

Goldfish Judging Criteria

1. General Standards

- A. Judges should be familiar with size categories and classes of fish which will be exhibited at the show. Requirements for special prizes (e.g. most unusual fish, judge's award, best young fish, etc.) should be understood before judging begins.
- B. If the judge has any special preferences or dislikes (with regard to fish varieties), these should be communicated to the show chairperson before judging begins.
- C. If the judge has any special requirements for the show, these should be communicated to the show chairperson before the start of the show (several weeks advance notice should be given). Examples of special requirements are not limited to nets, holding tanks, viewing bowls, special lighting requirements, audio/visual equipment, etc.
- D. The judge should communicate rules for disqualification before judging begins (advance notification is strongly recommended). Disqualification can be merited by the following occurrences (other reasons for disqualification may be present):
 - 1. The fish is injured or diseased
 - 2. The fish does not fit into any of the accepted categories for the show
 - 3. The exhibitor has not paid the entrance fee
 - 4. The exhibitor has not provided his/her own aquarium (if required by the show rules)
 - 5. The fish does not possess a characteristic which is required for a particular variety (e.g. telescope fish possessing one normal and one telescope eye).
- E. The judge should indicate in writing to the show chairman, prior to the start of the show, the rules by which he/she will be judging fish. If the GFSA guidelines will be used, the judge shall have the latitude of judging strictly on a "points-based" system, or through a combination of "points-based" system and general knowledge of goldfish. If a "points-based" system is used, the judge is encouraged to provide the show chairman with the "point" totals, but may share the "point" totals with other parties solely at the judge's discretion.
- F. During the course of the judging, judges are encouraged to indicate the selection process which they are using. The communication should be made to the show chairman, or any other official representative of the show. Communication

among judge and show entrants is discouraged until after the judging has been finalized.

- G. The judge may, at his or her discretion, view, handle, or “bowl” fish to observe conformation with general breed guidelines. The handling of fish may be necessary to determine: proper placement and count of fins, condition and quality of special characteristics (e.g. wen growth in head fish; eyes for eye fish; color intensity for Shubunkins, etc.). Care should be exercised by the judge, so as to prevent damage during handling.
- H. Judging should be conducted in such a manner that positive characteristics of the fish are noted. If the judge experiences a fish with a minor fault (such as non-paired anal fins, where the breed characteristic requires paired fins), the judge may subtract points from the fish, ignore the infraction, or in more severe cases disqualify the fish, at the judge’s discretion.
- I. After completion of judging, results should be communicated to the show chairman and prizes awarded according to the size categories and classes established for the show. Frequently, show participants will ask the judge for a description of how the fish were judged, and the selection criteria used by the judge. The GFSA strongly encourages judges to provide answers to these questions in order to help promote knowledge of fish standards and judging criteria. The formality of these responses is left up to the discretion of the judge.
- J. When providing commentary at shows, judges are encouraged to use discretion when commenting on a particular fish. It is best to emphasize the positive attributes of a fish, rather than to dwell on the negative aspects of the animal. Judges should always remember that the exhibited fish are a personal pet, and that people have invested time and money in the care of their fish.

2. Show Best Practices

- A. Shows are encouraged to provide the following items necessary to conducting a goldfish show:
 - 1. A source of fresh, clean water
 - 2. Chemicals which may be necessary to treat water for removal of chlorine, chloramines, and ammonia.
 - 3. Chemicals which may be necessary to stabilize water conditions at the show, such as: stress coat, zeolite, Ph water buffers, etc.
 - 4. General medicinal agents, such as: mercurochrome, salt, methylene blue

5. A sufficient number of aquariums (if provided by the show) or tubs, for viewing
 6. Fish nets, "bowling" tubs, vats, or final viewing aquaria (if shows want to display major category winners separate from the general fish population)
 7. Adequate lighting for proper viewing and judging of fish
 8. Adequate bracing or support which will hold the weight of aquaria on display
 9. A bagging and oxygen station for transporting fish from the show after display
 10. Adequate check-in procedures which eliminate diseased or injured fish; provide pictures of each fish entered for later identification and display; classification into the categories accepted at the show.
 11. Air stones should be provided, by the show committee, for each aquarium in use at the show.
 12. Water quality measuring kits should be provided at the show, and regular water quality measurements should be taken at pre-determined times during the show. If required, water changes should be made to ensure the health of the fish.
- B. The show policy on filtration should be communicated to the participants prior to the show. It is strongly recommended by the GFSA that filtration be used in each tank at the show.
 - C. The policy on feeding should be communicated to show participants. Feeding is not to be allowed at the show. Fish should be placed off-feed for a minimum of three days prior to the show, with five days being the preferred length of time for being off-feed.
 - D. A policy addressing the number of fish permitted for each tank should be communicated to the participants prior to the show. In the case of participant-provided tanks, more latitude may be given to stocking guidelines.
 - E. Required water change times and amounts, should be communicated to show participants. In the case of tanks with filtration provided, water changes of one per day should be sufficient. In the case of tanks which do not have filtration, water changes of two or more per day are encouraged.
 - F. The show should provide a person to measure water quality parameters, such as: ammonia/Nitrite levels, presence of chlorine/chloramines, Ph, and optionally, dissolved oxygen.
 - G. If comments by the judge are made after the show, adequate communications equipment such as a PA system, slides, or

overhead projectors should be provided, if required by the judge.

3. Judging Etiquette

- A. Judges are encouraged to dress appropriately for the show. The status and authority of the judge is often influenced by visual and verbal signals which may serve to detract from a judge's perceived knowledge. Proper attire will provide a positive visual sign of authority and knowledge.
- B. It is customary for a judge to provide a gift or trophy to the club in recognition of the honor accorded the judge. The trophy or gift may or may not include a GFSA acknowledgement or sanction of the event, at the judge's discretion.
- C. Judges are usually required to provide transportation to and from the event, at their expense. In some cases, the club or organization sponsoring the show may provide transportation or lodging. In addition, some organizations provide meals for the judge at the event. In many cases, the show organizations will also provide the judge with a gift or honorarium, as a means of expressing their thanks to the judge. The GFSA encourages judges to acknowledge these gifts to the organization, and to write a thank-you to the show chairperson.