



Miniature American Shepherd Club of the USA, Inc.

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Table/Ramp/Floor Committee

January 13, 2026

Report of Findings

After reviewing judges' feedback and historical precedent, the committee found no compelling reason to alter the existing Table Designated option for the Miniature American Shepherd (MAS) in the conformation show ring.

The Committee strongly recommends our findings be accepted and that MAS remain a Table Designated breed.

Our goal throughout the process was to hear concerns from a viewpoint grounded in 'what's in the best interest of the dog' rather than the handlers who present them.

The collective expertise of the four Committee members, with a combined dog-related experience of 70+ years, enabled each member to take a neutral yet collaborative, open-minded approach throughout the fact-based process.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all members who have contributed their expertise and insights to this project. We are proud of the work we have accomplished on behalf of the Miniature American Shepherd Club of the USA.

Please find attached:

- Committee Introduction - Purpose and Rules
- Pros and Cons - Reasoning Behind Conclusions
- Judges' Survey - Results with Comments
- AKC Table & Ramp Breed list (rev. 2025)

Committee Introduction - Conformation Floor, Ramp, Table

This Committee was created in response to members' inquiries to evaluate and recommend the ideal method for presenting the MAS breed during the hands-on examination phase of AKC conformation competition.

The analysis viewpoint is grounded in the most objective presentation of the dog rather than the convenience of the handlers who present them.

The committee examined the pros and cons of the three presentation options—floor, ramp, and table. Throughout the process, members' concerns were heard.

An official judges' survey was sent by MASCUSA to the current list of AKC MAS-approved judges. Excellent feedback was received, with a high response rate, which yielded valuable insights.

While exhibitor convenience and tradition were acknowledged, the Committee's guiding principle remained clear: decisions must prioritize the best interest of the dog above all else.

Understanding the Rules

AKC - The appropriate place to individually examine dogs during breed judging is designated by the parent club. AKC does not take precedence over its authority in this regard.

Breed designation changes for AKC conformation—such as moving from 'table breed' to 'ramp breed'—are determined by the parent club and must be formally submitted by MASCUSA to the AKC for approval.

Floor/Ground

Breeds not designated as either Table or Ramp may only be examined on the ground. The Committee unanimously agreed that judging MAS on the Floor was not a reasonable option; therefore, a pro/con analysis was not developed.

Ramp Designated Breeds

A Ramp Designated breed requires a ramp for the judges' hands-on examination (or re-examination) portion of judging during competition. This includes the Group and Best in Show competitions.

Ramp Optional Breeds

For Ramp Optional, it is never the exhibitor's choice; it is always at the judge's discretion on the day of the show. This means there is always a chance a judge may examine MAS on the Floor. Exhibitors will not know in advance how the dogs

will be examined. As per AKC rules, all entries in a breed on that day are required to be examined the same way (on the Floor, Ramp, or Table) once a judge makes a decision.

Table Breeds

Currently, MAS is designated as a Table breed in AKC Conformation, requiring an examination table for the judges' hands-on examination (or re-examination) portion of judging during competition. This includes the Group and Best in Show competitions.

Pros and Cons - Reasoning Behind Conclusions

TABLE DESIGNATED - PROS

- a. Smaller and larger dogs are more equitably judged on a table.
- b. Dogs are already familiar with grooming tables.
- c. Judges' visual line of sight is level; clear view of topline, angulation, and proportions.
- d. Stacking; Handlers can position a dog's feet precisely.
- e. Presentation on the Table may help differentiate between the MAS and the Australian Shepherd in the Group ring.

TABLE DESIGNATED - CONS

- a. Larger MAS may be more difficult to lift or position safely on the table.
- b. Injury to the dog could result if an exhibitor allows the dog to jump off the table unassisted.

NOTE: For safety, dogs should be lifted or supported by the handler when being removed from the table.

- c. Some dogs may become anxious or stressed on elevated table surfaces.
- d. Exhibitors such as Juniors, individuals with physical limitations, or those with injuries may find it challenging to place their dog on and off the table.

AKC NOTE: All exhibitors may request the judges' permission for an individual to assist with placing the dog on and taking the dog off a table. Judges and ring stewards are not permitted to assist.

RAMP DESIGNATED - PROS

- a. Lower height makes it accessible for dogs to walk into position for the judge's examination
- b. The Ramp eliminates the need to lift the dog onto the table for examination.
- c. The Ramp may address some dogs' confidence level.
- d. Presentation on the Ramp may help differentiate between the MAS and the Australian Shepherd in the Group ring

RAMP DESIGNATED - CONS

- a) May not provide the judge's visual line of sight to evaluate proportions properly.
- b) The lower ramp height changes the visual perspective, like changing the angle of a camera.
- c) Stacking - Slightly less control of foot placement, reaching over some dogs and not being able to reach under others
- d) Dogs may be uncomfortable when exhibitors and/or Judges hover over the top of the dogs to position their feet and examine their teeth.
- e) It can be challenging to position less confident dogs and pups.

JUDGES SURVEY - RESULTS

The judges' response rate was strong, with most responding almost immediately. Of 207 surveys sent, 58.8% selected the table, and 41.2% selected the ramp.

Using Constant Contact, the MASCUSA Committee Liaison conducted an official email survey with a single question and an optional comments section. This survey was limited to judges approved to evaluate our MAS breed.

Survey introduction: "We believe that judges' perspective is essential in determining which approach provides the most effective line of sight evaluation of the Miniature American Shepherd. The goal is to provide the ideal visual perspective for judges to evaluate the Miniature American Shepherd."

Judges' question: *In your opinion, do you prefer Table or Ramp? And why?*

JUDGES' SURVEY COMMENTS - TABLE

- ❖ “The breed will slowly get larger if judged on the ramp.”
- ❖ “I believe this breed should stay on the table, especially due to the fact that it has a DQ on size.”
- ❖ “We as judges have gotten an "Eye for size" when placed on the table.”
- ❖ “I feel moving to the ramp will allow for dogs looking smaller and less judges measuring the large ones thus creating a larger problem with size in this breed.”
- ❖ “This is a measuring breed, and if you wish to preserve that height, limit the table is the best view to do this.”
- ❖ “If you switch to the ramp, the breed will tend to increase in size despite the DQ for height”.

JUDGES' SURVEY COMMENTS - RAMP

- ❖ “Given that the high end of the MAS height standard bumps up against the low end of preferred height for the Australian Shepherd (a ground breed) it probably does make sense to have the MAS examined on a ramp for optimal efficiency and perspective.”
- ❖ “I feel the ramp gives the dog and handler more confidence. The dog can go up without being lifted.”
- ❖ “Ramp provides a more stable platform from which to examine the dogs.”
- ❖ “Your breed's height range makes it a great option for the ramp over the table.”
- ❖ “The ramp has a better visual for all sizes of MAS dogs.”

In closing, the committee reaffirms that there is no compelling evidence that supports changing the MAS's current Table Designated status.

We extend our gratitude to the Board, the judges who provided valuable insight, and the committee members who contributed to this process. The End.



TABLE BREEDS

SPORTING

COCKER SPANIEL
ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL
NEDERLANDSE KOOIKERHONDJE

HOUNDS

BASENJI (*or Ramp – Eff. 10/1/25*)
ALL BEAGLES
PETIT BASSET GRIFFON VENDEEN
ALL DACHSHUNDS
PORTUGUSE PODENGO PEQUENO

WORKING

DANISH-SWEDISH FARMDOG

TERRIERS

ALL TERRIERS **on TABLE, EXCEPT** those noted below are examined **on the GROUND:**

AIREDALE TERRIER
AMERICAN STAFFORDSHIRE TERRIER (*or Ramp*)
BULL TERRIER
IRISH TERRIER (*or Ramp*)
MINI BULL TERRIER (*or Table or Ramp*)
SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER (*or Ramp*)
STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER (*or Ramp*)

TOY - ALL TOY BREEDS ON TABLE

NON-SPORTING

ALL AMERICAN ESKIMOS
BICHON FRISE
BOSTON TERRIER
COTON DE TULEAR
FRENCH BULLDOG
LHASA APSO
LOWCHEN
MINIATURE POODLE
NORWEGIAN LUNDEHUND
SCHIPPERKE
SHIBA INU
TIBETAN SPANIEL
TIBETAN TERRIER
XOLOITZCUINTLI (Toy and Miniatures)

HERDING

CARDIGAN WELSH CORGI
LANCASHIRE HEELER
MINIATURE AMERICAN SHEPHERD
MUDI (*or Ramp*)
PEMBROKE WELSH CORGI
PULIK (*or Ramp*)
PUMI
PYRENEAN SHEPHERD
SHETLAND SHEEPDOG
SWEDISH VALLHUND

MISCELLANEOUS BREEDS

ALASKAN KLEE KAI (*Eff. 6/25/25*)
BOLOGNESE
GERMAN SPITZ (Small and Medium)
PERUVIAN INCA ORCHID (Small and Medium)
RUSSIAN TSVETNAYA BOLONKA
TEDDY ROOSEVELT TERRIER

RAMP OPTIONAL BREEDS: At the discretion of the judge through all levels of competition including group and Best in Show judging.

AMERICAN WATER SPANIEL	PORTUGUESE WATER DOG	
BOYKIN SPANIEL	STANDARD SCHNAUZER	FINNISH LAPPHUND
ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL	AMERICAN STAFFORDSHIRE TERRIER	ICELANDIC SHEEPDOG
FIELD SPANIEL	IRISH TERRIER	MUDI (<i>or Table</i>)
NS DUCK TOLLING RETRIEVER	MINIATURE BULL TERRIER (<i>Ground/Table</i>)	NORWEGIAN BUHUND
WELSH SPRINGER SPANIEL	SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER	POLISH LOWLAND SHEEPDOG
BASENJI (<i>or Table</i>) (<i>Ramp eff. 10/1/25</i>)	STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER	PULI (<i>or Table</i>)
GRAND BASSET GRIFFON VENDEEN	FINNISH SPITZ	SPANISH WATER DOG
WHIPPET	AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG	BASSET FAUVE DE BRETAGNE (<i>Misc.</i>)
GERMAN PINSCHER	ENTLEBUCHER MOUNTAIN DOG	NORRBOTTENSPET (<i>Misc.</i>)

NOTE: Ramps can be used in emergency situations to judge any breed. See next page for ramp emergency use information.

BREEDS THAT MUST BE JUDGED ON RAMP: Applies to all conformation competition associated with AKC conformation dog shows or at any event at which an AKC conformation title may be earned.

CLUMBER SPANIEL	BASSET HOUND	BULLDOGS	KEESHOND
LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO	CIRNECO DELL'ETNA	CHINESE SHAR-PEI	SPANISH WATER DOG
SUSSEX SPANIEL	KERRY BLUE TERRIER	CHOW CHOW	

Breeds not listed above are to be judged on the ground.



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Use of Ramps: Clarification

Background

The appropriate place to individually examine dogs during breed judging is designated by each parent club and AKC does not pre-empt their authority in this regard. The current list of table and ramp breeds may be found on the AKC website.

Table Breeds

Designated table breeds must be examined on an examination table. When re-examining them, they must be placed back on the table. No other breeds may be examined or otherwise considered during judging on an examination table. This does not apply to breeds that are eligible or required to be judged on the ramp during breed judging, when judging these breeds in the Group and/or Best in Show.

Ramp Breeds

A judge requesting the use of a ramp must give notice to the show superintendent/show secretary prior to judging. AKC approval is not required. Designated ramp breeds may be examined on the ground (table if applicable) or on a ramp during breed judging at the sole discretion of the judge and not the exhibitor. The entire entry in that breed is to be examined on the ground (table if applicable) or on a ramp. **Effective January 1, 2015, the ramp will be available at the discretion of the judge for all ramp optional breeds through all levels of competition including group and Best in Show judging.**

All Other Breeds

Breeds not designated as either table or ramp breeds may only be examined on the ground.
Exception: Miniature Bull Terriers may be examined on the ground, on a table or on a ramp.

Emergencies

In emergency situations, with the approval of the Show Chair, breeds customarily examined on the ground may be examined on a ramp, not on a table. An emergency is defined as a temporary condition that arose immediately prior to or at a dog show. Convalescence from a medical procedure, illness and recuperation from injuries are examples of conditions that are not emergencies. The emergency use of a ramp may be allowed on a day and may be extended to include a cluster as well as judging either a group and/or Best in Show.

When a ramp is used for non-ramp breeds in an emergency, the superintendent is to post appropriate signs at the ring and at the superintendent's office that must include notice that exhibitors are entitled to a refund of their entry fee. Field Staff is directed to report all instances of the emergency use of a ramp to Events and Judging Operations. If there is need thereafter, the following weekend for example, as in the past, a formal accommodation must be requested from our legal department.

AKC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and wants to provide to all the opportunity to participate in its events.

However, according to the "Fitness to Judge Policy" as published in the Rules, Policies and Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges, approved May 2007, "It is essential that a dog show judge be physically capable of performing the functions necessary to properly judge dogs." A judge must have:

- The flexibility to examine all parts of a dog's anatomy where each breed is presented (i.e., on the ground, on a ramp or on a table).
- The capability of measuring or weighing a dog and examining on the ground, table or ramp where applicable.