

# *Poised for Success Freestyle Titling Program Guidebook*

*Last Update: July 27, 2019*



### *Mission and Philosophy*

As a Freestyle enthusiast, it is my hope that training and performance in Canine Musical Freestyle is both a source of joy, and a form of art and expression, for each dog and handler team who choose to participate.

I have designed this Titling Program to provide participants with a format that will assist with the development of technical and artistic skills in the discipline of Canine Musical Freestyle, with a goal of enabling dog and handler teams to create their own unique art together.

It is my hope that the tasks included in the Program will challenge teams creatively and artistically, while providing a format that allows handlers to continually discover their own dog's artistic talents and preferences.

- Kristine C. Hammar  
Founder and Owner of  
Poised for Success

### *The Titling Program*

The Poised for Success Freestyle Titling Program is a titling program in Canine Musical Freestyle that can be completed via the Internet, regardless of the amount of space available to the dog and handler team.

For those teams who have access to large performance areas, you are encouraged to use those areas.

However, for those teams who have access only to smaller spaces, perhaps in your own home, this program is designed so you, too, can participate to the fullest!

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### *Who Can Participate?*

All dog and handler teams are welcome to participate in the Poised for Success Freestyle titling program. Puppies, senior dogs, and dogs with special needs or limitations are equally welcome.

Physically challenged dogs and/or handlers are welcome, and modifications to elements of the titling program can be designed upon request, based on the needs of the team.

Although the guidelines always refer to “dogs”, other types of animals, such as cats, may participate if they can safely meet the criteria for each titling option or requirement.

### *Registration*

All dogs need a registration number in order to participate. Please fill out the “Registration Number” form for each dog with whom you plan to participate.

There is a \$5.00 processing fee for each Registration Number.

### *Summary of the Titling Program Structure*

The Poised for Success Titling Program is divided into six levels, which are called “Divisions”. Overture Division is a beginner level title, and Performers Extraordinaire is a champion level title.

<b><u>Division Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>
Overture Division	PFS-O
Melody Division	PFS-M
Harmony Division	PFS-H
Dynamic Division	PFS-D
Master Performer Division	PFS-MP
Performers Extraordinaire Division	PFS-CH

All teams, regardless of prior experience, or titles earned in other Freestyle venues, begin with the Overture Division

Titles in the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions are earned by completing requirements that fall into three categories: Handling, Technical, and Artistry

One leg in Handling, one leg in Technical, and one leg in Artistry are earned at each level to title at each level in these three Divisions. These three legs are submitted separately, although they can be submitted at the same time.

The descriptions of the options and requirements needed for each Leg in the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions can be found in the “Guide to the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions”.

For the Dynamic, Master Performer, and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions, titles are earned through submission of Freestyle routine performances. Details for the Dynamic Division, including description of performance categories, are provided in the “Guide to the Dynamic Division”. Details for the Master Performer and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions will be released in the future.

For more information about the PFS Freestyle Titling Program title offerings, check out this video from the Poised for Success Freestyle Titling Program YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bsWzQpphQU&t=358s>



## *Space Requirements*

There is no set space requirement for submission entries in the Poised for Success Freestyle program.

It is my hope that in this titling venue, participants will explore the different performance space, and filming, options, that are available to them.

If a team only has a living room to work in, that team can create art in that space. If one's dog works well on a patio, or in a yard, that team can explore those options. Some of handlers might have beautiful outdoors spaces where they can film using the amount of space provided by the lens of the camera.

Some teams may have training buildings and videographers, and I encourage those who have that to use those spaces, as well.

In a case where a space is so small that getting the whole team into the picture in the video clips is difficult, please contact us to discuss options such as setting the camera up high to get an "overhead" view of the team.

## *Music*

In the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions, use of music is required where specified, primarily in the Artistry Leg for each Division title. For the Handling and Technical Legs, music is not required unless it is expressly stated that music must be used for a particular task.

However, you may always incorporate music, as long as it is playing so that it is heard by both the dog and handler.

Music may not be set as an overlay in the Overture, Melody, or Harmony Divisions, unless that particular skill is part of a particular option.

In the Dynamic, Master Performer, and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions, music may be added to certain performances as an overlay. See the "Guide to the Dynamic Division" for details.

Please keep music copyright laws in mind. Your video needs to play on YouTube in the United States with the music that you have chosen. If YouTube blocks the music on your video, it cannot be used for submission. I highly recommend doing a test upload with any music that you plan to play to ensure that it will come through in the upload.

Videos may also be uploaded to Vimeo for titling submission. Please contact Kristine directly if you wish to submit your video through any other video platform, to ensure that she will be able to access your video.

You retain ownership of your submission videos at all times – before, during, and after submission.

### *Handler Attire*

For the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions, no particular attire is required for titling submission entries, unless use of particular attire is required to complete a particular option.

Casual clothing that one would normally wear for training is acceptable, or you may choose to wear distinctive attire.

Performance attire is recommended for the Dynamic, Master Performer, and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions, appropriate to the category that you have chosen for your performance submission.

### *Dog Attire*

If you choose, dogs may wear decorative collars, bandanas, or decorated harnesses.

Please ensure that your dog is comfortable in the attire that you choose, and that your dog can move freely and comfortably.

Although such attire is permitted, it is in no way required.

Dogs may perform in flat buckle collars, martingale collars (adjusted so the collar does not tighten on the dog's neck), or without any collar.

No other collars of any type are permitted for titling submissions.

Tags are permitted, as long as they do not interfere with performance in any way.

Dogs may perform in harnesses, as long as the harness does not impede the movement of the dog in any way.

### *Leashes*

Leashes are permitted, but optional, in all categories at all levels. When used, a 4 – 6 foot leash is recommended.

When used, the leash should remain loose, and should not be used to cause the dog to move. When used in Freestyle performance, keep in mind that “the leash is a decoration”.

### *Cues*

One of the foundations of the Poised for Success Freestyle Titling Program is respect for, and allowance of, all cue styles. Therefore, from Overture Division through Performers Extraordinaire Division, the handler always has the ability to use the cue style of his or her choice.

If you have a passion for verbal cues, you may work through all of the Divisions using verbal cues.

If you prefer to use physical cues, including those that support the movement of the dog, you are very welcome to do so.

If it is your choice to use both verbal and physical cues, either alternately or concurrently, that is perfectly acceptable.

Particularly in the case of blind and/or deaf dogs, tactile cues are welcome, as long as the handler allows the dog to respond to the cue by his or her own volition. (Example: Handler touches dog briefly on the side, and removes hand, and the dog spins)

In the “Cues” section of the Handling Leg in the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions, options allow for the handler to focus on the types of cues that he or she wishes to develop, or to explore new ones.

### *Handler Dancing*

Handler dancing is **optional!** If you like to dance along with your dog, you are very welcome to do so. Just take care not to steal the show! If you prefer not to do any dancing, but simply handle your dog through the dance, that is perfectly fine as well!

This is your art – do what works for you and your dog in this regard.

## *Food and Toys*

Food and/or toys may be used to reinforce your dog in all Divisions throughout the progression of the Titling Program.

Typically, food/toys must be concealed from the dog until the task is finished, but there are some options, particularly in many of the options and requirements for the Artistry Legs, where food/toys may be visible to the dog, even in the hand.

Pay close attention to directives in the descriptions of the requirements and options for each Leg in each Division. Where no specific directive is made, food/toys should be concealed from the dog.

## *Safety*

Handlers are urged to keep safety in mind at all times.

- ✚ Props should be stable and strong enough to hold the dog's weight if the dog is putting paws on the prop
- ✚ Dogs should appear confident and comfortable when performing jumps
- ✚ Avoid having dogs jump on hard or slippery surfaces
- ✚ If performing or working outdoors, obey leash laws, and use a leash if working near potential hazards, such as traffic
- ✚ Puppies (under a year old) should not demonstrate jumping options

## *Awards and Ribbons*

Ribbons will be mailed after completion of Legs and Titles.

### Overture, Melody, Harmony, and Dynamic Divisions

- ✚ Q Ribbon for each qualifying Leg
- ✚ Title Ribbon for each Title completed

### Master Performer and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions

- ✚ Q Ribbon for each qualifying Leg
- ✚ Title Award – To be announced

Certificates will be emailed to all participants upon completion of each title in each Division. These can be printed, or shared with friends online.

### *Non Qualifying Entries*

In the event that a submission does not qualify, the handler has the option to fix the portion of the submission that was problematic and submit a re-try.

For the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions, there is no fee if you need to fix up to two errors.

A resubmission fee of \$7.50 (1/2 of a full entry fee) will be charged if three or more options need to be resubmitted in order to qualify.

For the Dynamic, Master Performer, and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions, a resubmission fee of \$7.50 (1/2 of a full entry fee) will be charged for any performances that need to be re-judged.

### *Judging Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions*

In these Divisions, each video clip submitted for each option chosen, or requirement (where applicable), is judged separately, and assigned a "score" of "Good" or "Non-Passing". Your score for each clip is printed on your scoresheet.

The following criteria must be met to receive a "Good" score on your scoresheet for each video clip:

- ✚ All directives written in the description of the option, or requirement, must appear to be attempted.
- ✚ The essential components of the exercise must be successfully completed.
- ✚ The essential components of the exercise must be visible to the judge.
- ✚ Unless permission has been secured prior to, or at the time of, submission, all of the dog and handler must appear throughout the video clip. (A bit of the top of handler's head or bottoms of feet cut off is typically not penalized).
- ✚ If music is required, it must be audible to dog, handler, and judge. (If there is an audio issue that makes hearing the music on the video difficult, contact Kristine to discuss the issue before discarding your clip!)

In addition, the following will cause a "Non-Passing" score for a particular video clip:

- ✚ Dog moves completely out of the video shot during the completion of a requirement or option. This does not apply when the dog is blocked briefly while working with a prop, or circling behind the handler.
- ✚ Dog eliminates while performing a requirement or option.
- ✚ Use of verbal or physical corrections
- ✚ Luring the dog with food or toys, except where expressly permitted
- ✚ No audio on the video (Unless official exemption has been made)

In order to receive a Qualifying Score for a Leg, the following criteria must be met for each Division:

### Overture Division

- ✚ All attempted options and requirements for each Leg must be successfully completed
- ✚ Any video clips that receive a “Non-Passing” score must be re-submitted.
- ✚ Up to two video clips can be re-submitted per entry at no charge

### Melody Divisions

- ✚ All options for each Leg must be reasonably attempted
- ✚ All except one video clip in your entry for each Leg must receive a score of “Good”. If more than one video clip receives a score of “Non-Passing”, those scored “Non-Passing” must be resubmitted, except for one.
- ✚ In a case where a single option consists of more than one distinct part, each part is considered a different “video clip” for scoring purposes.

### Harmony Division

- ✚ All options for each Leg must be reasonably attempted
- ✚ For the Handling and Technical Legs, all except one video clip in your entry for each Leg must receive a score of “Good”. If more than one receives a score of “Non-Passing”, all clips that scored “Non-Passing” must be resubmitted, except for one.
- ✚ For the Artistry Leg, all except two video clips in your entry must receive a score of “Good”. If more than two receive a score of “Non-Passing”, all clips that scored “Non-Passing” must be resubmitted, except two.
- ✚ In a case where a single option consists of more than one part (example: two floor patterns with transitions must be demonstrated), each part is considered a different “video clip” for scoring purposes.

## *Judging Dynamic Division*

In the Dynamic Division, each full performance will be judged.

For each performance, in all categories, the dog and handler team will receive a score of: Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or Criteria Not Met for each of the following criteria:

### Handling

- ✚ There is clear engagement and rapport between dog and handler
- ✚ Handling is clear and supportive
- ✚ Cues are clear to the dog
- ✚ The cue style(s) chosen in the performance are appropriate to the dog
- ✚ Props (if used) allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths

### Technical

- ✚ Dog demonstrates fluency and confidence in movements and moves included in the performance
- ✚ Movements and moves allow the dog to perform to his or her strengths

### Artistry

- ✚ Team demonstrates flow in transition from movements to moves (sequencing)
- ✚ Performance space used effectively
- ✚ Handler maintains natural body language, appropriate to the category, throughout the performance
- ✚ Artistic use of transition moves
- ✚ Overall quality of choreography
- ✚ Use of attire, props, decoration (if applicable)

### Category Criteria

This will vary, depending on the requirements of the performance category chosen. See "Guide to the Dynamic Division" for details.

Each requirement for the category will be scored as Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or Criteria Not Met

In order to receive a Qualifying Score for a Leg, the following criteria must be met for each performance in the Dynamic Division:

- ✚ Team must score "Excellent" or "Good" for most of the criteria listed under "Handling, Technical, and Artistry". Up to 4 scores of "Acceptable" are permitted, and one score of "Criteria Not Met" is permitted per Leg.

If props are not used in the performance, that criteria will be scored as "N/A" (Not Applicable), and it will not be factored into the judging.

- ✚ Team must reasonably attempt to meet all Category Criteria for the Performance Category chosen. See the "Guide to the Dynamic Division" for specific Category Criteria for each Performance Category.

Please note that the number of points under "Category Criteria" will vary, depending on the exact requirements for the Performance Category. If you would like a blank copy of the scoresheet for any of the Performance Categories, one can be provided via email, upon request.

- ✚ One score of "Acceptable" is permitted for Category Criteria, the remainder of the points under Category Criteria must receive a score of "Excellent" or "Good".

### *A Note About Judging*

Every effort will always be made to judge according to criteria as written for each option, or requirement, or Performance Category. However, keep in mind that Canine Musical Freestyle always has a subjective element to it.

All decisions by the judge are final, unless a procedural error has been made, but explanation will always be provided for "Non-Passing" or "Criteria Not Met" scores.

## *Video and Submission of Entries*

Participants have two options for creating video submissions:

- ✚ Video Compilation
- ✚ YouTube Playlist

### **Video Compilation**

You can create a video compilation on your own video editing software.

If possible, please create a title page for your video that includes:

- ✚ Your name (first name is fine)
- ✚ Your dog's name
- ✚ Division (Overture, Melody, etc.)
- ✚ Name of Leg (Handling, Technical, or Artistry)

Example:

Kristine and Bandit  
Overture Division  
Handling Leg

In addition, please label each clip with the name that is printed for that option in the "Titling Requirements" for that Division. This can be done as a caption on the video, or as a title page that precedes the clip.

A separate compilation should be created for each Leg within a Division, as each one is a separate submission.

### **YouTube Playlist**

You can create a "Playlist" through YouTube.

If you choose to create a Playlist, please include the following in the Playlist title:

- ✚ Your name (first name is fine)
- ✚ Dog's name
- ✚ Division (Overture, Melody, etc.)
- ✚ Name of Leg (Handling, Technical, or Artistry)

Example:

Kristine and Bandit Overture Handling

Or

Kristine and Bandit Overture Division Handling Leg

In addition, please use the name that is printed for that option in the “Titling Requirements” for that Division as the title of each individual clip in the Playlist.

A separate Playlist should be created for each Leg within a Division, as each one is a separate submission.

## **Video Guidelines**

### **Camera Setup**

When you set up your camera or device, please look at your filming space carefully to ensure that all of you, and your entire dog, are going to show in the video.

This is especially important when filming for “Artistry” legs, and for full performances when you get to the Dynamic Division and beyond.

It is fine if a little bit of your feet are cut off, or the tippy top of your head, but the picture shown in your submission clips should be a “full picture”.

If your working space is too small to allow for you to do this, please contact us to discuss modifications, camera setting strategies, or possible exemptions to this rule.

If using a device, such as a Smartphone or iPad, please set the device so it records the video with the longer sides horizontal. Try to avoid the long, thin videos that are taken when the device is set with the longer sides vertical. This is rarely an issue with a regular digital camera.

### **The Performance Clip**

Unless otherwise indicated, you may choose to approach a particular exercise with a stationary start or a moving start.

For instance, if your dog is performing a spin in center position, you may begin with you and your dog standing still, cue the spin, and allow the dog to carry out

the spin, and then praise your dog and reinforce.

Or, you may be moving backward, and your dog moving toward you, cue the spin while in motion, pause while your dog carries it out, and then either remain stationary, or resume your movement as you praise, reinforce your dog.

It is fine if your clip includes delivery of a treat or toy to your dog, but be sure that the exercise is fully completed before reaching into your pocket for the reinforcer.

### **Performance of Multiple Options**

In a case where you and your dog will be completing multiple options within a category, you may choose to film each option as an individual clip, or to film multiple behaviors in a continuous video clip.

For example, if one category requires the dog to perform three Freestyle behaviors, you could film each one individually, and include them in your compilation or Playlist as separate clips.

Or, you could have the dog carry out the three behaviors in one video clip, which may include reinforcers in between each behavior, and submit the video as one continuous video.

Please note that even in a case where multiple options are performed in a single video clip, each is considered a separate "video clip" for judging purposes.

### **To Enter**

Complete the "Entry Form" and submit payment for the entry through Paypal.

Email the Entry form and video link, or playlist link, to: [pfsfreestyle@gmail.com](mailto:pfsfreestyle@gmail.com)

### **Judging**

Unless otherwise indicated, all entries will be judged, and you will receive results via email, within one month of receipt entry.

## *Get Started, The Next Step*

See the following supplemental documents for Titling Requirements and Options:

- ✚ Guide to the Overture, Melody, and Harmony Divisions
- ✚ Guide to the Dynamic Division
- ✚ Guide to the Master Performer and Performers Extraordinaire Divisions  
(To be Released in the Future)

These documents can be found on the Poised for Success Freestyle Web Page under the tab, "Musical Freestyle Titling Program"

<http://www.poisedforsuccessfreestyle.com/>

These documents can also be found under the "Files" tab in the Poised for Success Freestyle Facebook Group.

Please read through the requirements and options for each category in those documents very carefully. If you are unsure of what is needed for submission, please ask through email:

[pfsfreestyle@gmail.com](mailto:pfsfreestyle@gmail.com)

Or on our Facebook Group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PoisedForSuccessFreestyle/>

I am happy, at any time, to take a look at an individual clip of a particular requirement or option to let you know if it meets the requirements necessary to qualify in that category for that Division, and what changes need to be made if it does not.

Please, jump on in. And .... Enjoy! I look forward to seeing the art that you and your dog create together!