

Judge Dan Mosher

How long have you been judging the breed? I have been an AKC licensed for German Shepherds since 1980. However, I started judging matches in the early 1970's after two (2) years into the breed because of my mentor, Ardyce Shively of Yoncalla Kennels, insisting that I would learn faster by putting my knowledge to the test which is another way of saying "trial by fire", as I saw it. Notwithstanding same, I took about a nine (9) year sabbatical from judging, breeding and exhibiting and have now returned to the game.

How many times a year do you judge German Shepherds? I was judging 4-6 shows per year when I was most active. I attended the National Specialty last October for the first time in several years, and now I am re-entering the breed and have accepted my first assignment in August 2008.

Are you an active breeder of German Shepherd Dogs? No, I am not active now, but I plan to make some very select breedings starting next year and continuing on from there. **Do you have a kennel name?** Yes. I have two (2). My current kennel name is DANZ, and my former kennel was DAPAMO which some people may recognize from as far back as 35 years ago.

How long have you been in the breed? Approximately 39 years if you count the sabbatical. **When and how did you get started?** I purchased my first GSD from a pet breeder in Somis, CA when I lived in Moorpark. I bought a female named "Heidi" to protect my fearful wife from intruders, but then she would leave the dog outside when I was gone because she was afraid of her. Funny, huh?! Since I lived in Ventura County, at that time, I was blessed with meeting some very knowledgeable people who were willing to share their knowledge and experience with me. As I stated earlier, my key mentor was the late Ardyce Shively who taught me about the breed. I also read books on horse gaits, and I attended workshops to learn as much as I could about the breed. I judged a great number of different breeds of dogs in matches; A & B Sanctioned Matches whereby I judged individual breeds, groups and even Best in Show before becoming licensed for the GSD. I also handled several hundreds of different GSD in matches and point shows which gave me the experience from the other side of the fence.

Do you judge both all-breeds and specialties? Yes. **If so, which do you prefer?** I have judged at both all breed shows and specialties, and I do prefer specialties because of the accommodations and the entry size. However, some all breed shows are very accommodating to the GSD in ring size which I feel is the most important factor.

Do you have a color preference? No, not when I am judging, but yes, when I am picking for myself. If two (2) dogs or bitches are similar, I will always pick rich, strong pigment.

Do you find it harder to judge solid blacks? No. It takes focus to judge each dog individually and solid blacks are no different. However, it may appear that solid black dogs are more difficult to judge. **If so, why?** I find myself focusing a little more on solid blacks because there are aspects of the anatomy that are less obvious because there is no clear cut marking or color break as you are watching the dog in action. Nonetheless, I can see a good croup or a flat croup on any color dog, for example.

When judging the dog, do you also judge the handler? No. I don't judge the handler, however, I have been a Professional Handler, and I have some very strong opinions on how to best present a GSD in the ring. Please elaborate if possible. I have been known to make comments to handlers

when I felt that they were acting in a detrimental way to showing the dog at its best. Dog Shows are learning experiences, and if we are not willing to share our experience with others, then I feel we are doing the Exhibitors an injustice. We are not experts in every area of the breed, but I feel that presented correctly, we can learn and grow together.

What importance do you place on missing teeth? I think it's important to ask the question, Do you consider missing teeth a fault? Yes, but in relationship to everything else. If a dog was missing four (4) teeth, as an example, and two of them happened to be molars, the problem is serious in that particular dog. If a dog is missing a premolar or two, and everything else was good, then it is not serious, in my opinion.

Please discuss temperament in the ring today. Has it improved? I haven't judged recently to say it has improved or not. However, as a spectator at the National Specialty this past year, I would not say it has improved. **Declined?** I am not sure that I can comment on this either, but let me say that Temperament is #1 in the GSD because without it, you don't have a German Shepherd. **Please explain.** Good, strong, sold temperament is a requirement of the breed, and if it's not, then we are not serving the breed or the fancy. It would be like putting Mr. or Mrs. America in front of the audience and announcing that they are schizophrenic but they look really good, and what about their movement across stage. Isn't that spectacular? People would be in an outrage, wouldn't they, that we have our values in the wrong place? I know that they would not accept it and neither should we.

Do you prefer a dog to be shown on a loose lead? A loose lead is the ONLY way to see what the dog is doing without the influence of the handler.

How would you rate the following in sequence of importance? (On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best). First off, let me explain that if I attempt to do this rating on a scale of 1-10, it won't be accurate or very helpful to anyone. Many of us have learned the Whole-Part-Whole Theory and some people were more comfortable with the Part-Whole-Part Theory. Both are pretty much self explanatory, nonetheless, let's presume that I judge by the Whole-Part-Whole Theory and let's begin with what I choose to call my process of judging. That is, I use Temperament-Type and Gait as my basis for evaluating the GSD under any circumstance anywhere. That is to say that I do the same things whether I am in the ring on an assignment or I am in a backyard evaluating a litter of puppies. So the #1 Priority in a GSD, according to the Standard, and my Personal Standard, is a Good, Solid Dog that is comfortable in any setting. #2 is GSD Type. That is, the dog or bitch must look like a German Shepherd according to the Standard and have all the attributes of the breed type. #3-Gait, is what I have always bred for and look for in the ring providing the first two (2) attributes are present. This is the deciding factor and gait separates "the wheat from the shaft". All of the items below, with the exception of Temperament, Side gate and Structure, are involved with the Part-Whole-Part Theory and I use them to separate the individual dogs and bitches once we have established that the Correct Temperament-Correct Type and the Correct Gait are present.

Coming/Going:

Sidegait:

Temperament:

Teeth:

Coat:

Pasterns, hocks, feet:

Pigment:

Structure:

Shoulder/Reach:

Attitude:

In your opinion should double handling be allowed? Yes, but only in moderation. Please explain. Having attended the most recent National Specialty, I can only say that the double handler is attempting to control the attitude, mood and speed of the dog by using every device known to man to distract the dog or bitch from paying attention to either its handler or the judge in the ring. I know that most people would say that they have to do it in order to be competitive, and I say that the judge is exercising NO control in the ring by allowing the double handler to control his or her ring from the outside. It would be similar to illustrate this point by allowing everyone to exceed the speed limit by 30 or 40 mph saying that they must keep up with the flow of traffic in order not to have an accident, and the law enforcement officer allowing the speeding to occur in justification of the speeders safety and well being. It's ludicrous to allow exhibitors to stay out of control and run a foot race. The show ring is not Saratoga Racetrack or the Kentucky Derby. It is a dog show with the emphasis on the dog being shown and not raced. Enough said.

Do you feel more emphasis should be put on the total package, and less on movement? I feel that I have adequately explained this question above in addressing Temperament, Type and Gait with all of the parts of the dog being the deciding factor when you have the main three areas of importance present and accounted for. This is where Education comes into play and the individuals who are participating are allowed to know and see everything that the judge knows and sees. This is not a secret society. I believe everyone has the right to knowledge and applied knowledge or wisdom about anything and everything on this planet including, but not limited to, the German Shepherd Standard and how it works.

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?) The only thing I really disapprove of is rudeness to either another exhibitor or to a judge or to a spectator. Rudeness is a sign of ignorance and lack of respect for oneself and for others. This is a game and all games need to be played by the rules and with a sense of fairness or why participate. Rudeness and lack of respect could be one of the causes of a decline in participation and enrollment in the GSD Game as we know it today.

Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should ALWAYS do when showing under you? Enjoy the experience and keep an open mind. This is the best formula I know for fun and real learning.

Do you have any advice for people who are relatively new to showing and/or breeding? The same answer as directly above and I would add more item. Learn from everyone. Even the most novice participant has something to offer. Sometimes we learn by looking at what not to do as well as what to do. Study and seek the knowledge of the breed for yourself, and don't take everyone's word as the gospel and discount your own feelings and beliefs. You, too, are valuable and make a contribution by your involvement.

Any final comments? I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts and feelings openly to the GSD Fancy and Peers. This is a time of great growth and learning on the Planet, and we all need to speak our thoughts as well as to listen to others. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Dan Mosher