



## JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP *at the* 2012 NATIONAL SPECIALTY

**FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER**, the IWCA will be offering junior showmanship classes at the National Specialty, and from the perspective of a person that grew up competing in juniors, I am extremely encouraged by the club's decision to make this happen! Since we have a full six months prior to the 2012 National, I thought it would be helpful to distribute pertinent information about junior handling competition, including why it is offered, eligibility requirements and judging criteria. I encourage all youth planning on attending the 2012 National to give juniors a try – have fun with your dog, work on your handling skills and help all of us remember the importance of youth in our Irish Wolfhound community!

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### WHY JUNIORS?

The AKC has 3 primary objectives for offering Junior Showmanship classes. They offer young people the opportunity to:

- 1.) Develop their handling skills
- 2.) Learn about good sportsmanship
- 3.) Learn about dogs and dog shows

Juniors are important to the future of the sport of dogs and responsible dog ownership, and the more they learn, the more valuable they become. The values, attitudes and responsibility learned through Junior Showmanship will serve youngsters well throughout their lives. By putting time and effort into learning about their dog and how to present it, juniors are rewarded with a win.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Junior Showmanship classes are open to children from 9 to 18 years old and are divided into Novice and Open classes. Novice classes are for those children who, at the time entries close, have not won three (3) first-place awards in a Novice class at a licensed or member show. To qualify as a win, more than one child must be in competition in a class. The Novice class gives those children who are beginners a chance to gain experience and confidence apart from the more seasoned youngsters. Open classes are for those children having three or more first-place wins.

The classes are further divided into:

- Junior: At least 9 years old but under 12 years old on the day of the show.
- Intermediate: At least 12 years old but under 15 years old on the day of the show.
- Senior: At least 15 years old but under 18 years old on the day of the show.

**IMPORTANT: All participants in Junior Showmanship classes must have an AKC Junior Showmanship Handler Number.** You can request a junior showmanship number online at [http://www.akc.org/kids\\_juniors/jrnoform.cfm](http://www.akc.org/kids_juniors/jrnoform.cfm). If you are planning on entering, please be sure to request this number well ahead of time!

All juniors must also be of amateur status. An individual who is listed as agent or accepts payments for handling dogs is ineligible to compete.

### WHAT DOGS ARE YOU ALLOWED TO SHOW?

Any dog entered must be eligible to compete in dog shows or obedience trials. Spayed and neutered dogs are eligible. **Bitches in season are NOT eligible.** As this is an Irish Wolfhound specialty, only Irish Wolfhounds may be presented. The dog must be owned by the child, a member of the child's family or member of his household. This includes dogs owned by the junior's mother, father, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, grandmother or grandfather and all corresponding step and half relations.

### JUDGING CRITERIA

Juniors are judged on their ability to present, or handle, their dogs within the same formats and guidelines as those who compete in the breed ring. The quality of their presentation, not the dog, is judged. Juniors are encouraged to develop their handling abilities, dress appropriately, conduct themselves in a proper manner, and present their dog in a well-groomed condition.

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I hope this helps everyone understand a few of the basic guidelines surrounding junior showmanship. I am more than happy to answer individual questions if you have them. Please feel free to email me at [Jamie@limerickiw.com](mailto:Jamie@limerickiw.com). Again, I encourage everyone eligible to participate, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2012!

- Jamie Souza Bartlett