



Becoming an ABA Poultry Judge

Glen Cryar
ABA General Judge
Judge Licensing Committee, Chairman

So you want to be an ABA Judge. It is not as hard as one might think, but it is not easy either. As a member of the Youth Group, it is never too early to start thinking about the decision. First, one must be a member of the American Bantam Association for five consecutive years and be at least 21 years old. There are three types of licenses to apply for: the General license allows one to judge all bantam chickens and ducks; the Bantam Chicken only license is just what it says, it allows one to judge bantam chickens only, and likewise, the Bantam Duck license allows one to judge just bantam ducks. I highly advise the candidate to apply for the General License.

Becoming a judge is a hard process, and to be a successful judge, one must have "thick skin." By this, I mean that one must be able to take criticism about the way they place the birds. One must learn to explain to the exhibitor why placings were made the way they were made, and accept that not all will agree. Being a judge is an honor, and carries great responsibility. One must be honest, and place the birds to the best of their ability, without playing favorites to any breed or exhibitor. Judging is a hard job, but the rewards are many. Do not let the difficulty stop you from achieving your goal.

The first step in becoming a licensed judge is to obtain a latest copy of the Bantam Standard and start to study it. All licensed judges are required to have a copy of the latest Bantam Standard.

The second step in getting the license is to apply to the ABA for an application, complete the application and send it, along with the required fee to the ABA. The ABA Judges Licensing Committee (presently Warren Carlow, Glen Cryar, and Walt Leonard) will review the application and notify the candidate as to what action to take.

The next step is to complete a two-year stewardship program. This consists of clerking at a minimum of eight different shows under eight different judges and getting the judges to complete a form to return to the ABA. This process allows the candidate to observe how the different judges go about judging and placing the birds.

Once the stewardship program is complete, one is ready for the testing portion of the process. A judge will be appointed by the committee to administer a written test which must be passed by a score of 80%, and a showroom test must be passed with a score of 90%. One must study really hard for the exam, because it is really difficult. All the standard must be studied, not just the popular breeds or just your favorite breeds. The test covers a large part of the Standard and generally takes 2-3 hours to complete.

Over the years, I have observed many candidates pass the exams on the first try, but some have failed. My advice to the new candidate is to study hard, learn the standard, and become familiar with all the breeds and varieties. In my opinion, the easiest way to go about the process is to start early, raise and exhibit as many breeds as possible, and study, study, study. Don't wait until you have made your application to start the study process. Set goals for the various steps, and work to achieve these goals.

If you have any questions during your licensing process be sure to contact a committee member for clarification. It is much easier to get questions answered during the process; because once you are taking the exams, it is too late to ask questions. You are on your own then.

If you truly want to be an ABA Judge, set a goal, work to achieve that goal, and don't let anything stop you. Hard work will get it done.

Once you have completed the process, you will be required to participate in a continuing education program.



**APA-ABA YOUTH POULTRY CLUB
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP JUDGING PROGRAM**
(For Potential Future Licensed Judges)

Pre-Apprentice Judges Program Advisors:

Doris Robinson, National Director, YEPA
Mr. Pat Malone, APA & ABA Licensed Judge
Mr. Jamie Carson, APA & ABA Licensed Judge

This program is available for those youth members that are seriously considering becoming ABA or APA Licensed Judges (or both).

This part of the program is not mandatory to reach the top level of the APA-ABA Youth Poultry Club A.C.E. Program.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this final stage of the youth ACE program is to help educate and train eligible young fanciers in the field of judging exhibition poultry. Both the APA and ABA always benefit from young fanciers taking a genuine interest in this aspect of our hobby. It is the hope of this program's organizers that the Pre-Apprentice Program will help prepare out youth to become knowledgeable judges and educators that will help see our great hobby into the next generation.

This part of the APA-ABA Youth Program is to encourage and help youth that have the future goal of becoming a certified, licensed poultry judge. This program is designed to help give our youth a head start studying the Standard's of the American Poultry Association or the American Bantam Association or both by working with licensed judges in each field.

Eligibility:

If you wish to participate in this portion of the program, a young person that has achieved all of the previous levels (Coop Tender, Flock Tender, Flock Master and Poultry Master) must request in writing permission to participate in the Pre-Apprenticeship Judging Program. This written request is mandatory. Your request should be sent to the National Director of the APA-ABA Youth Poultry Club. When your request is acknowledged you will be provided with an identification card stating that you are a participant of the APA-ABA Youth Program Pre-Apprenticeship Judging Program.

Age:

You must be age 17 or older to begin participating in the Pre-Apprenticeship Judging Program and the Poultry Master level must be achieved before you can move into this part of the APA-ABA Youth Poultry Club program. This part of the program must be completed by your 25th birthday.

PROJECTS:

Step 1: Clerking Assignments with APA-ABA Licensed Judges.

A. Each program participant must complete six clerking assignments (for a minimum of five hours each) with a judge licensed by either the APA and/or the ABA.

B. It is mandatory that two clerking assignments be completed in each of the following three areas: Bantams Chickens, Large Fowl Chickens
Waterfowl, Turkeys, Guineas (combined)

The judge for which the participant clerks must be fully licensed in that area (i.e. participants cannot clerk for an ABA judge who is judging Turkeys and receive credit.

C. Participant will be provided with "Report Forms" to be completed by each judge (1) stating the breeds clerked for that day and (2) giving a brief evaluation of the participant's knowledge of the judging process, etc. This form will be mailed to the APA-ABA Youth Program office when completed. (See more information below).

D. If you wish to apprentice clerk at a show, you must contact the show secretary in advance (a week or two) before the show to request permission to clerk. If you find you cannot attend the show you should have the courtesy to call and cancel your date so they can find a replacement. *Please* do not expect to walk into a showroom at the last minute and expect to clerk.

Step 2 – Written Essays

This section involves the participant writing three separate essays, a minimum of five hundred (500) words each. Each essay should be written on (1) bantams, (2) large fowl, and (3) waterfowl, turkeys and guineas (combined).

These papers are to include breed specific information on the judging of one breed within each class in that groups (i.e. SCCL, Medium Ducks, Asiatic Class, etc.) as well as general judging guidelines that would relate to judging all breeds and varieties in that specific group (i.e. general defects, disqualifications, etc.)

The information in these essays is to be taken from the APA and ABA Standards, with proper credit given at the end of the essay.

Step 3 – Written Exam

Following the submission of each essay, if the essay is deemed sufficient by the program supervisor, the participant will then take a written examination on the judging of poultry in that group.

This test will not be an "open book" format, and the written test is to be administered by a Licensed Judge or by an appropriate supervisor (as designated by the program supervisor).

The format of each of the three tests will be true/false and multiple choices. The minimum passing grade for each test must be 80%.