

American Kennel Club, Inc.
MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AKC Offices at 101 Park Avenue, New York, NY
February 7, 2020

The Board convened on Friday, February 7, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

All Directors were present, except for Dr. Davies. Dr. Davies participated in the meeting by telephone conference, and by Board policy, and without objection, he did not vote. Also present was the Executive Secretary.

The January 2020 Board minutes, copies of which had been provided to all Directors, were reviewed. Upon a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Ms. Biddle, the January 2020 Board meeting minutes were approved unanimously. (Dr. Davies did not vote)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss sensitive business matters. It was reported out that the Minutes of the January 2020 Executive Sessions were approved.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Board Action Items

Mr. Sprung reviewed Action Items and reported on Staff initiatives.

Legal Status Report

The Board reviewed a status report on pending litigation and other Legal activities for the month of January 2020.

FINANCE

Joseph Baffuto, CFO, briefly summarized AKC's unaudited financial results for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2019. Total year to date revenues of \$79.5 million were \$2.7 million or 3.5% greater than the 2018 comparative period. Dog Registrations were up for the year by 1.2%, and Litters increased by 3%. Events increased by 5.3%, while entries were at an all-time high of 3,310,558. Operating income for the year ended December 31, 2019 was \$5.2 million which was favorable compared to 2018, while including a number of unbudgeted items. Additionally, the operating investment portfolio reflected total unrealized gains for the year of \$14.8 million dollars.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President, Sport Services participated in this portion of the meeting.

Australian Terrier Proposed Breed Standard Revision

The Board reviewed proposed revisions to the Australian Terrier breed standard, submitted by the Australian Terrier Club of America (ATCA). The Australian Terrier Club of America, Inc. (ATCA), received a petition dated December 27, 2019, signed by 35 members, 22%, requesting a revision to the tail section of the standard.

Following a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Ms. Biddle, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Dr. Davies did not vote) to permit the ATCA to proceed to ballot its membership on the proposed standard changes in accordance with the club's Constitution and Bylaws.

Manchester Terrier Proposed Breed Standard Revision

The Board reviewed proposed revisions to the Manchester Terrier standard as submitted by the American Manchester Terrier Club (AMTC). The current standard was approved June 10, 1991.

Following a motion by Mr. Tatro, seconded by Mr. Hamblin, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Dr. Davies did not vote) to approve the proposed revision to the Manchester Terrier breed standard be published for comment in the Secretary's Page of the *AKC Gazette*.

Parent Club Designation for Small Munsterlander Pointer

The Board reviewed a request from the Small Munsterlander Pointer Club of America to be designated as the Parent Club for the Breed.

Following a motion by Mr. Sweetwood, seconded by Mrs. Wallin, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Dr. Davies did not vote) to designate the Small Munsterlander Pointer Club of America as the Parent Club representing the Small Munsterland Pointer with the AKC.

CONFORMATION

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events and Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President, Sport Services participated in this portion of the meeting. Tim Thomas, Vice President of Dog Show Judges, Glenn Lycan, Director, Event Operations Support; Alan Slay, Director, Event Programs; and Heidi Spaeth, Manager, Dog Show Rules & Programs, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Limited Number of Events Policy

Starting in January 2019, the Limited Number of Events Policy was changed to provide flexibility across the country. The goal was to assist clubs that might want to hold a third show and provide additional opportunities for local exhibitors without negatively impacting other clubs in the region. Given one year of experience under the new policy, the staff presented a memo at the January 2020 meeting to explore possible additions to the policy that could further assist clubs without negatively impacting other clubs in the area.

Following their discussion in January, the Board requested a modification to the Limited Number of Events Policy to allow clubs the option of holding a third show provided they meet specific criteria. The staff recommendation is, in addition to the current policy, a club would qualify for a third show provided there are no other shows within 600 miles on the day of the show or any day of the cluster. There was significant discussion among Board members and staff if 600 miles was the correct distance. Also discussed was a 400-mile range and distances in between 400 and 600 miles.

The goal is to keep the existing criteria plus add additional provisions to provide even greater flexibility. Staff will do additional research and bring the memo back for further discussion at the April Board meeting.

Bred-By-Exhibitor Puppy Classes

The Board reviewed a recommendation to create a Bred-By-Exhibitor Puppy (BBEP) class in conformation. This idea was originally proposed in 2017 by Board Member Patricia Cruz. Many exhibitors are motivated to earn the Bred-By-Exhibitor medallion. Currently they are inhibited from showing in the Puppy classes on the chance that they earn Championship points, which would eliminate them from earning the medallion. Offering BBEP classes will be at the option of the host club. The recommendation is consistent with AKC's focus on the importance of breeders and the Board's decision to dedicate 2020 as the "The Year of the Breeder".

Following a motion by Ms. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Powers, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Dr. Davies did not vote) to create a Bred-by-Exhibitor Puppy Class. This will require an addition to the Rules Applying to Dog Shows, Chapter 3, Sections 3, 8-A and 11 and updated wording to the requirements to earn the BBE Medallion and the Puppy of Achievement Certificate.

This proposed rule changes will be read at the March Delegate meeting for a VOTE at the June Delegate meeting.

NOHS Levels of Achievement

In September, the All-Breed Delegates Committee discussed and supported the idea of NOHS Levels of Achievement in order to provide exhibitors with tangible goals and encourage continued participation. This idea is consistent with what the Sports & Events staff has been considering. Staff shared their general ideas for the structure of the new program with the Board in November 2019 and it was presented to the All-Breed Delegates Committee at their December 2019 meeting.

The Board reviewed a Staff memorandum which presented a formal recommendation to implement NOHS Levels of Achievement to include Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards to exhibits obtaining a predetermined number of NOHS points based on the current NOHS point system.

Following a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mrs. Wallin, the Board VOTED (In favor Ms. Biddle, Mr. Carota, Mr. Feeney, Dr. Garvin, Mr. Hamblin, Ms. McAteer, Mr. Powers, Mr. Smyth Mr. Sweetwood, Mr. Tatro, Mrs. Wallin; Ms. Cruz abstained and Dr. Davies did not vote) to amend the NOHS regulations in create NOHS Levels of Achievement to include Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards. Exhibits obtaining the predetermined number of NOHS points based on the current NOHS point system will earn these designations. The primary owner of a dog achieving these levels will receive an appropriately colored NOHS pin and will be emailed a Certificate of Achievement. As part of this action, the Board approved to allocate an unbudgeted \$19,000 to add the ability to grandfather awards back to the launch of the program. The grandfathering will recognize the highest level achieved to date.

<u>Recognition Level</u>	<u>Minimum Level of NOHS Points</u>
Bronze	250
Silver	500
Gold	1,000
Platinum	2,000

Staff Review Process for Dogs Disqualified by Event Committees

The Staff presented the procedures that will be utilized should the change to *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, Chapter 11, Section 8-A be approved by the Delegates at the March 2020 meeting.

Currently a dog can only be disqualified by an Event Committee in the rare instance that there is an injury to a dog or person. There are cases where a dog attacks but there is no injury due to quick reactions or simply by luck. The recommended change is to allow the Event Committee to determine if a dog that attacks presents a hazard and, if so, it may disqualify a dog for aggression without an injury.

There has been some concern that the revised rule could be misused. To mitigate these concerns, exhibitors need to be confident that the AKC has a solid review process in place to confirm that the Event Committee acted properly, and the facts of the matter support the conclusion of the Event Committee.

An article was published in the March issue of Perspectives to communicate to the Delegates the internal review process used when a DQ by Event Committee is reported. The article incorporates the Board's direction that the Event Committee's review process must include written documentation of the incident including signed witness statements.

The DQ by Event Committee form was modified to emphasize the documentation that must be submitted. The DQ by Committee form, with the changes from the current form was presented to the Board and this form will be used if the Delegates approve the recommended change at the March Delegate meeting.

Status Report - AKC Event Search & Results

The Staff provided a status report on the enhanced AKC Event Search & Results that was launched in January 2018 and enhanced in May 2018 with the addition of the map-based search feature.

Measurable goals for the enhanced AKC Event Search & Results were:

- (1) Increasing the daily usage of the search.

Result: The number of average daily users since implementation has continued to be at least 30% higher than pre-implementation.

- (2) Improving the experience for users of mobile devices.

Result: The number of mobile device users since implementation has continued to be at least 100% higher than pre-implementation.

- (3) Providing access to important event documents.

Result: In 2019, an average of 637 event documents (premium lists, judging programs, etc.) were accessed daily through the AKC Event Search & Results. Posting documents on the AKC Event Search & Results was not possible prior to the enhancements.

The enhanced AKC Event Search & Results tool has increased customers using the AKC website and provided exhibitors with a useful tool for event planning and results verification.

4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Exhibitor Update

The Staff provided the Board information about 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy (BPUP) exhibitors; specifically, what percentage of the BPUP exhibitors are new to the sport and what percentage of dogs go on to exhibit in regular conformation shows.

28.2% of the households exhibiting in BPUP in 2018 were new to conformation. An analysis of the dogs exhibited in BPUP in 2018 showed that 78% of the dogs continued to show in regular conformation classes. Additionally, some of the exhibitors go on to participate in other sports, with CAT/Fast CAT, Rally, and Obedience being the most popular.

The BPUP competition continues to grow. In 2019 there were 964 BPUP events, a growth of 151 events (19%) when compared to 2018.

JUDGING OPERATIONS

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events participated in this portion of the meeting and Tim Thomas, Vice President of Dog Show Judges participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Mandatory Ramp Examination - Cirneco dell'Etna

The Board reviewed a request from the Cirneco dell'Etna Club of America that the Board of Directors mandate the use of a ramp for all examinations of the breed including during group and Best in Show judging. Currently, Cirneco dell'Etnas may be judged either on the ground or the ramp at the discretion of the judge.

Following a motion by Mr. Smyth, seconded by Mr. Tatro, the Board VOTED (In favor: Ms. Biddle, Mr. Carota, Ms. Cruz, Mr. Feeney, Mr. Hamblin, Ms. McAteer, Mr. Powers, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Sweetwood, Mr. Tatro, Mrs. Wallin; Opposed: Dr. Garvin, Dr. Davies did not vote) to approve the request from the Cirneco dell'Etna Club of America to make mandatory the use of the ramp for all examinations of the breed including during group and Best in Show judging.

CONSENT

Following a motion by Dr. Garvin, seconded by Mr. Powers it was VOTED (unanimously) to approve the following Consent items:

- Delegate and Club Approvals
- Alaskan Malamute Obedience Jump Height Requirements
- Communicable Diseases - Rules Applying to Dog Shows Chapter 11, Section 9
- Eligibility to Participate in the 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition
- Retriever Field Trials – Marking the Blind Retrieve with a Conspicuous Object
- Pointing Breed Hunting Tests - Three Recommended Clarifications
- Parent Club Designation for American English Coonhound

Delegates Approved

Kristina M. DeLisi, Runnells, IA
To represent Central Iowa Kennel Club

Diane Reid, New York, NY
To represent Briard Club of America

Alaskan Malamute Obedience Jump Height Requirements

The Board VOTED to approve a request from the Alaskan Malamute Club of America, that the jump height requirements in obedience be lowered to three-quarters of the height of the breed at the withers. With the change, they will jump at 16" – 18". The request is consistent with similar breed adjustments already approved for obedience competition (see Chapter 4, Section 13 and Appendix A of the Obedience Regulations).

Rules Applying to Dog Shows Chapter 11, Section 9 - Communicable Diseases

The Board VOTED to approve a recommendation from the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee (DSRC) to modify Chapter 11, Section 9 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, which defines the eligibility restrictions related to dogs with communicable diseases. This will be read at the March Delegate meeting for a VOTE at the June Delegates meeting.

Proposed new wording underlined:

CHAPTER 11

SECTION 9. No dog with a communicable disease shall be on the show grounds or premises. Exhibitors should follow their veterinarian's recommendations to ensure that their dogs are free of internal and external parasites, any communicable disease, and have appropriate vaccinations.

Eligibility to Participate in the 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition

The Board VOTED to approve a recommendation submitted by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee to modify the 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition Regulations to allow minor

children of professional handlers with amateur status to participate in the Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition. This idea was originally proposed by Board Member Patricia Cruz.

The revised section of the Regulations is provided below:

- Professional handlers, members of their household and current assistants to professional handlers **may not personally exhibit dogs** in the Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition. Dogs that are owned or co-owned by the forenamed may compete in this competition but must be handled by a non-professional handler. *Professional handlers are defined as any person who belongs or has belonged to a professional handlers' organization, distributed rate cards, or otherwise advertised or represented themselves as handling dogs for pay within the last five years.*
- Minors (under 18) with amateur status who reside with professional handlers and current assistants to professional handlers that are eligible to compete in Junior Showmanship (meet age and amateur status requirements) **may personally exhibit** dogs in the Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition.

Retriever Field Trials – Marking the Blind Retrieve with a Conspicuous Object

The Board VOTED to approve a recommendation from the Retriever Field Trial Advisory Committee to clarify that in Retriever Field Trials, the location of the bird in a blind retrieve should be clearly marked with a conspicuous object. This clarification will bring greater consistency between trials.

Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures for Retrievers

Supplement to The Standard Procedure. Part I – Trial Procedure. Paragraph 8.

On “blind” retrieves, whenever possible, the Judges should plan their tests in such a way that they take advantage of natural hazards, such as islands, points of land, sand bars, ditches, hedges, small bushes, adjacent heavy cover, and rolling terrain. Despite such natural distractions, it should be possible, at least in theory, for a dog to “find” a well-planned blind-retrieve on the initial line from his handler; that he will do so is highly improbable because of those natural hazards, so he must be handled to the “blind.” Nevertheless, the test should be so planned that the dog should be “in-sight” continuously. To further the prior principle, the blind must be clearly marked with a conspicuous object. A blind retrieve is a test of control, and a dog which is out of sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control. Utilizing natural hazards should obviate the need for Judges issuing special instructions about the manner of completing a blind retrieve, other than to “get the meat” by the shortest, fastest, or most direct route.

Pointing Breed Hunting Tests - Three Recommended Clarifications

The Board VOTED to approve a Staff recommendation for three changes to be made to the *Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds* meant to clarify issues that have arisen in the field (changes underlined below). Specifically, (1) better define what is meant by “no training on the grounds”, (2) clarify that when two dogs are on point in close proximity to one another, the judges should take control of the situation by instructing one handler to hold up while the other dog completes its bird work, and (3) clarify how to handle the situation where a Junior level dog catches a bird and proceeds to mouth it excessively.

Chapter 3. Instruction for Hunting Test Committees.

Section 9. Training. There shall be no training on the grounds of a Hunting Test on the day of the event prior to its start or during the running of the event. The definition of “the grounds” shall include any area used for the course(s) plus the parking area. Beyond that, the exact determination of “the grounds” is left to the determination of the event committee given the specifics of the location. Once an event has concluded, training is allowed provided it is allowed by the host club and the landowner/managing agency. Exceptions may be granted by the Performance Events Department under special circumstances.

Chapter 5. Test Requirements.

Section 1. General Requirements and Instructions.

(N) Courtesy to One’s Bracemate. When two dogs are working in the bird field, the handlers, judges and gunners should be generally aware of the location and actions of the bracemate so as not to interfere with each other. When both dogs are on point in close proximity to each other, the judges should take control of the situation in order to ensure safety and minimize interference. Usually the dog that goes on point last should be asked to hold up until the other dog has completed its bird work. If the first dog is having difficulty, it is up to the judge to decide when the second dog may proceed with its bird work.

Part II. Hunting Test Categories.

5. Retrieving. New paragraph #9

In a retrieving situation when both dogs are on point in close proximity to each other, the judges should take control of the situation in order to ensure safety and minimize interference. One dog should be asked to hold up until the other dog has completed its bird work. If the first dog is having difficulty, it is up to the judge to decide when the second dog may proceed with its bird work.

Chapter 5. Test Requirements.

Section 2. Instructions and Test Requirements for Junior Hunting Test.

(4) Trainability: If a Junior dog catches a bird and proceeds to mouth it excessively, the dog shall receive a lower score in trainability depending on the extent of the fault. Note: This fault is scored under Retrieving in Senior and Master level tests.

Parent Club Designation for American English Coonhound

The Board VOTED to approve the National American English Coonhound Association as the designated Parent Club to represent the American English Coonhound.

COMPANION AND PERFORMANCE

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events, was present for this portion of the meeting. Caroline Murphy, Director, Performance Events, participated in this portion of the meeting via video conference.

Dalmatians Request to Participate in Herding

The Board reviewed a request from the Dalmatian Club of America to allow Dalmatians to participate in AKC Herding events.

Following a motion by Ms. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Tatro the Board VOTED (In favor: Mr. Carota, Ms. Cruz, Mr. Feeney, Mr. Hamblin, Ms. McAteer, Mr. Powers, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Sweetwood, Mr. Tatro, Mrs. Wallin; Opposed: Ms. Biddle, Dr. Garvin, Dr. Davies did not vote) to not approve the request from the Dalmatian Club of America to allow Dalmatians to participate in herding events.

Participation in the AKC Herding program is limited to breeds whose historical function is consistent with the test. While there is little doubt Dalmatians are intelligent, versatile dogs, the evidence does not support herding livestock was a historical function of the breed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss sensitive business matters. There was nothing reported out of this session.

AKC MEDIA

Ron Furman, Director, AKC Media, Daphna Straus, Vice President, Business Development, and William Ellis, Media Manager participated in this portion of the meeting. Staff presented on update on media sales, sponsorships, licensing and AKCTV.

AKC's digital sales team saw increases across the board in 2019. This increase in sold impressions and higher direct CPMs in 2019 represents better utilization of available inventory, and higher revenue optimizations for direct sold campaigns in 2020. 2019 saw substantial growth in advertising on AKC.org, AKC.TV, Content, Direct Email, and Video.

AKCTV traffic is up across all platforms. We continue to focus marketing efforts in 2020 on mobile app downloads.

MARKETING

Kirsten Bahlke, Vice President, Marketing participated in this portion of the meeting.

National Digital Brand Marketing Campaign Launch Update

Staff gave a presentation on the Q1 2020 launch of the AKC's national digital brand marketing campaign "If It Barks, It's AKC." This cross-channel, digital campaign, targeting all types of dog-lovers, will promote AKC's key objectives: registration of purebred dogs, awareness and interest in AKC training, sports and events and the overall perception of AKC.

The key messaging in the campaign was reviewed: "The American Kennel Club has the "expert knowledge, advice, resources, and support you need, anytime, anywhere, about anything and everything dog—if it quacks, moos, or meows, you've come to the wrong place. But if it barks, it's AKC."

Marketing Updates and Highlights

Staff presented a review of the Marketing Departments highlights and accomplishments in 2019.

- AKC.org: AKC.org site traffic is extremely healthy. Positive site traffic growth is attributed to SEO (search engine optimization) improvements both in site structure and content, content strategy, and improved cross-channel collaboration. The year closed on a high with December Users and Sessions up versus year ago (YAG), +10% and +8.5% respectively, positioning the website for continued growth in 2020.

- AKC Email Program: In 2019 AKC sent emails across 1,051 campaigns. Emails open rate increase by 27% YOY. AKC's open and click-thru-rates remain well above industry benchmarks.
- Social Media: AKC **Facebook** finished 2019 with a total of 4,007,922 followers. This is a +2.18% YoY increase. For comparison, Facebook overall US user growth was +0.22%
- AKC **Instagram** finished 2019 with a total of 304,536 followers. This is a +11.7% YoY increase.
- AKC Marketplace traffic was up versus year ago +7.9% (users) and +10.4 % (sessions). Organic traffic increased (+8.8% YOY). Direct traffic was up 34.3% in 2019. Litter listings continue to trend up in 2019, with July being the top month, beating the same month in 2018 (YAG +24%). Total litters listed in 2019 is +18% vs 2018.
- **AKC Barketing Basics was held December 11-14 in Orlando** – The Marketing department held one-on-sessions with AKC club members and breeders that covered marketing best practices and how they can use them to help grow their membership and events, educate the public, or find the right puppy owners.

CLUBS

Doug Ljungren, Executive Vice President, Sports & Events, and Lisa Cecin, Director, Club Relations, participated in this portion of the meeting.

Delegates and Member Clubs

The Board reviewed a report on the prospective Delegate credentials to be published in two issues of the AKC *Gazette*, a report on Requests for AKC Membership and a report on Member Club Bylaws approved and newly licensed clubs.

Report on Member Clubs Bylaws Approved in December 2019 and January 2020

Harrisburg Kennel Club, Harrisburg, PA (1938)
 LEAP Agility Club of Central Massachusetts, Sturbridge, MA (2015)
 Papillon Club of America (1935)
 Pekingese Club of America (1909)

Report on Newly Licensed Clubs Approved in December 2019 and January 2020

German Pinscher Club of the Southwest, greater Albuquerque, NM area (including communities west to Buckeye, AZ, north to El Prado, NM, east to Dallas, TX and south to Austin, TX), 31 total households, 17 local.

Heart of America Chinese Crested Club of St. Louis, greater St. Louis, MO area (including communities north to Wright City, MO, south to Cadet, MO, east to Greenville, IL and west to Fulton, MO), 30 total households, 12 local.

Southern Nevada Boxer Club, greater Clark County, NV area, 21 total households, 12 local.

COMPLIANCE

The following AKC Management actions were reported:

(Final Board Disciplinary actions are reported on the Secretary's Page)

FINAL

FEBRUARY 7, 2020

It was VOTED to adjourn Friday, February 7, 2020 at 3:13 p.m.

Adjourned

Attest: _____

Gina M. DiNardo, Executive Secretary