

# Kylie Jo Hirschy-Seivert Junior Showmanship Copyright © 2009

I look forward to assisting juniors and working with them in a way to show them how to succeed in junior showmanship.

Here is a little bit about myself.

Junior Showmanship is “close to my heart” as I showed extensively in that area when I was a teenager. Showing a Golden Retriever that I finished myself (CH Amberac’s U Can’t Tucker Him Out) and several Field Spaniels (CH OTCH Chevy, CH Demo, and CH CT Race), I earned national rankings through competition and defeating other juniors that included #1 Junior Handler with a Sporting Breed, #4 All Breed and, the highlight, #1 Junior Handler with a Golden Retriever along with #1 Junior Handler with a Field Spaniel. I currently breed Field Spaniels with my mom under the Calico prefix and compete in conformation, obedience, rally and hunting.

**A few words of advise is to create a team that can float around the ring, set up with confidence, listen to instructions, dress yourself and your dog for success, and the result is simply breath taking.**

**I wish all juniors “good luck” in the ring!**

After all, the juniors of today are the breeders, exhibitors and judges of tomorrow.



Kylie shown showing Ritz in the BBE Sporting Group at the 2008 Eukanuba Show in Long Beach, CA.

Here are my **Top 8** things I am looking for when I judge Junior Showmanship:

1. **First Impression:** A dog set up efficiently, confidently is clearly showcased, and an eye-catcher. You want to catch the judge's attention by means of professionalism.
2. **Handler/Dog Relationship:** There is a genuine and affectionate relationship between the junior and the dog. Be sure to take time to play with your junior's dog and develop a relationship. It will shine through in the ring and the judges notice the juniors that play with their dogs in the ring. It is also important to have water near the ring in large classes to keep the dog hydrated judges do notice the constant care for the dogs while in the ring. Take the time to play with your dog in the ring because the judges do notice the handler/dog team. This is a great way to show off your tricks for example begging, high fives and spins.
3. **Grooming:** A well-groomed dog shows preparation, and don't forget the teeth! While it is a personal "picky point" for me in judging, when I examine a dog and see dirty teeth – well the dog is not being show-cased to the best of the juniors ability and it reflects a level of care for the dog.
4. **Handling and Gaiting:** It is very important to move smoothly with the dog so that your movements are not a distraction behind the dog. Your arm should not string the dog up in the air, but a nice loose lead does not mean the lead is draping in a swoop beneath the dog's chin. The ideal "loose" lead is not really loose per se; it is actually similar to holding the reins of a dressage horse.
5. **Listen to Instructions:** When given specific instruction, the junior should comply efficiently and correctly. To do otherwise, simply shows that the junior is not listening well to instructions.
6. **Individual Patterns:** The top juniors do not drift all over the ring in gaiting their dog; they are able to focus and maintain a line, while at the same time being attentive to the dog and the judge. Learn to get a focal point and gait your dog toward that point. With practice, it becomes automatic and you no longer need to think about it.
7. **Free Baiting:** Isn't for everybody or every kind of dog, but it can truly make the difference in how a junior places in a class. In judging juniors, a final observation is often to ask the juniors to gait the dogs around, individually, and then free bait them in the center of the ring. It is a very helpful keen competition to sorting out the class, so be prepared for it!
8. **Dress for Success:** Remember, you want to be the one in the Best Junior Handler photo! You do not need expensive outfits; when showing in juniors and to this day I often shopped Goodwill and EBay for bargain outfits. At a premier dog show from a fun match, National or State 4-H event bring out the real nice cloths that showcase the dog yourself and the dogs well. Remember to look "classy" and have that polished look judges are looking for to get that "first impression." In other words "classy" can mean attractive, useful and comfortable. This isn't the place for the prom dress with high-heeled shoes, but this is the place for comfortable flats. Also, remember to dress your age and that means no low-cut blouses or miniskirts. Junior Showmanship is a class that you will need to bend over so wear comfortable, but nothing revealing. Remember dress for success!!!

The below information is from the American Kennel Club website [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

## **Getting Started in Junior Showmanship**

The American Kennel Club licenses dogs shows (competitive exhibitions in which dogs are judged in accordance with an established standard of perfection for each breed) that test and evaluate the form and function of purebred dogs. In addition, at some shows the AKC offers classes which evaluate the abilities of the participant on the other end of the lead, the young handler.

AKC Junior Showmanship classes offer youngsters the opportunity to:

1. Develop their handling skills
2. Learn about good sportsmanship
3. Learn about dogs and dog shows.

## **Join the world of AKC Junior Showmanship!**

Juniors are important to the future of the sport of dogs and responsible dog ownership, and the more they learn, the more valuable they become. The values, attitudes and responsibility learned through Junior Showmanship will serve youngsters well throughout their lives. By putting time and effort into learning about their dog and how to present it, juniors are rewarded with a win.

## **Who may participate**

Junior Showmanship classes are open to children from 9 to 18 years old and are divided into Novice and Open classes: All participants in Junior Showmanship classes must have an AKC Junior Showmanship [Handler Number](#). Novice classes are for those children who, at the time entries close, have not won three (3) first-place awards in a Novice class at a licensed or member show. To qualify as a win, more than one child must be in competition in a class. The Novice class gives those children who are beginners a chance to gain experience and confidence apart from the more seasoned youngsters. Open classes are for those children having three or more first-place wins; these are the more experienced Junior Handlers. A beginner can learn how to present their dog more effectively by watching these talented youngsters in the ring.

The classes may further be divided into:

- Junior: At least 9 years old but under 12 years old on the day of the show.
- Intermediate: At least 12 years old but under 15 years old on the day of the show.
- Senior: At least 15 years old but under 18 years old on the day of the show.

## **Judging criteria**

Juniors are judged on their ability to present, or handle, their dogs within the same formats and guidelines as those who compete in the breed ring. The quality of their presentation, not the dog, is judged. Juniors are encouraged to develop their handling abilities, dress appropriately, conduct themselves in a proper manner, and present their dog in a well-groomed condition.

## **What about the dog?**

Any dog entered must be eligible to compete in dog shows or obedience trials. The dog must be owned by the child, a member of the child's family or member of his household. Many times junior showmanship classes are free (if the dog is entered in regular classes) or are offered at the reduced rate.

## **How to get started**

The best way for prospective junior handlers to see what is involved in junior handling is to watch the Junior Showmanship classes at a dog show. They will see how children take part at all levels of competition, how they have developed friendships and have learned to compete and accept their wins and losses in a gracious manner. Talk to these young participants in our sport. You will be impressed by their knowledge, attitudes and their willingness to share their experiences with someone new to the sport. Another way to learn the basics is at your local dog club. Many clubs offer weekly handling classes. These informal sessions are conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and afford both dog and handler an opportunity to practice in a setting similar to an actual show.

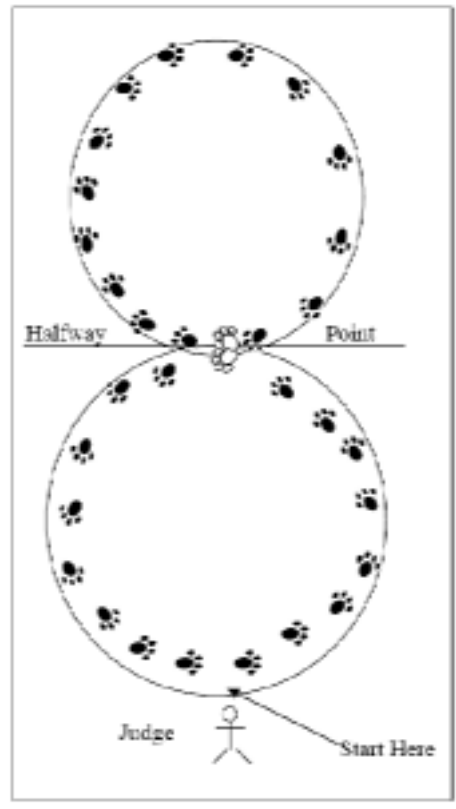
In order to receive Premium Lists (which detail date, location and judges of all classes at a particular show) for shows in your area, visit the Superintendent's office at any show. Or subscribe to the [AKC Gazette](#) and you will receive, as a part of your subscription, the Events Calendar, a monthly supplement that lists all the AKC events held throughout the country.

Reference the [American Kennel Club Website](#)

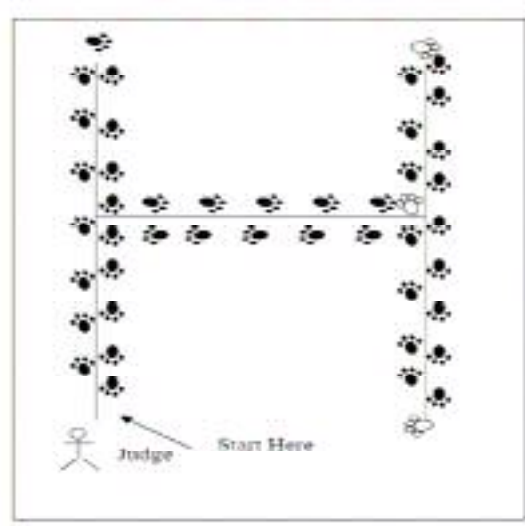
Depending on where you are competing will depend on what handling patterns that you can expect. In AKC, most judges follow the down and back, triangle and “L” pattern for their individual examinations. In 4-H, you can see a variety of handling patterns. The following charts are from the ASCA website:

Only select handling patterns will be used in the ASCA<sup>®</sup> Junior Program. The decided patterns are following, and included are suggested ways in which to complete them.

**The Figure 8 Pattern**  
Starting in front of the Judge, create a half circle to the halfway point, switch hands, continuing a half circle to the top of the “8” and completing your upper half. At the halfway point, switch hands again, and complete your bottom circle part of the “8”, continuing to the point of beginning.



**The “H” Pattern**  
Starting in front of the Judge, Go straight away, to the top of the H. Turn the dog to the inside, go half-way down your same track, and turn to make the “H” bar. Switch hands. Turn up to create the upper half of the either side of the “H”. Again, switch hands and turn into your dog, keeping it to the inside, and come down to the bottoms of the “H”. Switch hands and continue up to the halfway point. Cut back across the “H” bar to the first step of the “H” and turn down to your judge. All steps should be inside themselves.





**The Double Down and Back**

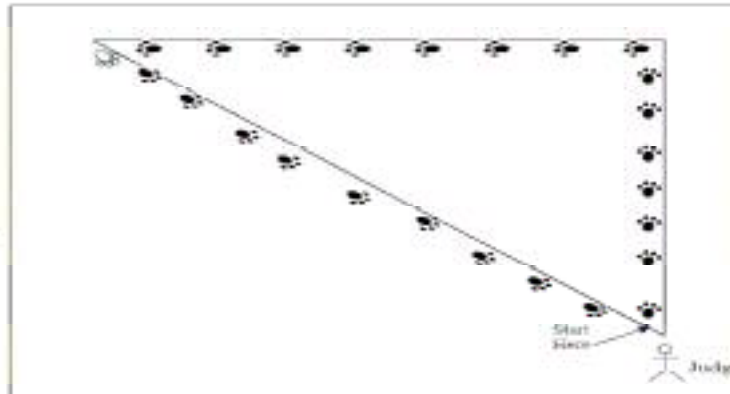
Starting in front of the judge, with both dogs on the inside, go straight away from the judge. When you get to the end of the ring, you turn your dogs so that they are still side by side, and retrace your steps back to the judge.



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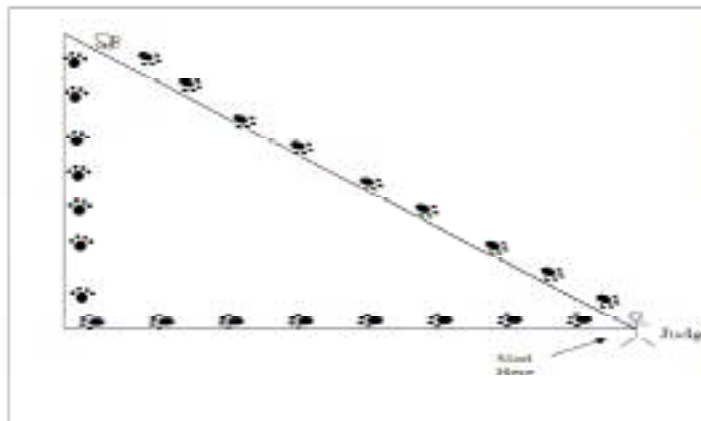
**The Triangle to the Left Pattern**

Move your dog away from the judge in a straight line, as you come to the corner of the ring, turn Left and continue to the next corner. At this corner, make a "courtesy turn" and continue down to the judge.



**The Triangle to the Right Pattern**

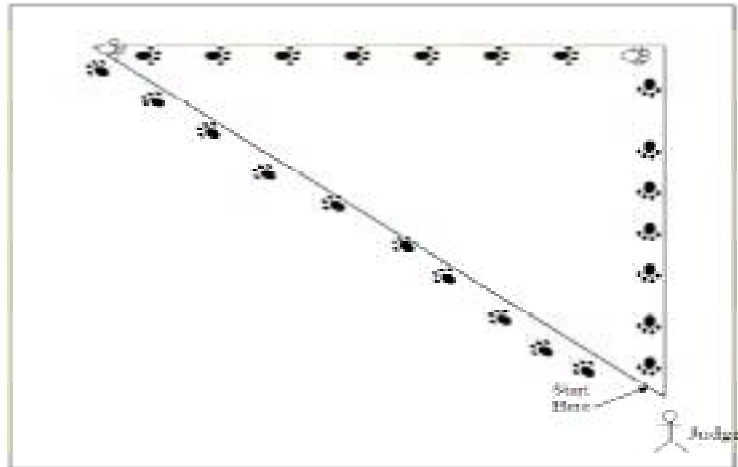
Move your dog away from the judge in a straight line to the left. As you come to the corner of the ring, turn Right and continue to the next corner. At this corner, turn back down towards the judge.



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**The Reverse Triangle Pattern**

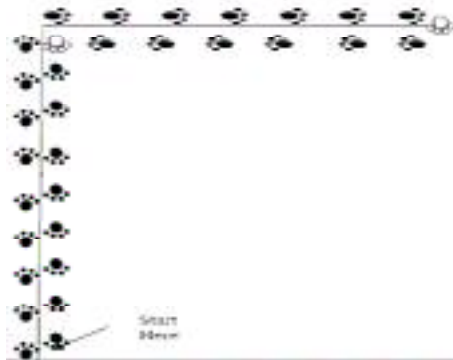
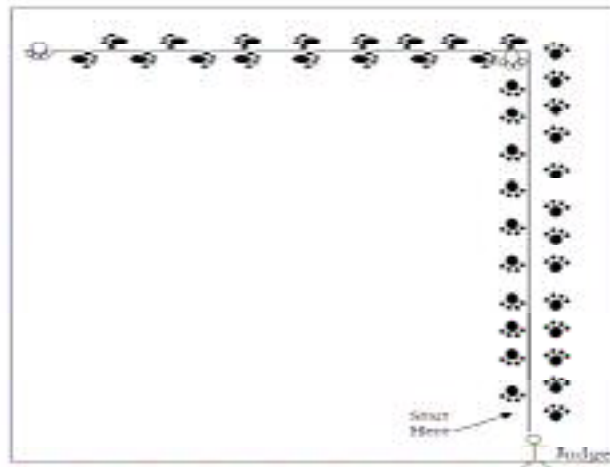
Starting in front of the judge, go out on the diagonal to the corner of the ring. Change hands and continue across the top of the ring. Once you reach the next corner, change hands again and go straight down to your judge.



At this point, I think we should explain some of the items you are seeing here. Please keep in mind that just because these patterns do not show courtesy turns, that does not mean you can not do them. Courtesy turns are at the sole discretion of the handler. Also, the way in which hands are switched and the dog is switched, is also at the discretion of the handler. These patterns are intended to be a guide in helping Junior Handlers to become familiar with what will be asked of them in the ring. The "V", "Z", and capital "I" are to be used in the Best Junior Handler Class only. All other patterns may also be used in the Best Junior class also. Any order in which these patterns are used, shall be at the discretion of the Judge. Where you see a "white" paw, is where hand or dog side changes are to be made.

**The I to the Left Pattern**

Starting at the Judge, go straight away to the top of the ring. At the corner, turn left, continuing to the opposite corner. switch hands and cut back across the top, in your same steps. Once back at the corner, have your dog switch sides, and continue down to the judge.

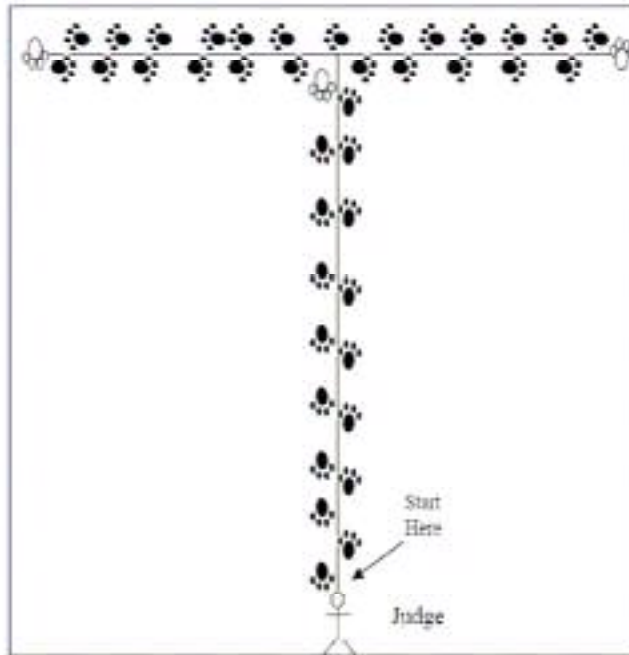


**The I to the Right Pattern**

Starting at the Judge, go straight away to the top of the ring. At the corner, turn right, continuing to the opposite corner. switch hands and cut back across the top, in your same steps. Once back at the corner, have your dog switch sides, and continue down to the judge.

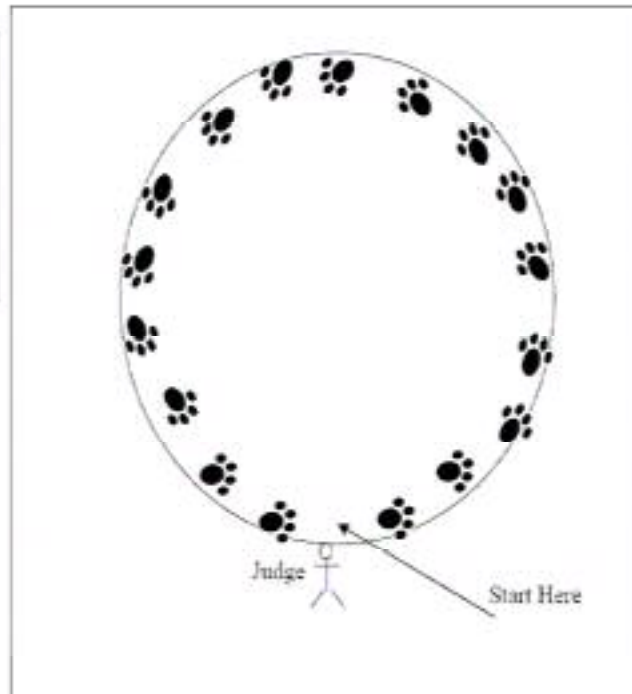
**The "I" Pattern**

The most difficult of all class patterns, but the most impressive if done correctly. Begin the pattern by moving up the "stem" of the "I". When you reach the top of the "I", turn left. When you reach the end of the left half, switch hands as you would in the "L" and continue along the top of the "I" until you reach the end of the other side. You then switch hands and move back to the halfway point, which is the top of the "stem". Turn left back towards letting your dog switch sides. Continue directly down to the judge's front.



**The "Go All The Way Around" Pattern**

This pattern is self-explanatory, and is usually done at the beginning and end of classes.



**Reference: American Kennel Club [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)  
ASCA Website [www.asca.org](http://www.asca.org)**