Poised for Success Freestyle

Guide to the Master Performer Division

For Performer (Regular) and Laude Classes

Updated: 11/29/2020
Guidelines for the Laude Class have been added
Also added Table of Contents

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Introduction to the Master Performer Division

Congratulations!! Completion of the Dynamic Division of the Poised for Success Freestyle Titling Program allows you and your dog to participate in the Master Performer Division.

In the Master Performer Division, you and your dog will create and film full length performances to meet criteria for different categories. Each Leg for this category is earned through submission of one performance in **one** single category. Three separate legs, each in a different category, are needed to earn the Poised for Success Master Performer title.

In addition to fulfilling the criteria for the category chosen, teams will be assessed on criteria developed in the earlier Divisions of the Titling Program:

Handling

- A high degree of engagement and rapport between dog and handler
- Clear and supportive handling
- Clear cues
- Cue style chosen is appropriate to the dog
- Dog responds readily to majority of cues given throughout the performance
- Props (if used) allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths

Technical

- Dog demonstrates fluency and confidence in movements and moves included in the performance
- Movements and moves allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths
- A variety of moves and movements are demonstrated throughout the performance
- Dog transitions between different positions, relative to handler, several times throughout the performance
- A variety of transition moves are demonstrated throughout the performance
- A balance between moves and movement throughout the performance space is demonstrated, as performance space allows.
- Props (if used) are incorporated into the performance in meaningful ways

Artistry

- Team demonstrates flow in transition from movement to moves (sequencing)
- Performance space is used in creative and interesting ways
- Handler maintains natural body language, appropriate to the category, throughout performance
- Artistic use of transition moves
- Overall quality of choreography
- Performance includes a logical opening and closing
- Some degree of contrast or dynamic is incorporated into performance
- Artistic use of Attire, Props, Decoration (if applicable)

Master Performer Division Titling Requirements

To title in the Master Performer, PFS-SS-MP or PFS-TH-MP, in either the Performer (Regular) or Laude Class, **three Legs** must be earned.

Each leg in this Division consists of the performance of one 2:00 – 3:30 minute long choreographed performance. (1:30 – 3:30 for Laude Class)

The performances should consist of complete routines, and should include a distinct opening and closing.

Handlers are encouraged to take performances submitted for the Dynamic Division and improve upon them, but that is not required. Please note that if you are submitting an improved performance from the Dynamic Division, you do not have to submit it in the same category in which you submitted it before.

These performances are to be created to meet the criteria described from the categories described below, in addition to the general criteria set forth for this Division (above). For each Leg, one category is to be chosen. Within the Master Performer Division, three different categories must be completed. The performances must also be distinct from one another, using different music.

Titling Tracks

Two separate titling tracks exist within the Master Performer Division.

Theater: This titling track replicates the "live performance" Freestyle experience. In this titling track, no editing is permitted, other than to trim the beginning and end of the performance video.

Treating during the performance is permitted. (See "Treats and Toys" below)

Music overlay is permitted for only one of the three performances.

Silver Screen: This titling track represents the "video" Freestyle experience. In this titling track, editing is permitted. You may perform the routine in segments and edit them together.

Treating during the performance is not permitted (since the instance of giving treats can be edited out), although you may have treats or toys concealed on you.

Music overlay is permitted for all three performances.

All other rules and guidelines for the Master Performer Division are the same for all other titling tracks.

Teams may choose to complete both titling tracks. However, completion of only one is necessary to progress to the Performers Extraordinaire Division.

Laude Class – Master Performer Division

Because there is a great deal of flexibility already built into the Master Performer Division performance criteria, including the option to participate in the Silver Screen track, which provides an opportunity to film in shorter segments, there is just one adaptation to the guidelines for the Master Performer Division for dogs in the Laude Class.

The minimum time for performances for dogs in the Laude Class is 1 minute and 30 seconds. Maximum time remains the same.

In addition, the performances of Laude Class dogs will be judged in light of the dog's age and particular limitations, with less of an expectation to see technical components, and more of hope to see the dog and handler enjoying themselves to the music.

Handlers of dogs performing in the Laude Class are encouraged to focus on the dog's comfort level, enjoyment, and performance of skills that the dog performs willingly. Use of props is particularly encouraged, if incorporation of props enhances the dog's motivation and enjoyment level.

General Rules – Master Performer Division

Music

As in the Dynamic Division, it is expected that you are performing to music in all submissions.

Because sometimes technical difficulties happen, in the Theater Titling Track, a music overlay will be permitted for any one of the three performances that a team will create. Music overlay is not required.

However, for at least two of the performances, the music must be playing audibly on the video, and music overlay may not be included.

In the Silver Screen Titling Track, music overlay is expected in all performances.

Treats and Toys

You may conceal treats or toys in a pocket, or in a container outside of the performance area (example: on a shelf).

In the Theater Titling Track, you may reinforce with food during the performance at any

time.

It is recommended that you try to build instances of treat delivery into the performance so the flow of the performance is not interrupted in a major way. Example: Your dog sits, you walk around the dog, reach into the pocket and treat upon return, the two of you break out into movement together. It is fine if there is a slight pause for treating, or if you give your dog a second to eat the treat.

Food must be concealed at all times, except when actually being delivered to the dog. Luring with food is not permitted at any time. Food may not be carried in a hand or mouth throughout the performance.

Unless it can be done in a way that does not interrupt the flow of the routine, reinforcing with a toy during a performance is not recommended. However, you may carry a toy (concealed) and reinforce at the end.

In the Silver Screen Titling Track, food or toys may be carried, but it is expected that all instances of reinforcing be edited out of the final video.

Performance Categories

In this Division, each performance will be crafted to meet the criteria specified for a specific category (listed below)

Please pay careful attention to the specific instructions presented for each of the Master Performer categories (which are the same as the categories available in the Dynamic Division). This criteria must be met **in addition to** the overall performance criteria (applicable to all performances in this Division).

Performance Duration

Minimum time for each performance in this Division is 2 minutes. That is firm. Please be sure to perform for at least two minutes!

Maximum time for each performance in this Division is 3 minutes and 30 seconds. I will make allowance for 3 – 4 seconds of extra time, but please limit yourself, as precisely as possible, to 3:30.

In this Division, it expected that all performances will be full routines, complete with logical opening and closing.

Other Rules and Guidelines

All general rules and guidelines regarding: size of performance area, leashes, cue styles, handler attire, dog attire, safety etc. apply in the Master Performer Division, as described in the general Poised for Success Titling Program Guidebook.

Master Performer Division
Performance Categories

As you create performance submissions for the Master Performer Division, choose from among these categories. Be sure to read each one very carefully because the criteria differs from one category to another!

Just an important note: You will choose a total of **three** from among these categories to complete the Master Performer Division Title. All categories will not be completed!

Please note that the categories available in the Master Performer Division are the exact same categories that are available in the Dynamic Division. The category criteria is also the same from one Division to the other, although some of the general performance criteria is different for the Master Performer Division. (See Page 3 for details)

Category: Freestyle Dance

Description: Create a performance that is a well-balanced dance between yourself and your dog.

No handler dancing is required, but your handling should "suggest" dancing in the way that you cue and interact with your dog throughout the performance. (Note: You do not need to dance).

Use of supporting physical cues is encouraged in this category. If you choose to use verbal cues, be sure that your body language is natural.

Props are allowed in this category, but must be incorporated into the "dance" in some way. For instance, the dog could send around a prop and return to the handler as a dance sequence. Props should not be used in this category to feature stationary tricks, but can be used to feature your dog's movement (dog can go around, go under, go between, jump over props).

If handler dancing is incorporated, be sure to balance any handler dance moves with dog movement to create an overall effect of team movement, not just the handler. And, again, handler dancing is not required.

Category Criteria for Freestyle Dance Category:

- Performance is well balanced between handler and dog movement (overall)
- Dancing is "suggested" through cues and interaction with dog
- Supporting physical cues were used, or handler maintained natural body language when using verbal cues
- If props were used (optional), they were incorporated into the dance and featured the dog's movement

Category: Hand Held Prop

Description: Create a short performance in which you hold a hand-held prop (cane, "sword", "wand" etc.) for at least half of the performance. Your dog should interact with the prop in some meaningful way (moving around it, putting paws on it, jumping over it, etc.) at least three times within the performance.

The handler **may** use the prop to cue the dog, and the dog **may** follow the prop as if it were a target, but this is not required

The dog may also take a turn holding the prop, but this is also not required.

Category Criteria for Hand Held Prop Category:

- Prop is held by handler for at least half of the performance
- Dog interacts with prop in meaningful way at least three times

Category: Move to the Beat!

Description: Performances in this category should feature moves, movement, and behaviors that feature your dog's natural open gait, with **your dog's** front footfalls in time to the music. Whether or not the handler moves in time to the music will not be judged.

While stationary moves are recommended for contrast within this category, the use of strong outside curves, large, open floor patterns, flowing circles, and wide turns is recommended. Props may also be incorporated in this category, but all props in the performance space should be used by the dog and handler team at least twice. The team moving around the prop together is considered "use" of the prop in this category.

Use of transition moves that feature your dog's movement is highly encouraged in this category.

This category may not work very well for some dogs in small spaces, but for those who wish to give this a try in small spaces, the use of flowing circles, movement around props, and outside turns is suggested.

At least half of the time for this performance should be spent demonstrating your dog's gait. However, no formal "heeling" is required. The dog's position relative to the handler will not be judged in this category.

Finally, the team need not move throughout the entire performance. Stationary moves are highly recommended for contrast.

Category Criteria for Move to the Beat!

- Performance features moves, movement, and behaviors that feature your dog's natural open gait, with **your dog's** front footfalls in time to the music.
- Movement such as: strong outside curves, large, open floor patterns, flowing circles, and wide turns are used in the performance to feature the dog's movement to the music
- If there are props in the performance space (optional), all props are used by the dog and handler team at least twice
- At least half of the performance was spent demonstrating your dog's gait
- Clear contrast to movement provided by some stationary moves

Category: Poised for Success-Style Heelwork to Music

Description

Note: This category has rules that are different from "Heelwork to Music" in other Musical Freestyle venues. Please read the criteria carefully.

In this venue, "Heelwork to Music" is defined as: synchronized movement of dog and handler. "Heelwork" consists of both "Heelwork Movement" and "Heelwork Moves"

"Heelwork Movement" may include: moving forward, backward, or laterally together with dog in heel or side position, or dog and handler facing one another, moving together as the handler moves forward (dog backing), backward (dog moving toward handler), or laterally (dog moving with handler, facing handler). This may also include the dog and handler moving together (forward, backward, or laterally) with the dog in a different position, such as crossed across the front of the handler, or dog in heel or side but facing handler.

"Heelwork Moves" include: Pivots and turns where dog and handler move together, turns (inside and outside), opposite turns, synchronized spins, or mirror spins.

For performances in this category, at least half of the performance should consist of "Heelwork Movement" and "Heelwork Moves".

Any and all other Freestyle moves and behaviors are permitted for up to 50% of the performance. Although I recommend "weighting" performances in this category toward Heelwork Moves and Movements. There is no restriction on leg weaves or jumping in this category. Other moves and behaviors can serve as excellent contrast for the synchronized work that will be featured in this category. Props may be used, but should serve to feature or contrast with heelwork, and not be the main focus.

A note on "Heelwork". No set "heel position" is mandated for this category, and one set "heel position" need not be maintained throughout the performance. In other

words, the dog can heel very closely at one point, and heel at a distance from you at another point. As long as the movement appears deliberate on the part of the team, this is fine.

Category Criteria for Poised for Success-Style Heelwork to Music

- At least half of the performance consists of "Heelwork Movement" and "Heelwork Moves"
- Performance is "weighted" toward synchronized movement
- Other Freestyle behaviors and moves make up less than 50% of performance
- Dog and handler movement appears to be deliberate, in the event that "heel position" changes throughout the performance
- Props (if used) feature heelwork, or serve as contrast to heelwork sequences

Category: Holiday Theme

Description: Performances for this category should incorporate an obvious holiday theme. Any readily recognizable holiday may be used (4th of July, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.)

The theme may be conveyed through at least two of the following elements: choreography, background decoration, props, attire, the music.

Use of props is not required for this category, but they are permitted. In addition, decoration that is not used as a prop is permitted in the performance area (example: a Christmas tree), but such decoration should not interfere with the performance in any way.

Category Criteria for Holiday Theme:

- Holiday theme is obvious
- Theme is conveyed through at least two elements (choreography, background decoration, props, attire, and/or music)

Category: Live Demonstration

Description: In this performance, you will pretend that you and your dog are performing a live demonstration for an audience of your choice. You may choose any "audience", but your "audience" should be specific. You will identify your "audience" on your entry.

You MAY perform a live demonstration and submit the video for titling for this category, as long as the performance meets all necessary criteria for this category.

In this category, you will want to shoot for audience appeal through: interesting props, prop moves (audiences love to see dogs interact with props!), fancy tricks, elements of comedy, "flashy" tricks or cute tricks, and behaviors that allow your dog's personality to shine.

However, no obvious "theme" is required. You may build your performance around a theme – that can be a great way to create audience appeal. However, if you simply wish to demonstrate a beautiful dance, that is perfectly appropriate.

This is a great category for small spaces! No elements of "movement" are required, although always permitted!!

Category Criteria for Live Demonstration:

- "Audience" identified upon entry
- Audience appeal is evident in at least one obvious way

Category: Trick it Up

Description: In this category, your dog's best tricks can shine!

In this performance, you will want to feature at least four of your dog's best tricks.

The tricks need not be highly difficult, but should stand out as somehow "featured" within the context of the performance.

You can "feature" tricks through use of choreography, props, the way the trick is matched to the music, or other creative means.

However, while these tricks are featured, they should not make up the entire performance. Movement, heelwork, or performance of other Freestyle moves should be blended in with your team's featured tricks.

As always, please keep everything safe.

Category Criteria for Trick it Up:

- At least four different tricks are featured
- Tricks are featured in a clear way
- Movement, heelwork, or performance of other Freestyle moves are blended in with featured tricks
- All tricks are carried out safely

Category: The Plot Thickens

Description: Create a performance that incorporates a "plot" or "story". The performance need not tell a full story, and your dog need not perform as a particular "character".

"Plot" may be included in the song, or may be expressed through choreography (technically, you could do this using music without words!)

This differs from expression of a "theme" in that some kind of a "story" or "acting something out" is conveyed, even if only partially (for this Division).

Music is required for this category.

Use of props and clearly connected attire is encouraged in this category.

Category Criteria for The Plot Thickens

- A plot or story is incorporated into the performance, to some extent
- Something is "acted out" in some way
- Props (if used) and attire are clearly connected to the plot, or story, in some way

Category: International Theme

Description: Choose a country or culture other than your own, and create a performance that reflects an International theme in some way.

Theme may be expressed through music, choreography, props, decoration, attire, etc.

Category Criteria for International Theme

- International theme is clear
- Theme is clearly expressed (through music, choreography, props, decoration, attire, etc.)

Category: Showcase of Precision

Description: Does your dog have a passion for precise performance? In this category, you can allow this to shine!

Elements of precision that your dog can showcase may include: crisp heelwork, clean returns to position through transition, fast response to cues, straight backing, laterals, or pivots, demonstration of skills in different heelwork positions, etc.

It is recommended that you choose at least two elements of precision to feature in this performance.

Category Criteria for Showcase of Precision:

- Two elements of precision were chosen to showcase in this performance
- Precision, as defined by the handler, is evident for each of the two elements in the performance

Category: Distance

Description: Create a performance that features at least three skills carried out at a distance of at least 4 feet from the handler (small dogs), 5 feet from the handler (medium sized dogs), 6 feet from the handler (large dogs). Distances will not be measured by the judge.

If you feature a duration skill (example: distance spiral), go for a duration of at least 5 seconds.

Only one of the distance skills may incorporate use of a prop!

Category Criteria for Distance:

- Three distance skills are carried out in the performance
- Distance skills appear to meet minimum distance requirement
- If a duration distance skill is included (optional), the minimum duration of 5 seconds was met

Category: Something About Your Dog

Description: Create a performance that expresses something about your dog, such as: athleticism, grace, smoothness, sweetness, eagerness, etc.

Expression can be made through use of movement, props, choreography, attire, etc.

Please express positive attributes.

Category Criteria for Something About Your Dog:

- Performance expresses something about the dog
- Positive attributes were expressed through the performance

Category: Transition Showcase

Description: Create a routine made up only of transitions of position and movement in different positions.

Movement can be forward, sideways, or backward.

Category Criteria for Transition Showcase:

- Performance consists only of movement and transitions (of movement and/or position)
- No moves or movements are included that are not an obvious part of a transition

Category: The Hills Are Alive

Description: Perform a routine outdoors in a natural setting.

You may incorporate natural features of the environment as part of the performance. Example: You may use a tree as a prop, or a hillside as a way to add contrast to the performance.

Category Criteria for The Hills are Alive:

- Performance takes place in a natural outdoor setting
- If features of the environment are incorporated into the performance (optional), this is done safely

Category: Theme Through Choreography

Description: Choose music that has an obvious theme.

Create a performance through which the choreography expresses the theme in some way.

Every move and movement does not have to convey the theme. The choreography segment overall should convey the theme.

Props may be used, but presence of the prop alone cannot convey the theme. However, particular use of the prop may do so.

Category Criteria for Theme Through Choreography

- Music has an obvious theme
- The theme is conveyed through some of the moves in the performance
- If props are used (optional), use of a prop conveys the theme in some way

Category: Theme Through Setting

Description: Choose music that has an obvious theme.

Choose, or create, a setting that expresses that theme in some way. Setting can include decoration or props. The entire area need not be a "set", but props or decorations should clearly communicate the theme.

Natural settings may also be used.

Create and perform a routine in that setting. If props are present that can be used by the dog and handler team, they should be used at least once. Background decorations need not be incorporated into the performance.

Category Criteria for Theme Through Setting:

- Music has an obvious theme
- Props and/or decorations convey the theme
- Props (optional) that can be used are used by the team at least once

Master Performer Division Judging Criteria

In the Master Performer Division, the full performance will be judged, as is the practice in other Musical Freestyle titling venues.

For each performance, in all categories, the dog and handler team will receive a score of: Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or Criteria Not Met for each of the following criteria:

Handling

- There is a high degree of engagement and rapport between dog and handler
- Handling is clear and supportive
- Cues are clear to the dog
- The cue style(s) chosen in the performance are appropriate to the dog
- Dog responds readily to the majority of cues given throughout the performance
- Props (if used) allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths

Technical

- Dog demonstrates fluency and confidence in movements and moves included in the performance
- Movements and moves allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths
- A variety of moves and movements are demonstrated throughout the performance
- Dog transitions between different positions, relative to handler, several times throughout the performance
- A variety of transition moves are demonstrated throughout the performance
- A balance between moves and movement throughout the performance space is demonstrated, as performance space allows.
- Props (if used) are incorporated into the performance in meaningful ways

Artistry

- Team demonstrates flow in transition from movements to moves (sequencing)
- Performance space used in creative and interesting ways
- Handler maintains natural body language, appropriate to the category, throughout the performance
- Artistic use of transition moves
- Overall quality of choreography
- Performance includes a logical opening and closing
- Some degree of contrast or dynamic is incorporated into performance
- Artistic use of Attire, Props, Decoration (if applicable)

Category Criteria

This will vary, depending on the requirements of the performance category chosen. (See Performance Category descriptions above)

Each requirement for the category will be scored as Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or Criteria Not Met

Qualifying Submissions

In order to receive a Qualifying Score for a Leg, the following criteria must be met for each performance in the Master Performer Division:

- Team must score "Excellent" or "Good" for most of the criteria listed under "Handling, Technical, and Artistry". Up to 2 scores of "Acceptable" are permitted, and one score of "Criteria Not Met" is permitted per Leg.

  If props are not used in the performance, that criteria will be scored as "N/A" (Not Applicable), and it will not be factored into the judging.

- Team must reasonably attempt to meet all Category Criteria for the Performance Category chosen. See the "Guide to the Master Performer Division" for specific Category Criteria for each Performance Category.

- One score of "Acceptable" is permitted for Category Criteria, the remainder of the points under Category Criteria must receive a score of "Excellent" or "Good".

Awards

- A flat Qualifying Ribbon will be awarded for each Leg earned in the Master Performer Division

- A small rosette will be awarded for each Master Performer Division Title earned

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