



## GUIDELINES FOR RINGSIDE MENTORING

- Use breed specific terminology from the AKC breed standard when making a reference to conformational/anatomical features.
- When discussing physical characteristics, relate their importance and/or link to the function and original purpose of the breed.
- Avoid pointing out generic faults—they are obvious to all.
- Have a copy of the breed standard on hand. You are ringside mentoring JUDGES, not breeders. All comments must relate to the breed standard. Any item that is not contained in the breed standard should not be discussed.
- Stress the importance of staying with the “whole picture,” (the sum of all of the parts)
- Personal preferences/breeder preferences must never override and take precedence over breed standard requirements. They have not purpose in ringside mentoring.
- If one “gets” the essence of breed type, they will “get” the details of type.
- Prioritize key features of the breed by how they are referenced in the breed standard. Refer back to form and function when relevant.
- Judges have a small window of time in the show ring to assess important characteristics...they are not building a breeding program.
- Break down your information in simple terms targeted toward the prioritization of breed characteristics in a two-minute ring evaluation.
- Ask judges to visualize the ability to perform the function he was bred for when looking at the dog. Point out the characteristics in the breed standard that directly relate to form and function.
- Be articulate and knowledgeable about all sections of the standard, and be able to apply the priorities as they are stated.
- Accurate breed-specific hands-on examination technique is important; explain effective ways to go over heads, coats, etc. Refer judges to the breed “handouts” and other educational material on the club website ([www.australianshepherds.org](http://www.australianshepherds.org))
- The Ringside Observation form is filled in first by the mentored judge followed by mentor’s comments after the previous section is complete. Be sure the form is filled out in its entirety.
- Take ownership in your breed. When you sign a form for a prospective judge for a ringside observation, you are verifying that the experience occurred *as described*. If it did not, *do not* sign the form. If the individual displayed conceptual challenges and/or difficulties, *state it on the form*.

*Keep a record of whom you mentor and sign forms for.*