

# AKC Code of Sportsmanship

**PREFACE:** The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.