

Final Show Rule Change for the 2011-2012 Season – Opens as Champions

By Monte Phillips, Chair of the Show Rules Committee

The delegates at the 2010 Annual Meeting voted to approve the concept of opens competing as champions in qualifying rings in lieu of earning winners' ribbons, and of earning grand points in the same rings while still an open.

Thirty rule changes were associated with this proposal, and there has been some confusion on what the proposal actually does. When implemented, (1) the winners' ribbons are replaced by qualifying rings and (2) as they are competing as champions, they will earn points towards their grand titles and increase the number of cats counted as champion/premiers. It does not eliminate opens as a class of cats entered or judged, and it does not change the catalog from its current form, except for the order in which cats are listed.

Regarding the first change, the color class awards would no longer be first (winners), second, third, etc. (similar to receiving letter grades – A, B, C - in school) for the opens. Instead, opens would be judged for a qualifying ring (similar to pass/fail courses in school). Since it is strictly a matter of pass/fail, there is no need for a separate set of awards just for the opens on the judges' color class sheets - all of the opens will be listed as champions or premiers on the judges' color class sheets. The master clerk and Central Office can tell if a cat "passed" from whether it received any award in champion/premier judging (note – award includes a dash on the color class sheet). The cats are still listed in the exhibitor catalog as opens. In fact, the catalog will still look just like the catalog of today, except for the order in which the cats are listed. Nothing else has changed in the exhibitors' catalog. Exhibitors still enter their cats in the open class. Only the grading system used for the Open class will change. Judges judge these cats to either award a qualifying ring (pass) or withhold awards (fail). Let's look at this rule from the perspective of everyone involved with implementing it: Entry Clerk, Judge, Master Clerk (and ring clerks), Central Office, and finally, the exhibitor. Throughout this article I use the word champion for either a champion or premier. If you're showing in premiership, substitute the word premier for champion.

Entry Clerks: Depending on the software used by the entry clerk, the entry clerk will enter the open cats into their software as a champion (unsupported software) or as an Open (software modified to incorporate this change). Because of this, these entries will appear on the judges' color class sheets as a champion. They will automatically be listed in order by age, regardless of whether the entry form is for an open or a champion. If the software can't support the ability to list cats one way on the color class sheets and another way in the catalog, i.e., it is unsupported software, the entry clerk will need to print a master for the catalog before it is copied, then manually change all of the opens entered back to opens in both the catalog and the Master Clerk's condensed catalog before printing.

Judges: Opens will be listed in judges' color class sheets as champions with the grands in that breed underneath the champions. By giving the cat any award at all, the judge is in effect giving the "pass" for the open class while giving it a placement on the color class sheet as a champion. The judging process isn't changed. They judge the cats and make all of the normal awards. The open judging is transparent to them - it happens as part of the champion judging. Judges should already be withholding on cats, regardless of title, if the cat doesn't merit an award.

Master Clerk (and to a limited extent all clerks): Awards will be marked in the condensed catalog (or judge's catalog) just like they are recorded on the judges' color class sheets, regardless of whether the cat is an open or champion. For example, a judge has five "champions" on the color class sheet (three opens and two champions) - he awards 1, 2, 3, a dash, and a DISQ/UT on one. The cat with the 1 is then the best champion of breed. It won't look any different than a current color class sheet except no cat has an OPN next to its number. The catalog may indicate that the first went to an open, the second to a champion, the third to an open, the dash to an open, and a champion received the disqualification (award withheld). The master clerk and ring clerk will record those results in the catalog. As long as the cat getting the purple ribbon has a blue ribbon and is not a grand, the awards are mechanically correct. Similarly, when the Master Clerk adds up the count for champions, they will not only count the champions, but also the opens.

Central Office: Central Office will determine from the marked (master clerk's) catalog which cats were entered as opens, that they were present, and had no awards withheld. For each of those rings, central office will award that cat a qualifying ring. When the exhibitor pays the confirmation fee and Central Office has counted six qualifying rings, they will notify that exhibitor that the cat is now a champion. Central Office will also score finals and purple ribbons as usual to award those cats grand points, regardless of whether they were opens or champions. Using the above example, Central Office would know from the catalog to award a qualifying ring to all three opens, and grand points to the one cat that got the purple ribbon.

The exhibitor: there would be no change in how an open is entered at a show. The cat is entered in the open class on the entry form and it will be listed in the catalog as an Open. However, if the cat is entered as a champion before it had its six qualifying rings or if the catalog lists an open as a champion by mistake, that change will not be made on the absentee and transfer list as is done now. It will be made with the Master Clerk at the beginning of the show on a catalog correction form. Similarly, if your cat earns its sixth qualifying ring, but not enough grand points to grand, you will not need to do any catalog correction to transfer your cat on the second day of a show. The cat is already on the judges' color class sheets as a champion. Conversely, if the cat earns its sixth qualifying ring and completes earning its 200 grand points, it can be transferred to grand at the end of the first day of a two day show. Simply complete the catalog correction slip transferring it to grand, and file the appropriate championship claim form at the show or online.

One other rule change associated with the above. In the past, the Board was concerned with having cats at a two-day show with 10 rings receive six winners ribbons on Saturday and then become champions on Sunday, thus providing grand points to cats on Saturday against whom they never competed. These "phantom champions" will no longer exist, as the opens ARE in the competition for those grand points right from the beginning of the show. Thus, the concern over limiting the number of times a cat can be judged in one day to five at a 10-ring show goes away. Hence, a rule was also adopted to allow cats to be judged up to six times in one day (just like what happens at a six ring back to back set of two shows).