamp rings with tight time constraints and will limit my accepting assignments at all-breeds for our GSD breed.

Do you have a color preference?

I love a beautiful deep "natural" Black & Red pigment, but quite frankly it is so unimportant to me in the whole scope of things. If I saw a gorgeous sable, black, bicolor or black and tan that just blew me away, quite frankly, I would barely notice the color or even make it an importance to me.

Do you find it harder to judge solid blacks? If so, why?

No not at all, and I am seeing more and more really good ones.

When judging the dog, do you also judge the handler? Please elaborate if possible.

The handler isn't important to me, and I really like owner-handlers, but at times they don't get the performance from their babies like a handler would and you get a totally different picture of the same dog with a handler. But all in all it's what's on the end of the lead that I judge. I do seriously get annoyed and get my hackles up with poor sportsmanship and a handler who thinks they are going to play intimidation tactics. It has the opposite effect on me.

I also don't like heavy-handed yanking, pulling and being nasty to dogs. I won't tolerate it. These animals are special and they deserve to be treated with the utmost respect.

What importance do you place on missing teeth?

It all falls into perspective. If I have a highly superior animal in all ways and they have a missing tooth, it will not keep them from winning. I would not put a lesser animal up over a superior one with a missing tooth. But I also don't disregard its importance in our standard as well. Here's a little tip: Nasty dirty teeth are just gross, and unhealthy for your dogs. There's no excuse for a disgusting mouth. Give your dog some crunchy biscuits or clean the teeth!

Please discuss temperament in the ring today. Has it improved? Declined? Please explain.

I feel it has improved over the years I have been in the breed. But it is still a concern in our breed and very important. These dogs are powerful, they need to be socialized and they need some manners. They don't have to love everyone but they sure need to tolerate people who don't pose a threat. And they certainly don't need to be a menace to society. Be a responsible owner, don't let your dogs run the neighborhoods and intimidate people or cause problems. Don't let them out with strangers if you know they have a protective side. Be responsible.

Do you prefer a dog to be shown on a loose lead?

Yes I do, animals on a tight lead can distort themselves to not look as good as they would on a loose lead, it also can make some animals look very lifty, restricted in the front, etc. However, a tight lead can alter a faulty dog as well. As long as I get to see a good pass on loose lead, I don't make a big fuss. But I insist on a good loose lead pass at some point. I realize the dogs come in the ring most times all cranked up, eventually with working them, they settle.

How would you rate the following in sequence of importance? (On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best). I'm not sure how this is worded so #1 is my most important, I also need to make a side note here: Drive, follow-through and a good functioning rear is missing and this is extremely important to me. I really think we have problems with good functional rears. I see way too much toe dragging and nonfunctioning locked up rears. It is awful to see.

Coming/Going: 6

Side gait: 3

Temperament: 2

Teeth: 7

Coat: 10

Pasterns, hocks, feet: 5

Pigment: 9

Structure: 1

Shoulder/Reach: 4

Attitude: 8

In your opinion should double handling be allowed? Please explain.

There's a place and time. I don't feel it should ruin the dog or disturb other people and breeds, however at specialties just use some good sense. And don't double on the temperament test.

Do you feel more emphasis should be put on the total package, and less on movement?

Well, the total package is very important, but there is no total package without the proper effortless motion that doesn't make the dog expend a lot of energy.

Do you have a pet peeve about anything owners or handlers do concerning the showing of dogs? (Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should NEVER do when showing under you ?)

Please have your dogs physically fit and conditioned. Nothing is worse than overweight, out-of-condition dogs. They are power moving athletes. Also please have their teeth clean, and have the dog groomed. Take pride in your dog no matter his quality and have him looking his best. Out of coat well there's nothing you can do about that and it's not important. But at least have them clean and well groomed.

Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should ALWAYS do when showing under you?

Good sportsmanship, even if you are totally mad; listen to and follow directions; and, above all else, please have a good time. We aren't stuffy. Enjoy yourself and enjoy your dog or the dog you are showing. This is a sport and we need to be relaxed and enjoying the privilege to do this. I enjoy it immensely, even if sometimes deep in thought and focusing on the dogs. I am totally honored to be in there and have your entries.

Do you have any advice for people who are relatively new to showing and/or breeding?

I just Love new people. I can't forget at a judging assignment this year a girl came up to me in the class and said this is my first time in the ring and I feel like I'm going to puke. Awww, I just wanted to give her a hug, but that would be inappropriate. I can't wait to judge the new amateur class. To someone new, I would say first, you are so lucky to have this breed in your life. Enjoy every moment of it. If your dog doesn't win in conformation, don't get upset, insulted or think politics. Realize that if you like the sport, you keep improving and getting better and better animals. But your baby you have can do some fun things like obedience or agility or herding, or anything else

enjoyable. Join a local GSD club, learn all you can, go to as many specialty shows as you can and Nationals if you are able. There is a lot of education by just observing all you can. Also get your dogs out and socialize them. I think we are all guilty at times of not getting them out and about as much as we should, but for this breed it is very important to get them out from a young age and socialize them to many situations and get them used to other animals.

Any final comments?

If everyone would mentor and bring along one new person to our breed and sport it would not be dying. I challenge everyone to bring a new person into our sport. Be a good mentor. It is essential to our survival. Now with the new amateur class and amateur division at the futurities we have all that much more to offer a new person and an even playing ground. It is really fun to be a mentor and watch your new person flourish in the breed and sport! Just do it!