

## NO TO MANDATORY RAMPING – Jean Sheehy

As we all know by now, the Delegate from the Basset Hound Club of America met with the Delegates' Committee on Dog Show Rules to seek a change in the rules to mandate the ramping of Basset Hounds at all times, including in the group ring if the group judge did not do Basset Hounds on that day. Further, that she asked the delegates from all the other "ramp" breeds to join her at the meeting and make a "united effort to accomplish this change", an invitation to which almost every other "ramp breed" club declined.

As a Life Member, Past-President, Past-every-other-officer except Treasurer of the Basset Hound Club of America, I would like to note that I am extremely opposed to MANDATING the use of the ramp to examine Basset Hounds, as are many other BHCA member judges, although I very much approve the use of ramps at the judge's discretion in the breed ring. Further, that I am probably the person most responsible for ramps being used in the first place.

Many years ago, some judges were requiring that Basset Hounds be put on a table. I was stewarding at an all-breed show in Junior Showmanship, and the judge asked a little girl in the younger class to put her full-grown Basset male on the table. As I knew this judge, even though I knew I shouldn't, I felt I had to speak up and told her that it wasn't a good idea to do this as the child could not lift the dog and when it jumped off the table, its front could be ruined. (The child got the dog on the table by putting its two front feet on the table and lifting the rear). I asked her if I could help the child lift the dog off the table. The judge snapped at me that it was her ring and the child should have the dog under control at all times. As I feared, the dog had to jump off the table.

As I was BHCA secretary at the time, I went back to the Board and told them of this incident, and it was decided I would write the AKC and ask for their support in not allowing Basset Hounds to be examined on the table. We had to give them an alternative, and so we said that a ramp similar to the type used for pictures would be perfectly acceptable to us. AKC agreed to write all the superintendents and Basset Hound judges and ask that Basset Hounds not be examined on the table but preferably on the floor or on a ramp. All the superintendents, some judges, and even some exhibitors ranted and raved about the ramp at first. However, over the years everything has changed, including the fact that the ramps are now pretty standardized, and both the judges and the exhibitors love using them. Little by little, other breeds got on the bandwagon and asked to have ramps approved for their use.

However, the ramps are still very bulky, and here is where the rub comes in. I do two groups that have "ramp approved" breeds in them, and although I almost always use the ramp for these breeds in the breed ring, it is an entirely different situation in the group ring. You are expected to judge a group in approximately 20 minutes and having to get that heavy ramp in and out of the group ring several times during group judging would delay matters no end. This, at the end of the day when everyone is tired and wants to leave the show, get dinner, and rest.

Also, there is a **big** difference to requiring use of a table for the table breeds and use of the ramp for the ramped breeds. The toy breeds, for instance, are so small someone bending over them to examine or reexamine them on the floor could easily spook them.

The following statement, made in the "Board Response" is ludicrous:

**"Do not kneel in front of a dog. • Do not hover over a dog. • Do not bend over face to face with a dog. • Do not bend over cheek to cheek with a dog.**

Basset Hounds may not be small and intimidated like toy breeds but lots of them still don't like someone coming down on top of them."

The above statement certainly pertains to small toy dogs, but in no way, shape, or form can I visualize it pertaining to the judging of a Basset Hound. I would like to know what judge kneels in front of a Basset Hound, bends over face to face with a dog, or bends over cheek to cheek to examine them on the floor? I know I sure don't, nor do I know anyone else who does. As a matter of fact, with my height I am more cheek-to-cheek with them when they are on the ramp than when they are on the floor. And if someone looking at him or her on the floor intimidates a Basset Hound, it sure does not have the correct Basset Hound temperament!

Unlike most of the table breeds, all of the breeds approved for examination on the ramp can easily be examined or reexamined on the floor. As both a group judge and a show chairman, I approve using a ramp in the breed ring in most instances but do think it should be left at the judge's discretion, and am opposed to requiring its use in the group ring in any instance.

In closing I would like to say that if the BHCA Board is so set on Mandating something, they should ask AKC to MANDATE that Basset Hounds NOT be judged on a TABLE. For all these over 30 years since BHCA got use of the ramp approved, the most AKC would say is that they RECOMMEND that Basset Hounds not be judged on a table!