Revised February 25, 2025

ESSFTA

Top Twenty Extravaganza
Overview, Protocol, and Procedures

OVERVIEW

The Top 20 Extravaganza is an independent event run in conjunction with the ESSFTA National Specialty that is designed to showcase excellence in the English Springer Spaniel breed. With this in mind, the Top 20 Committee has developed an event, the top 20 Extravaganza, that is designed to honor the top English Springer Spaniels who attained outstanding records in conformation, performance, and field during the previous calendar year using the ESSFTA ranking system. These dogs are honored with an invitation to the annual event, a rosette and sometimes a trophy item memorializing their Top 20 ranking achievement.

This event is intended to honor, educate and entertain judges, exhibitors, breeders and fanciers, while at the same time recognizing breeders, handlers, and owners. This conformation competition is an added incentive for breeders and owners to strive to breed and show English Springer Spaniels that excel in structure, movement, temperament and conformation as described in the AKC approved written breed standard.

The conformation competition portion of the Top 20 Extravaganza uses a scoring and point system that represents key attributes from the breed standard. Each dog will be evaluated independently by three judges as to how closely it conforms to the breed standard. The winner and second place dogs will be awarded Winner and Reserve Winner rosettes. In addition, a People's Choice competition allows the audience to choose their favorite dog.

An Owner-Handled People's Choice award is also given to the Owner-Handled dog garnering the greatest number of spectator votes.

Dog and owners from the performance and hunting venues have the opportunity to show off their talented English Springer Spaniels in front of an appreciative audience and to compete for the Performance People's Choice award.

PROTOCOLS: These items have been established as requirements for the annual event. Changes may be requested by members of the committee or in writing from ESSFTA members to the Committee Chair. Changes to these protocols made by June 15th of a calendar year will be implemented in that calendar year. Changes made after June 15th will not go into effect until the next full calendar year. All requests will be brought before the committee and a simple majority is required to amend the criteria. <u>The only areas that require this formal process are Eligibility Requirements and the Judge selection process.</u>

ELIGIBILITY

Conformation Criteria: The qualifiers for the Top 20 Breed Competition are based on the ESSFTA breed points earned by English Springer Spaniels in conformation competition during the previous calendar year, regardless of gender. The standings are based on total breed points as published in the ESSFTA Spotlight and on the ESSFTA website. Points are calculated beginning January 1 and ending December 31 of the year prior to the Top 20 event. Points awarded are equal to the total number of dogs defeated (including Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex) by winning Best of Breed or Best of Opposite Sex at an AKC All-Breed or Specialty show. That is, dogs are awarded one point for each dog defeated in breed competition only. A brief history of the ESSFTA system is included in Schedule B. Spayed bitches and neutered dogs that have been named among the Top 20 may compete in this event.

Conformation Top 20 previous years' winner(s):
Newly adopted criteria language, June 2018, implemented in 2019

Any qualifying previous Top 20 winner(s) will be invited as Exhibition Only and may participate for the People's Choice award. Previous winners are excluded from being named winner or reserve winner at the Top 20 competition. Previous winners will be given the opportunity to showcase their dog to the music of their choice and receive a rosette. Entry fees will apply to these individuals in the same manner as the other awards

Top Owner Handled Recognition: *Adopted July 17, 2018; Revised June 15, 2022*

The Top 20 Committee will invite the top ten Owner Handled English Springer Spaniels based on the Canine Chronicle official October to October rankings from the previous year. These top ten Owner Handled dogs and handlers will be invited to attend the Top 20 for recognition of their achievement. Owner-handled dogs in attendance at the Top 20 Extravaganza will compete for a People's Choice Owner-Handled Dog rosette.

Amended May 3, 2019: If a dog is entered in both the regular Top 20 competition and the Owner Handled competition, the dog may be handled by a professional handler in the regular Top 20 competition but must be handled by the owner in the Owner Handled portion of the event.

Performance, Hunt and Field Trial Dogs: The top Performance/Hunt/Tracking/ Field Trial dogs are invited to participate by achieving top status in Obedience, Rally, Agility, Hunting, Field and Tracking as described in the Performance invitation criteria:

AGILITY - The top four Agility dogs will be invited. Ranking is determined by evaluating the dog's best 10 QQ runs and the yards per second for each run. The four dogs with the best YPS for the 10 QQ runs will be invited to the Top 20. The top Preferred Agility dog will also be invited using the same criteria

OBEDIENCE - The top four dogs will be invited by calculating the top three "high combined open and utility" scores from three obedience trials held during the award year. Scores may come from either the A or the B Class or from a combination of scores from both classes.

RALLY - The top 4 dogs will be invited by using the top Master level scores.

TRACKING - Any dog earning a Champion Tracker title during the award year will be invited.

HUNTING - Any dog that earns a Master Hunting Title (MH or MHA) during the award year will be invited

FIELD TRIAL- The top two High Point Open Dog and the top two High Point Amateur Dogs from the previous year will be invited. The winner of the National Amateur and National Open Field Trial from the previous year will be invited (*beginning 2014*).

Amended June 2023

Juniors' Eligibility Requirements:

Junior Showmanship Qualifiers in Conformation are determined as the Top 10 English Springer Spaniel Junior Handlers per Canine Chronicle Statistics from January 1 through December 31st of each year.

Companion Event/Performance Event/Field Trial juniors will be invited based on their performance from the previous year and statistics maintained by AKC.

The Top Ten Juniors in Junior Showmanship, the Top Juniors in Obedience, Rally, Agility, Scent Work, Coursing, Field Trial, and Hunt Tests will be invited to be honored at the Top 20 event.

These qualifiers will receive invitations from the Top 20 committee and may enter their dogs according to the instructions. There will be no judging but each junior will receive a rosette.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Owners, co-owners and dogs must be in good standing with the American Kennel Club and the ESSFTA. If an AKC suspension of a dog/owner/co-owner has occurred and the dog/owner/co-owner has been re-instated, the re-instated status must be verified with the AKC at least 10 days prior to the day of exhibition.

Owners and co-owners must agree to abide by all of the Top 20 rules. These rules apply to the finalists' participation in this event and failure to follow these rules may revoke the privilege of future participation or be subject to bench hearing as prescribed by AKC and ESSFTA, regardless of eligibility.

Any deceased qualifying dog will be invited and will be granted the same honor as the rest of the Top 20 participants, to include a catalog page and rosette.

Entrants will only be allowed to compete if their owner or agent attends the mandatory briefing that is held prior to the start of Top 20 judging.

CONFORMATION JUDGE SELECTION

Judges for the Top 20 Competition are selected by a member or members of the Top 20 Committee who do not have a conflict of interest.

Any person who has a vested interest in a Top 20 qualifier will be considered ineligible to judge at the Top 20. This includes, but is not limited to owners, breeders of a qualifier, owner/co-owner of the sire/dam of a qualifier or the handler of a Top 20 qualifier.

Additional Exclusions for Judges:

Any ESSFTA member who has any interest whatsoever in any dog eligible to compete.
Any person who has an association or conflict of interest with a qualifying dog (e.g., breeder, co-owner, stud dog owner, handler, and / or spouses of same).

Categories From Which Judges Are Selected:
The committee chair or designate will select an individual from each of the following judging categories:

1. Breeder Judge: An ESS breeder who has been breeding for at least ten years, having produced at least five AKC Champions of Record. The breeder may live in the United States, Canada or Europe and must be in good standing with the AKC, CKC, etc.

2. Handler (Past or present): A professional handler who meets the requirements for membership in any professional handler's organization, though not necessarily a member. The person must have at least five years professional handling experience and must be in good standing with the AKC, CKC, etc. The person must have at least three years of experience handling a Sporting dog.

3. Multi-Breed AKC Approved Judge: An AKC judge approved for English Springer Spaniels and the Sporting Group who is not an English Springer Spaniel breeder. The number of group placements given to English Springer Spaniels during the year may be considered when selecting a multi-breed judge.

In the event that invitations to judge are delayed and made at a late date resulting in difficulty acquiring a judge meeting all the criteria, limited concessions in qualifications as defined may be made by the Top 20 Committee.

PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES – Procedures provide historic information, valuable guidance and best practices for the execution of the event. <u>These guidelines are not binding and may be adapted to best fit the planned event.</u>

Invitation Procedure

Conformation: When the final statistics for the previous year have been compiled, the Top 20 English Springer Spaniels are invited to participate in the competition subject to the Top 20 event eligibility requirements. The number of dogs eligible and invited to the Top 20 are based on the dogs actually ranked in the Top 20, regardless of gender, by ESSFTA breed points. Based on total points, there could be a tie with the 20th place dog/bitch. In such a case more than 20 dogs will be invited to the Top 20 Event. In addition, the top five Owner Handled dogs, based on AKC ranking and Top 20 eligibility requirements, are invited to complete in a separate competition.

Performance/Tracking/Hunt/ Field Trial Dogs: Invitations will be sent to top scoring dogs in Agility, Obedience, and Rally and as described in Schedule B. Invitations will be sent to dogs who have achieved a Champion Tracking title or a Master Hunter/MHA title. In addition, the top two High Point Open Dog and the top two High Point Amateur Dogs from the previous year will be invited. The winner of the National Amateur and National Open Field Trial from the previous year will be invited (beginning 2014).

The invitations will be sent by the Top 20 Chairperson/designate and will be addressed to the dog, in care of the dog's owner. A n entry form will be included with the invitation and the owner must enter no later than eight weeks prior to the date of the event

In no event will the invitation be extended to dogs that ranked below the stated placement(s) to increase the number of participants.

An entry fee, the amount of which shall have been determined by the Top 20 Committee and approved by the ESSFTA National Specialty Committee, is to be submitted with the entry form. Dogs who are invited but will NOT appear may pay the entry fee and be entitled to a catalog page, biography and rosette. If a rosette and catalog are to be mailed to the owner of an entered but NOT appearing dog, a mailing fee will be charged.

Each owner has the option of selecting music to be played while the dog is moving in the ring. In order to avoid duplicate musical selections, the choice will be given based on the order in which the entries are received by the Chairperson/ designate.

In addition, the required information for the Top 20 Catalog must be returned to the Top 20 Chairperson/designate no later than the posted date prior to the competition.

Catalog Procedure

Each Top 20 event will have an independent catalog from that of the ESSFTA national specialty and should contain only information pertaining to the Top 20 competition. The catalog will be compiled by the Top 20 Committee Catalog Chairperson. The catalog's cover will have a logo specially designed for the Top 20 Competition and approved by the Top 20 Committee along with the words "Top 20 Year" with the date and location of the event. The size of the catalog will be at least 5 ½" X 8 ½".

Each judge will have a biography printed in the catalog giving a summary of their qualifications and experience in the dog fancy.

All previous years' winners, reserve winners and People's Choice Awards (Conformation, Owner Handled, and Performance) will be listed in the catalog. The listing, by year, will include registered name, owner, and breeder(s).

Optional: One or more page(s) may be included with the final Top 20 participants listed according to their rankings as published by the ESSFTA, #1 through #20 for conformation, #1 through #4 for Performance and a list of the Tracking, Hunting, and Field Trial dogs invited. A foot note, in bold type, would state that "this is NOT the order of judging". Dogs that qualified but are not entered will have their information printed with a notation "not entered".

Optional: In addition, the rules regarding the judging procedure may be included in the catalog as well as a copy of the actual score sheet that will be used by the judges.

Each Top 20 competitor, who paid the required entry fee by the closing date, will be given a one-page catalog layout which contains the following as supplied by the owner: Registered name, call name, owner(s), breeder(s), a brief biography of no more than 150 words in length and a high-resolution photo.

The catalog page will contain the armband number of the dog. Armband numbers are issued in random order as drawn by the show chair/designate.

An optional index with the names and addresses of the dogs' owners may be printed at the end of the catalog but is not required.

Judge Selection Procedure

Judges for the Conformation Top 20 Competition are selected by the Top 20 Committee Chair & National Show Chair unless their involvement would constitute a conflict of interest; in the case of a conflict of interest, the Chairs would delegate this accountability to their co-chair.

1. Each committee member may nominate up to three judges, one in each category (Breeder judge, All-Breed judge and Handler) and forward the names to the Committee Chairperson.

2. The Committee Chairperson will review those judges nominated for eligibility and will discuss the nominations with the National Show Committee Chair. Location and availability will be determining factors in the selection of six candidates – two for each category listed below.

3. The Committee Chairperson will extend an invitation to judge the Top 20. Each judge will be asked NOT to disclose their selection as a Top 20 judge to anyone, including the Top 20 Committee.

4. The Catalog Chairperson, who will be responsible for the creation of the Top 20 Catalog, will be provided biographies and the names of the judges for the event. The names of the Top 20 judges must be kept CONFIDENTIAL until the briefing before the start of the Top 20 Competition.

Stewards

The Top 20 Committee Chairperson will select three non-related people to be ring stewards, one for each judge. The stewards need not be a member of the Top 20 Committee and should not be related to any entered dog. The stewards will NOT be told the names of the judges prior to the start of judging.

During judging, the only communication between the steward and the judge will be confined to questions of procedure, hospitality or comfort.

When a judge has completed his/her scoring of a dog, he/she shall sign their Judge's sheet, and give them to the ring steward for further handling. The steward will not tabulate the scores. As soon as all the judging is completed, each steward will present the sheets to Top Twenty Chairperson/designate for tabulating.

Event Judging Procedure

General Information

Prior to the start of the judging, the Top Twenty Chairperson(s) will convene a mandatory handlers' meeting and distribute arm bands to all participants. All exhibitors will be informed of their exhibition order for presentation. This briefing will be restricted to the dog/handler team. Participants need NOT have their dog at the briefing. Catalog ad placement and therefore arm band numbers will be assigned based on the order in which they were drawn by the Chairperson(s). This information along with the order of judging will be provided, in advance, to the owner(s) and, if possible, the handler of each dog. A chart listing this information will be posted in the handlers' area and ringside prior to the start of judging. It is imperative that the ringside chart be removed prior to the judges entering the room.

Judges will gather approximately 15 minutes prior to the start of judging; the Committee Chairperson(s) will have a meeting with the judges. At this time, the judging procedure will be reviewed and the protocol for judging the dogs according to the AKC Standard for the English Springer Spaniel will be stressed – the entrants are not to be judged against each other. Additionally, the judges will be reminded not to discuss the dogs with fellow judges or stewards. Should a procedural question arise, the judge should direct his/her question either to the Steward or the Committee Chairperson(s) directly or through their steward.

Any impression of collusion between the three judges must be avoided. Judges will be provided with clipboards and score sheets. Each Judge will be assigned a steward to assist the Judge as required. Judges and stewards will then go to their appointed judging station. The steward MUST NOT at any point discuss any dog with the judge.

Once the judging is complete the score sheets will then be collected. Scores from three to ten for each category will be multiplied by the evaluation factor assigned to it, tabulated on an Excel spreadsheet to prevent calculation errors, and then added for a total point score for each exhibition. After judging, score sheet compilations will be emailed to all participants. Ballots for the People's Choice Award will be provided to each audience member. One ballot for each category per person will be collected for the People's Choice Award (Conformation, Owner Handled and Performance). Ballots will be tallied to determine the People's Choice Winners.

The Top 20 Conformation competition is held prior to Best of Breed judging so as not to allow the National Specialty BOB selections to influence the outcome of the Top 20 Competition

Sample Conformation Judging Process 1

Dogs will be judged in groups of three for the hands-on evaluation starting one hour prior to start of the spectator portion of the event. (No spectators are allowed in the room during the hands-on judging). Judges will rotate through each group of three dogs. After judging the dogs will return to the grooming area upon completion of their hands on examination (part one of the competition).

After the social or meal portion of the event, the conformation dogs and their handlers will return to the ring for part two of the judging, the movement segment. There will be a public address system and a Master of Ceremonies. Each judge will be formally introduced to the ringside spectators by the Master of Ceremonies.

Dog/handler teams will enter the ring (as their song selection begins) going around the ring once, ending with a free stack in the center of the ring. Dogs will be asked to do a movement pattern of the judge's choice, ending with a go-around and exiting the ring. The next dog/handler team will enter the ring as their song selection begins to play.

Tiebreaker: In the event of identical total scores, the dogs involved in the tie will be brought back into the ring and rescored by our three judges. The re-judging will include all hands-on categories and the complete movement segment.

Sample Conformation Judging Process 2

MC will introduce all three judges to the audience.

All conformation dogs come in together and go around the ring. After all dogs have completed a go around, the group exits.

Next, each dog comes in individually with their selected music, goes around ring and free stacks in middle. The judge will determine a "first impression" score that will be used to break any ties.

MC announces dog's number to the audience.

Dog goes up onto the ramp and each judge goes over the dog (music is softened) followed by a down and back and go around.

Dog exits, judge scores that dog and the score sheet is turned in and tabulation begins on that dog

The next dog enters and the procedure is repeated until all the dogs are judged.

Performance Dog Exhibition

Upon completion of the Conformation and Owner Handled portions of the event, the performance and field exhibitors and their dogs will gather in their groups for presentation. Each handler/dog team will appear in the catalog order. As their song selection is played the dog/handler team parades and/or may perform a demonstration in the ring; demonstrations should be limited to approximately two minutes.

SCORING

Conformation Scoring

Top 20 Conformation: Each score sheet for each dog from the three judges will be tabulated. The scores will then be added together and the dog with the highest overall score will be declared the winner. The dog with the next highest total score shall be declared the reserve winner.

People's Choice Awards

The People's Choice Awards will be awarded based on the highest total number of votes cast for a single dog on the supplied ballot in each category – conformation, owner handled, and performance.

Announcement Of Winners

Upon concluding the performance dog exhibition, all the conformation dogs will be called back to the ring. They will enter the ring circling once, judges will award the winner, reserve winner, Owner Handled winner, conformation People's Choice Award winner, People's Choice Owner Handled Award winner and People's Choice performance Award winner.

Prizes

Each dog entered in the Top 20 Extravaganza may receive a rosette, the size and color to be determined by the Top 20 Committee. The rosette will be printed with the dog's name, ESSFTA logo, date, location, and Top 20 Competition.

The Top 20 Committee will decide the type of trophy or medallion to be awarded to the Top 20 Winner, Reserve Winner, and the People's Choice winners.

Top 20 Committee

The Top 20 Committee is composed of no more than 12 members. The Committee consists of members of the ESSFTA who must be in good standing with both the American Kennel Club and the ESSFTA. The Chairperson(s) are appointed by the ESSFTA National Show Committee Chair. Top 20 Committee members are selected by the Top 20 Committee Chairperson. Ideally Committee members may not be an owner or breeder of a dog which qualifies for the Top 20 Event. From time-to-time committee members may find that a dog they bred or own will qualify for the Top 20 Event. In these cases, the Chairperson will have the option of (a) keeping the member on the committee or (b) asking the committee member to not serve on the committee for that year. In ALL cases, any committee member who has a dog in the Top 20 event will ABSTAIN from voting on criteria changes which may be brought forward to the committee.

This annual event may have a Co-Chairperson who can serve in the absence of the Chair if necessary. Other positions within the Committee may be appointed by the Chairperson; for example, Catalog, Hospitality, Master of Ceremonies, Treasurer, and Trophy Chairperson may be designated as needed.

PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A PROTOCOL CHANGE (Eligibility and Judge Selection)

Changes may be requested by members of the committee or from ESSFTA members to the Committee Chair. Any requests to change the eligibility or judge selection criteria must be made in writing via standard mail or email to the Top 20 committee. All requests will be brought before the committee and a simple majority vote is required to amend the criteria. A written response will be returned to the requester by the Committee Chair. Any changes made to criteria before June 15th of a calendar year may go into effect for that calendar year. Any criteria changes made after June 15th of a calendar year may NOT go into effect until the next full calendar year. In all cases the criteria change should be made available to the fancy via normal information processes for the National Specialty.

All items described under the “Procedures” section are guidelines and changes are entirely at the discretion of the Top 20 Committee

ADDENDUM A

SCORESHEET FOR TOP TWENTY COMPETITION

Scoring Based on the Official AKC Breed Standard of the English Springer Spaniel

DOG NUMBER _____ Judge _____

Scoring: Assign a value from low (3) to high (10)

I.	Hand on Structure		x 3 =	
II.	Head		x 1.5 =	
III.	Forequarters/Front Assembly		x 1.5 =	
IV.	Hindquarters/Rear Assembly		x 1.5 =	
V.	Coat/ Condition		x 1.5 =	
VI.	Size/ Proportion/Substance		x 1.5 =	
VII.	Movement/ Gait		x 3 =	

TOTAL SCORE

_____ _____

Judge's Signature Date

ADDENDUM B

ESSFTA BREED STATISTICS CALCULATION - A BRIEF HISTORY

The English Springer Spaniel is a striking dog, with beautiful movement and a fluid impressive coat. As such ESS have enjoyed success in the group ring and as Best-In-Show winners. With such success Mrs. Julia Gasow saw a disparity that existed between the success of dogs and bitches in the breed ring. Mrs. Gasow believed that our ESS bitches were great representatives of the breed, but were not earning appropriate recognition for their virtues. Mrs. Gasow held the belief that ESS bitches show careers were limited. With blown coats, or a breeding pending their show career ended. From the book the New complete English Springer Spaniel - copyright 1984 Mrs. Gasow wrote, "A Springer Spaniel female seldom wins Groups and Bests in Show. She is a bit softer in temperament, less aggressive and often lacks the fire and flash of the males. For these reasons, most breeders feel as I do that it is a far greater thrill to win Groups with a bitch, having overcome the challenge of defeating striking males in the breed competition. . . Even if not bred, she is somewhat handicapped twice a year by her semi-annual heat cycles. This causes coat loss and lack of energy, both badly needed in the show ring."

Realizing that the breeds parent club could help remedy this disparity, she approached the ESSFTA. As the conversations continued Mrs. Gasow was instrumental in the development of today's ESFFTA breed statistics. These breed statistics reward Best of Breed Points AND Best of Opposite Sex Points to ESS competing in the breed ring.

Here is an example: In our competition we have (7, 9, (5,5)) with 26 dogs in competition we have five dogs and five bitches competing for Best of Breed. A dog special wins BOB, a bitch special wins BOS and BOW is won by our WB. The point break down is:

Dog Special 25 dogs defeated (26 in competition - 1 itself),
Bitch Special 20 dogs defeated (26 in competition, 7 dogs in regular classes, + 9 bitches in regular classes, + 4 bitch specials defeated).

As this example illustrates this dog and bitch special would remain competitive in ESSFTA breed statistics throughout the year.

ADDENDUM C

Top Twenty Conformation Invitation Criteria

1) The ESSFTA conformation statistics will be used to determine the invitees. The top 20 dogs/bitches will be invited based upon ESSFTA Breed Rankings "Total Points". ESSFTA Total Points include points for Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex wins.
2) The period will be for one calendar year beginning Jan. 1st – Dec. 31st of the previous year.
3) One or more of the owners of the dog MUST be an ESSFTA member that was in good standing for the previous calendar year. All owners, co-owners and dogs MUST also be in good standing with the AKC.
4) Previous years' winners who meet the above criteria will be invited to compete as "exhibition only" and for the People's Choice award. These dogs may enter and perform in the ring but will not be judged or eligible for the Top 20 competition.
5) The Top 20 Committee will invite the top five Owner Handled English Springer Spaniels based on the AKC's official October to October ranking from the previous year.

Top Twenty Performance Invitation Criteria

1) The period will be for one calendar year beginning Jan. 1st – Dec. 31st of the previous year, unless otherwise noted. (See Field Trial criteria).
2) One or more of the owners of the dog MUST be an ESSFTA member that was in good standing for at least six months of the previous calendar year. Only scores/titles earned while an ESSFTA member in good standing with both the ESSFTA and AKC will be considered
3) The ESSFTA performance criteria as defined by competitive event follows;

AGILITY - The top four Agility dogs will be invited. Ranking is determined by evaluating the dog's best 10 QQ runs and the yards per second for each run. The four dogs with the best YPS for the 10 QQ runs will be invited to the Top 20. The top Preferred Agility dog will also be invited using the same criteria.

OBEDIENCE - The top four dogs will be invited by calculating the top three "high combined open and utility" scores from three obedience trials held during the award year. Scores may come from either the A or the B Class or from a combination of scores from both classes.

RALLY - The top 4 dogs will be invited using the top Master level scores.

TRACKING - Any dog earning a CT title during the award year will be invited.

HUNTING - Any dog that earns a Master Hunting Title (MH or MHA) during the award year will be invited.

FIELD TRIAL- The top two High Point Open Dog and the top two High Point Amateur Dogs from the previous year will be invited. The winner of the National Amateur and National Open Field Trial from the previous year will be invited (beginning 2014).