

## **A Guide to Showing your Cat**

This is intended to be a guide for first-time exhibitors entering shows held under GCCF rules. I, myself, have shown only a few times over the years and there are many seasoned exhibitors who would be able to provide more in-depth advice.

### What is it like at a show?

The show hall is organised with the cats all in wire pens arranged in rows in the centre of the hall. The pens are solid metal at the back and both sides with a wire mesh top and front and they are placed in double rows back to back. The number of double rows in the hall depends on the number of entries for the show and the cats are penned in breed sections.

Around the edges of the hall, depending on the venue, you will usually find stalls selling all manner of cat-related goods and often craft stalls as well.

There are tables, often at one end of the hall, where you will find the Show Manager and his/her team. A team of volunteers will work at these tables to transfer the results from the judges slips on to the award cards and mark up the rosettes awarded to the winning cats.

### If I enter my cat, will I need specialist equipment?

Yes, at the very least, you will need a show kit. Each pen must have only white blankets, food and water containers and a white litter tray. This is so that no cat can be identified allowing the results of the competition to be unbiased. If the show hall is particularly cold, you may want to include a small hot water bottle (it is possible to get a special white cover or you can wrap it very firmly in a white show blanket – be aware, though, that if you cat uncovers it you may have a problem as it would be possible to identify your cat from the others in its class). You can buy all of this equipment from a cat accessory company and the Show Manager will be able to tell you whether there will be a cat accessory company stall at the show from whom you can buy a show kit. Otherwise, try checking the adverts in the cat magazines for details of one of the cat accessory companies, who will be able to supply you with a show kit by mail order.

Depending on the breed of your cat, you may need specialist grooming equipment. However, your breeder will be able to give you advice on this subject. It may also be possible to find out more from a member of the club whose show you are entering and you may want to ask about this when phoning for a show schedule. Consider joining the cat club – this way you can support the club and 'thank' them for their help and advice as well as gaining access to other benefits.

### How do I enter?

You can either download our show schedule and entry forms from our website – see the Show page – or you can send a stamped self-addressed envelope to the Show Manager at the address shown on the our Show page of our website asking for a show schedule. Read the rules in the schedule and on the entry form closely and fill in your cat's details from the cat's GCCF Transfer Slip (the registration document you received when you bought your kitten). Sign and date the entry form and, having double-checked it for mistakes, post it off to the Show Manager before the closing date. If the closing date has already passed, contact the Show Manager to check that the show has actually closed and that it is not possible to enter now as shows are often not full and entries are often possible after the closing date.

### The night before the show, do I need to do anything?

Groom your cat according to your breed's needs and clip its claws (very lightly, if at all, if your cat goes outside as you cat may need its claws unclipped to defend itself).

Check over your paperwork. You will need to take with you your cat's vaccination certificate. Without this, you will have real problems vetting in (getting into the show with your cat) if it's possible at all. If you do forget your certificate and it's not possible to return home for it, contact the Show Manager en route for advice, or as soon as you get to the show venue – it *may* be possible for you to still be admitted to the show if confirmation can be obtained from your vet that your cat's vaccinations are up-to-date.

Check the time of vetting-in and plan your journey to the show hall so that you arrive in plenty of time to vet-in before it closes.

### On Show Day

Get up in plenty of time so that you and your cat are not rushed. Once you are ready, put your cat securely in your cat carrier and make sure you have your vaccination certificate with you.

At the show hall there will usually be a sign to indicate the location of the entrance for vetting-in – quite often you can simply follow the line of people with cat boxes!!

When you reach vetting-in, you will be asked for your cat's vaccination certificate and, if this is in order, you will be given an envelope containing the number of your pen on a piece of paper and your show entry sticker – this allows you to get back in to the show hall later without having to pay again.

After vetting-in, go to your cat's pen and put your show equipment in and then, when it's ready, you can get your cat out of its carrier and make it comfortable in its pen.

At about 10 am, the Show Manager will announce that it is time to 'clear the hall' and this means that you need to take your cat's food out of the pen – leave its water container and the rest of your show kit – and you need to leave the show hall, or at least move to the edges of the hall if this is where the stalls are. This is your opportunity to look round the stalls, get a cup of coffee and chat to other exhibitors, or look round the local shops – whatever takes your fancy! You cannot return to your cat's pen until the Show Manager announces that you can – which is usually shortly before, or at the same time, as the show opens to the public. Buy your show catalogue as you leave your cat and you will be all prepared for your return later.

When the Show Manager says you can go back to your pen, you can return to your cat and make sure they are alright, give him/her a cuddle and some food.

Ask a fellow exhibitor to show you where the results boards are and, as the results appear on the board, you can mark them up in your show catalogue.

Towards the end of the show, Best in Show is usually judged. There will be three judges who will judge the cats who have been nominated for Best in Show. These cats will be passed, one at a time, along the Best in Show table in front of the three judges and they will give their judgement as to which cat is, in their opinion, the best. The results are announced.

Around 5 pm, the Show Manager will announce that the show is now closing and that you can pack up your things and take your cat home. Do NOT do this until the Show Manager has made this announcement – this can result in disqualification.

Happy Showing and Good Luck.

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