

Competition rules are not created for this event but these are the general rules of each sport. On the other hand just because of the special character of this contest some parts of the rules can not be adapted. These differences can be found in each call for entries of each event on the official website of the contest.
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HERDING COMPETITION RULES

HUNGARIAN KENNEL CLUB (MEOE – Magyar Ebtenyésztők Országos Egyesülete)
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I. GENERAL DIRECTIONS

1. The goals of herding competitions are: (1) to maintain and improve the working ability of the herding breeds; (2) to officially organize qualification of herding work; (3) to popularize and propagate herding as a sport.

- a. The Herding Sport Commission(HSC) organizes the herding events and the judges are assigned by and from the Herding Judge Corporation (HJC).
- b. The HSC and the HJC work in close cooperation with each other.
- c. Breed clubs, local clubs and contracted partners of MEOE (Hungarian Kennel Club) are allowed to organize and conduct herding competitions from which the results are recognized by MEOE, providing the clubs accept these rules and they asked HJC to assign a judge to the event.
- d. These present rules are for herding sheep.

2. The competitions can be:

- a. TRADITIONAL (“driving”, or continental style)
- b. SPECIAL (“collecting”, or Anglo-Australian-American style)

Within these categories the following sub-categories are separated:

- c. national competition (open or invitational);
- d. international competition (open or invitational);
- e. competition for show or popular reasons, where the circumstances and/or the rules can be different than the ones here discussed.

3. There is a possibility for within-breed qualification and estimation of the results, if the organizer of the competition intends this; otherwise all breeds compete with each other within a given class.

4. The organizers should always take into consideration the requirements for animal welfare and protection; they should check in advance the health status and breed specific requirements of the sheep; they should avoid any unnecessary demands on the livestock during the competition.

5. The organizers should have any necessary first aid equipment and drugs at the place of the competition.

I/a. Herding Instinct Examination(HIE)

1. The MEOE-HJC organizes the HIE events for the official evaluation of the breed specific, inherited herding behaviour in the herding breeds. These tests serve also for the maintenance of these genetically based abilities in the herding dogs.
2. Every dog must have an HIE for the right to enter a herding competition, but the HIT is not a working examination and the HIE is not necessarily among the breeding requirements of any given dog breed.
3. The MEOE HIE rulebook contains the circumstances and rules of the official HIE. The minimum age for entering the HIE is 6 months.
4. The results of the HIE's are filed by the HSC. The passed HIE result can be written onto the dog's pedigree and/or achievement book, following the actual directions of the MEOE's presidency.
5. The following qualifications can be given at the HIE:
 - passed
 - failed

II. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN A HERDING COMPETITION

1. The dog should have received a "passed" qualification from the HIE which was held by an FCI-approved kynological organization. Professional working herding dogs (i.e. working dog of a shepherd) and herding dogs with applicable international qualifications can enter also, independently from the nationality of their owner. In the case of an invitational event, the organizer should give the exact requirements of participation and the specific rules of the competition in advance.
2. The handler and his/her dog are considered to be a team on the competition. A given dog can participate in only one team during the same competition.
3. Dogs should have a valid vaccination against rabies at the time of the competition.
4. A bitch in season can participate in the competition only if her owner notified the organizer in advance. The organizer should make preparations in this case for isolating this bitch from the other competitors. Bitches in season can compete only at the end of the event. The handler/owner is responsible to prevent disruption of the competition and he/she can be disqualified in the event of any inconvenience to the other competitors.
5. Handlers should wear appropriate clothing and dogs should be healthy and in neat appearance. The judge is permitted to disqualify any handler who is visibly drunken or under the effect of any drug.
6. The handler is allowed to use a shepherd's crook but not for beating the sheep.
7. Handlers will be disqualified that punish their dogs physically.

8. The handler is responsible for any harm or damage which was caused by his/her dog. The damage should be paid to the owner of the sheep after the necessary negotiation and agreement between the two parties.

9. Entry deadline: ten days before the competition, in written or electronic form.

- There is the possibility to enter at the place of the competition, in this case the entry fee is double the normal fee. The handler/owner can enter a dog at least half an hour before the competition starts.

- For MEOE members the entry fee is always equal with the actual fee of the HIT. Hungarian breeds can be entered for half price. For non-MEOE members, the fee is the double of the MEOE member's fee, with the exception of competitions which are in the 2.c section of the General Directions.

10. Further entry requirements:

When a dog competes for the first time, a copy of its pedigree should be sent together with the entry application, or it can be provided at the place of the competition. The handler should prove the payment of the entry fee and the validity of the dog's rabies vaccination.

11. The minimal age of a dog is 9 months for entering a competition.

III. RULES OF THE 'TRADITIONAL' HERDING COMPETITION

A. Classes

1. There are four classes for competitors in the herding competitions:

- a. BEGINNER'S CLASS ("Kisbojtár")
- b. ADVANCED CLASS ("Bojtár")
- c. OPEN CLASS ("Öregbojtár")
- d. PROFESSIONAL CLASS ("Számadó")

a. Any team can enter the BEGINNER'S class providing the dog fulfilled the requirements of the II/1 section, until the team does not obtain the qualifications for entering a higher class.

b. The minimal qualifications for entering the ADVANCED class require the given team to have obtained at least two "Excellent" and one "Very good" results during previous competitions. After five "Excellent" results, it is mandatory to move one class higher.

c. A team can enter to the OPEN class only after it has competed in the ADVANCED class. If the team has won five "Excellent" results in the ADVANCED class, it must move to the OPEN class, but it can do it earlier as well. However, once a team competes in the OPEN class, it is no longer allowed to compete in the lower classes.

d. The PROFESSIONAL class is for the teams of professional working shepherds and their dogs. Amateurs can enter this class also if they choose, but in doing so, they cannot compete any further in lower classes.

2. If a different handler starts to compete with a dog, then this new team should start the classes from the lowest class. A dog should compete with the same handler throughout the season.

3. To decide which class the team can enter, only those results can be used which were obtained on competitions organized according to these rules and where the judge was assigned by the HJC.

B. The phases and the judging of the competition

The final result comes from the sum of all the points which were given after the different phases of the herding competition. In the BEGINNER'S class, the team should perform an obedience test before the competition. The team can start the herding work only if they pass the obedience requirements. During the competition if the team cannot pass a given task within 5 minutes, the judge sends them to the next task. In this case the team gets 0 points for the uncompleted task. The team is disqualified if they cannot accomplish the first task (taking the sheep out from the starting pen) within 5 minutes.

Phase 1: Obedience test

a. Walking without leash

The team moves along a large triangular path. The dog is unleashed and should walk roughly at the side of the handler. The handler should make the dog "sit" at every corner for 5 seconds.

b. Stay

The handler leaves the dog in one position (standing, sitting or laying) and then walks away 10-15 meters, while the dog should remain in the location it was left.

c. Call in

At the sign of the judge, the handler calls the dog which has to run to the handler following the first call.

Phase 2: Herding competition

At the beginning of the competition, the competitors (without their dogs) are familiarized with the course. During the walk through, they go over the course with the judge, who explains which direction they should follow, exactly how they have to solve the tasks, what are the specific requirements and any possible advice of the judge.

2/1. BEGINNER'S CLASS

There are five tasks in the course, including the penning out at the beginning and in at the end. Points are given for how the team deals with these tasks. As a maximum, 25 points can be given for a task. This score also includes how the team moves the sheep between two given tasks.

As a maximum, another 25 points can be given for the general impression of the team's work.

2/2. ADVANCED class

There are six tasks in the course, including the penning out at the beginning and in at the end. Points are given for how the team deals with these tasks. As a maximum, 25 points can be given for a task. This score also includes how the team moves the sheep between two given tasks.

As a maximum, another 25 points can be given for the general impression of the team's work.

2/3. OPEN and PROFESSIONAL classes:

There are seven tasks in the course, including the penning out at the beginning and in at the end. Points are given for how the team deals with these tasks. As a maximum, 25 points can be given for a task. This score also includes how the team moves the sheep between two given tasks.

As a maximum, another 25 points can be given for the general impression of the team's work.

Detailed description and judging of the tasks

Bringing out the sheep from the pen:

At the beginning the handler opens the pen gate. He/she can bring out the sheep from the pen in various ways: by sending the dog to the outside, around the pen's back; by sending the dog into the pen; by moving together with the dog.

Faults:

- the dog does not go to the sheep in vain the handler sends it, or shows signs of fear;
- the dog attacks or bites unnecessarily the sheep;
- the handler brings out the sheep without the significant help of the dog.

As a maximum, 25 points can be given.

Moving along the course:

The team should move the sheep along the course in an even, calm pace, without unnecessary pestering of the flock.

Faults:

- the dog attacks or bites unnecessarily the sheep;
- during a necessary intervention the dog remains behind the handler;
- the handler has to run himself/herself to direct the flock;
- the dog leaves the course, or in anyway gets out of the control of the handler;
- the flock does not follow the direction and path along the course which the judge required at the beginning.

Tasks (obstacles):

1/ Gate, strait, bridge, penning

During the driving through of each obstacle, the team should avoid the unnecessary pestering of the sheep, which means that they should be given enough time to get through in a normal pace. If some of the sheep detour the obstacle instead of going through it, the team can try to drive them through again if there is enough time left for this task.

Faults:

- the flock or a fragment of it does not follow the required path;
- the dog attacks or bites unnecessarily the sheep;
- the dog remains behind the handler during a necessary intervention.

2/ Detouring an obstacle

Various obstacles can be placed on the course for detour tasks. These should be detoured from the required direction and in the required distance.

Faults:

- the flock or a fragment of it does not detour the obstacle from the required direction, or /and close enough to the obstacle;
- the dog attacks or bites unnecessarily the sheep;
- the dog remains behind the handler during a necessary intervention.

3/ Forbidden zone

There can be a forbidden zone on the course, where the sheep cannot enter. This zone should be marked clearly.

Faults:

- the sheep enter the forbidden zone;
- the dog attacks or bites unnecessarily the sheep;
- the dog remains behind the handler during a necessary intervention.

3. The following scores can be given as result:

Score	OPEN and PROFESSIONAL		
	BEGINNER	ADVANCED	L
Excellent	130-150	150-175	180-200
Very good	110-129	130-149	150-179
Good	80-109	100-129	110-149
Fair	60-79	80-101	90-109
Failed	0-59	0-79	0-89

IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIZING A HERDING COMPETITION

1. The organizers should provide enough sheep for the event. For a few competitors it means 40 sheep as minimum, for a bigger competition there should be at least 60-100 sheep. Only this amount of sheep makes it possible that more than one flock can be formed, each flock can be changed after several teams have competed so the sheep can rest. The sheep should be such animals which have been regularly herded by dogs. The organizer should check out this fact before the competition. An event is considered to have "few" competitors when there is less than 10 teams. No competition can be made with sheep which are unfamiliar with herding by dogs. The judge should give the directions for constructing the course and also is the one who decides the path to be followed. The judge decides the order in which the given tasks (gate, detour, strait, etc.) follow each other. The difficulty level of the course should be in accordance with the class's level.

2. Every course starts with bringing out the sheep from the pen and ends with driving them back into the same pen. Between these penning's there are three tasks in the BEGINNER, four tasks in the ADVANCED and five tasks in the OPEN and PROFESSIONAL classes. A team can leave out any of the tasks (with the obvious point deduction), but every team should pass the initial bringing out of the flock from the pen. The team is disqualified if this first task is unsuccessful.

3. The course should be placed on such a field which preferably has an even, safe surface and which does not involve any danger for the sheep or the competitors. The judge is allowed to change the direction to be followed during the competition (obviously between two teams). He/she should notify the competitors about this decision and must give the reason for it as well.

4. Only the judge and the given team can be on the course during the trial, with the exception of an apprentice judge. If it is necessary, the judge allows a helper person to assist the handler (for example, the handler is physically challenged). However, the helper is not allowed to do actual herding activity, or influence in any way the team's work.

5. If it is necessary during the competition, the judge is permitted to send anyone away to a distance further from the course, if he/she considers somebody to be a disturbing agent for the team. Similarly, the judge is allowed to ask a team to stop the trial and leave the course. Helping the team from outside is forbidden. During the

competition other dogs are not allowed to be in close proximity to the course, the safety distance should be decided by the judge, according to the actual circumstances.

V. THE JUDGES

The judge gives a detailed explanation of his/her way of judging to the competitors before the start of the trials. The judge should follow and evaluate the work of the team from a distance, which is appropriate to the given breed of dogs' working specifications. The judge should be sure that his/her presence and movement along the course does not disturb the sheep. The judge shortly discusses his decision about each team's work after the team finished the trial. He tells his judgment and also writes it onto the team's score sheet. There is no possibility to object to the judge's decision on the competition. If there are complaints, these can be addressed to the HJC, however the result of a competition cannot be changed later for any reason.

Every competition should be summarized in written minutes. It should be filed in the archives of the HJC and a copy of it should be sent to the HSC.

VI. REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

The judge can disqualify a team from the given day's competition if:

- the handler was disrespectful towards the organizers or/and the judge;
- the handler was too rough with the sheep or/and with the dog;
- the handler is visibly drunken or he/she is under the effect of drugs;
- the dog sheds (separates one sheep from the flock and chases it);
- the dog gets out from the control of the handler;
- a not-competing handler or his/her dog disturbs seriously the work of another team.

VII. THE TASK OF A TEAM DURING THE TRIAL AND THE MAIN POINTS OF JUDGING

1. The handler should give as few as possible visual or/and acoustic commands to direct the dog. These commands should be timed properly and should be given with the optimal intensity for herding the flock properly. The herding should follow as exactly as possible the required order and direction of the tasks and should fit to the size and features of the course. The team should not pester unnecessarily the flock.

2. The judge should watch constantly the appropriateness and timing of the handler's movements and commands. He/she should judge if these movements and commands were or were not necessary and should pay attention if the handler's praising or scolding of the dog has the required effect.

3. According to the above listed points, the team's work becomes less valuable if:

- the commands were not timed properly; if the commands were weak and/or too few in number; if the commands were unnecessarily strong/intense and too numerous, or unnecessarily repeated.

- the handler scolds the dog unnecessarily or too often; if the handler curses;

- the handler moves differently than the shepherds usually do: leans forward strongly, crouches down, runs, etc.;

- the handler touches or beats the sheep with the shepherd's crook; touches, grabs or lifts the dog, with the exception of putting it into the pen at the beginning, if the jumping over the pen's fence would be dangerous;

4. The judge should evaluate every aspect of the dog-handler cooperation, with special interest on the appropriateness and speed of the dog's reaction to the handler's commands. According to these, the judge should evaluate how well the dog understood the commands as well as how precise, successful and determined was the dog in completing its tasks. Another important aspect should be the dog's hardness when it was necessary to fight back resistance from the sheep. The judge should evaluate the longevity of the dog's stamina and willingness to work, as well as the lack of these qualities.

5. The judge should evaluate the amount and appropriateness of the dog's barking during the trial, especially at the obstacles. Of course, he/she should consider the given breed's specific herding habits (does the breed use barking or is the breed silent). The handler should perform as few as possible of the actual "herding" manoeuvres during the trial.