

GRUNFELD GERMAN SHEPHERDS

The 2004 SV/WUSV/FCI Rules for the BH Qualification

COMPANION DOG AND BEHAVIOR/TEMPERAMENT TEST, WITH TRAFFIC SURENESS AND OTHER SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

(Begleithund & Verhaltens Test, BH/VT)

by Fred Lanting

All examinations and qualification events are subject to principles of sportsmanship regarding the performance and behavior of those involved. The execution, demonstration, and evaluation are more thoroughly described below. These regulations are binding for all involved, and all participants have to meet the same performance requirements. One change is that at the BH/VT examination, the gunsureness test no longer takes place. In order to participate in FH, SchH/VPG, IPO, RTP (SAR), Agility, and Obedience events, proof of the BH/VT is required. Authorized to award the BH/VT are SchH/VPG, Agility and Obedience trial judges listed and approved by any AZG-member association. The examination result is to be noted in the appropriate performance record, such as scorebook or Ahnentafel.

BH examinations are recognized only if they are recorded by an association belonging to the AZG (the special committee of VDH for SchH/VPG/Agility/Obedience). [AZG is the organization for breed clubs and working-dog clubs, and VDH is the German all-breed club.]

The gatherings have a public character; that is, the events should be in or simulate normal public traffic areas, and the general public is to be admitted. Location and performance of the trials are to be approved by the VDH-member association. Other member clubs are bound by these arrangements, including protecting the event dates.

General regulations

Certified are all dog owners/handlers who furnish proof that they have prior experience in such a specialized training examination (have previously earned a BH, for example), similar to the dog training regulations of the VDH.

Participants who for the first time enter a BH trial and who have not furnished appropriate proof of this special experience, must pass a specified written examination before the date of the event, to the satisfaction of the trial judge, before they and their dogs are tested in the practical part.

Dogs of all breeds and sizes can be certified. The minimum age for participation is fifteen months. In order to award any BH, at least four dogs must participate in the examination. If the BH is combined with other tests (e.g. SchH/VPG, FH, RTP), then there must be at least 4 participants combined. The permissible number of participants in one test-day for one judge varies from 10 to 15 entries, the number decided by the judge. The total for all levels in one event (a weekend, for example) is not to exceed 30. (Two BH's with the written exams counts as 3 entries.)

Impartiality demonstration

Before allowing the BH examination to proceed, the entered dogs submit to an impartiality test, showing normal temperament, along with identity confirmation in the form of checking the tattoo and/or chip number. Dogs that are not positively identifiable are not authorized to take part in the further examination. The evaluation of impartiality continues during the entire BH. Dogs that do not show impartiality throughout are excluded from any further test process even if they pass the first impartiality demonstration. At any time in the course of the examination, the judge can dismiss the dog for lack of character, and record in the performance register a note such as "Impartiality (or correct behavior) not demonstrated".

Evaluation

Dogs that do not attain the necessary 70% of the points in part A, cannot continue in part B (examination in public traffic areas).

At the conclusion of the BH examination, no points are announced; just the subjective value judgment as to whether suitability "existed" or "did not exist" for the BH award. The test is considered as having been successfully completed, if in part A, 70% of the possible points were attained, and in part B the exercises were considered by the judge as being sufficient.

The BH that is assigned is not a "training title or degree" in the sense of those titles governed by the regulations for breeding, conformation, Körung (official breed survey), or other exhibitions of a member-club of the VDH. A subsequent repeated BH attempt at a later date is not bound by any waiting period. Each trial result is to be registered into the dog's performance record independently of the success of any other test.

A) BH Portion Done on the Exercise Area

Total points: 60

Each single exercise begins and ends with the basic position: The dog sits straight on the left side of its handler with its right shoulder even with his legs. Taking the basic position is only permitted once at the beginning of each exercise. In the basic position, the handler stands normally, at ease or at attention; a widespread stance is not permitted. The position in which the team ends the preceding exercise can be used as the beginning basic position for the following exercise. "Body-language" help from the handler is not permitted; if any such movement is made, points are deducted. Carrying of training or play articles is not permitted. If a handler cannot perform a part of the exercise correctly due to physical handicap, then he has to communicate this before beginning of the examination to the judge. If a handicap does not permit the dog heeling at the left side of the handler, then the dog may heel at his right side.

The judge instructs the handler to begin an exercise. All further actions, such as commands, stops, changes of pace, etc. are implemented without instruction by the judge. It is permitted, however, for the handler to inquire of the judge regarding these instructions.

Praising of the dog is permitted only after each exercise ends. After that, the dog and handler can take a new basic position. Between praise and beginning the new exercise, a clear time interval (approximately 3 seconds) is to be observed. Between the exercises the dog must heel to the next starting position.

1. On-leash Work (15 points)

Voice Command: "Fuß"

The handler begins the exercise in the "basic" (heel) position, with his dog on leash and wearing the acceptable long-link collar or chest harness. Upon being given the voice command "Fuß!" the dog joyfully follows close at the handler's side. The collar may not be connected to the leash on the "live ring" (must not tighten as a noose if pulled).

Beginning the exercise, the handler with his dog has to go straight ahead without stopping for 40 to 50 steps, then make a left about-turn, return 10 to 15 normal paces, followed by 10-15 running steps, then 10-15 slow steps, and again 10-15 at a normal pace. Continuing at this normal pace, they implement at least one right turn, one left turn, one stop, and one about-turn. The dog always has to heel with its shoulder even with the knees of the handler, and at his left side; it may not forge, lag, or heel wide. The about-turn is always a pivot to the left.

Only when starting to walk, and with any change of pace is the handler permitted the voice command "Fuß!" If the handler stops, the dog has to sit itself automatically and quickly without help or instruction by the handler. The handler may not change his position to move closer to a dog that is possibly sitting some distance other than close-by. The leash is to be held in the left hand during heeling, and must sag (be slack enough to see the shape of a "J"). Upon instruction of the judge, the handler/dog team goes through a group of at least four persons. The handler must stop at least once in the group. The group itself has to move about, in random disorder.

Lagging, forging, or wide heeling as well as hesitation to respond to the commands of the handler are faults.

Group

Heeling through the group of moving persons is to be demonstrated both on-leash and off-leash. In each case there must be at least one turn to the left and one to the right (e.g. in a figure-8) around the persons in the group. There is to be at least one stop in the proximity of a person each time (both leashed and free-heeling). It is up to the judge to require a repetition. Praising the dog is permitted only after leaving the group, and only in the stopped basic position.

About-Turn (180°)

The execution of the about-turn is permitted in two manners, but in each case it must be shown as a left turn in-place (pivot). The dog may either go around behind the handler, or turn left with the handler, staying on the same side of him throughout the maneuver.

2. Free-heeling Sequences (15 points)

Voice command "Fuß!" (or "Heel" or equivalent)

When the judge indicates the start of this portion, the dog is off-leash and in the basic position. The handler loops the leash around the shoulder or waist, or puts it into his pocket (in either case, the opposite side from where the dog will be), and immediately proceeds again with his free-heeling dog into the moving group to repeat the exercise at least once. After leaving the group, the handler takes the basic position briefly and begins the off-lead sequence in the same pattern as described in Exercise 1.

3. Sit Out of Motion Exercise (10 points)

Voice command "Sit/Sitz!"

From the basic position, the handler goes straight ahead with his dog heeling off-leash. After at least 10 paces, he "sits the dog" with the command "Sit!" without interrupting or changing his pace or looking around. The dog must sit promptly. After a further 30 steps, the handler stops and turns immediately to face his dog. When the judge signals, the handler goes back to its dog and takes up the basic position at its right side again. If the dog lies down or remains standing instead of sitting, 5 points are deducted.

4. The Down Out of Motion, with Recall (10 points)

Voice command: "Platz!", "Hier!", "Fuß!"

From the basic position, the handler with his dog proceeds straight ahead with the voice command "Fuß!" After at least 10 paces, he commands the dog to immediately drop and remain lying down with the voice command "Platz!" Without turning to look, or giving other helps to the dog, the handler continues in the same direction and a straight line some 30 steps further, turns immediately to his dog, and stands quietly. Upon a signal from the judge, the handler calls his dog to him. The dog must joyfully and briskly run to its handler and sit itself closely in front. On the "Fuß!" command, it must go to the basic heel position beside its handler.

If the dog stands or if sits down, yet makes the approach perfectly, then 5 points are deducted.

5. Long Down under Distraction (10 points)

Voice commands: "Platz!", "Sit!"

At the beginning of another dog's examination, the handler puts his dog down at a designated place; this is done from the basic position, when instructed by the judge. The dog is left there without any leash or other article. The handler departs to a place 30 paces away, and stands with his back to the dog. During the other team's first several exercises, the dog left on this "Platz" has to remain lying down and calmly so. Upon a signal by the judge, the handler returns, steps to the right side of his dog, and on further instruction by the judge tells his dog to take it the basic position with the voice command "Sit!" If the dog sits, stands, or lies restlessly, then a partial score is given. A dog that rises, sits, or creeps over a distance longer than its own body, gets no rating for the exercise.

Restless behaviors by the handler, as well as other subtle assistance, are faulted.

Bitches are to lie down in different spots than where the males do.

A dog that does not attain at least 70% (42 points) in exercises 1 to 5 is excluded from the remaining parts of the BH examination.

B) Traffic Sureness Test

General Information

The following exercises take place outside of the training/performance field in a suitable nearby area, possibly enclosed. The judge, with the trial manager, specifies where and how the exercises are accomplished in the proximity of public traffic (roads, paths, or such places). Public traffic may not be hindered.

The execution of this part of the test requires a substantial allowance of time because of the nature of the exercises. Performance is not to be sacrificed for the sake of accepting many more entries.

Points will not be assigned for the individual exercises of part B. This section is judged subjectively, according to the over-all relevant impression of the dog in moving traffic and public situations.

The following described exercises are suggestions, and can be adapted to local conditions by the judge individually. The judge is justified in repeated and/or varying the dogs' exercises if he has any doubts regarding the evaluations.

Test Conclusion (Part B)

1. Encountering Groups

Upon instruction of the judge, the handler with dog on leash walks along a section of road or sidewalk. The judge follows the team at an appropriate distance.

The dog is at the left side of the handler on a loose leash, with its shoulder even with the handler's knees, and willingly heels with him.

The dog has to remain indifferent to the pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

On their way, the handler is passed by a running person. The dog has to be neutral and not bothered by it.

Handler and dog walk through a loose bunch of at least 6 persons, in the course of which, one of those people greets the handler, shakes hands with him, and converses with him. The dog has to sit beside the handler when told, and behave itself calmly during this short time.

Encountering Cyclists

The leashed dog goes further along the way with its handler; from the rear a cyclist passes them, with a bell signals as warning. After a long enough distance, the cyclist turns and comes back to again meet handler and dog. Bell signals are given again. Cycling past has to take place in such a way that the dog is between its handler and the passing cyclist. The dog has to show no fear of the cyclists coming toward them.

3. Encountering Cars

The handler with his dog on leash passes several cars. One of the vehicles is started. With another car, a door is slammed shut. While handler and dog continue, a car beside them stops. The windowpane is lowered and the handler is asked for information. The dog has to sit when told by the handler or do so automatically. The dog has to be calm and show indifference in relation to cars and all traffic noises.

4. Encountering Joggers or Roller Skaters

The handler walks with his calm, leashed dog further along the way. At least two joggers come past them without slowing down. As jogger # 1 gets farther away, jogger # 2 comes toward the dog and handler, without the speed to lower past the dog does not have to correctly keep heeling; however, it may not trouble the people passing and/or approaching them but allow them to pass. The handler is permitted to sit or "platz" his dog just before and during these encounters. Instead of the joggers, two roller skaters can be used.

5. Encountering Other Dogs

When another dog with its handler comes from behind or in front, the dog has to remain neutral and impartial. The handler may repeat the "Fuß!" command or may place his dog in the sitting or down position.

6. On-leash Behavior with Traffic; Being Left Alone a Short While; Calm Behavior Concerning Other Animals

When instructed by the judge, the handler with dog on leash takes to the sidewalk of a moderately busy road. After a short distance, and as the judge directs, the handler stops and fastens the leash to a fence, a wall ring or some such thing. The handler goes into a business or a house entrance or otherwise out of view.

The dog may stand, sit or lie down.

During the absence of the handler, a pedestrian with a dog on leash passes the test dog at a distance of approximately five paces.

The tied-out dog must remain calm during the absence of its leader. It lets the other dog be led past (one with no rowdiness itself) without showing aggression such as strong pulling at the line or continuous barking. Upon instruction by the judge, the dog is again fetched by the handler.

Note

It is left to the acting judge whether he require all the individual exercises with each dog at the places planned, or whether he might let all tested dogs complete only some of the exercises there and then visit the next test place and proceed likewise.

Notes by the translator:

Fuß = Fuss. Literally, "Fuß!". The German language is undergoing modernization, and many words with the "eset" ß (looks like the Greek "beta" or English capital B) are being changed to a double-s instead. Thus, a castle (a Schloß) may now be a Schloss (German nouns are capitalized). Proper names retain the ß.

Commands (imperative mood, whether emphasized or not) in the past always ended with exclamation marks. Now the trend is not to use them, although they really are useful in the context of dog training: Hier! Fuss! Platz! etc.

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