

[This document is a proposed version, not yet approved.]

Basenji Club of America Code of Recommended Practices

***Introduction:** As a breeder, exhibitor or owner, the basenji enthusiast is often confronted with decisions and courses of action which can impact not only the health and well-being of their own dogs, but also the continued preservation of the basenji breed as a whole. In a sincere effort to aid both the novice and the long-time fancier, the BCOA hereby sets forth these voluntary guidelines, representing a distillation of the personal codes of conduct and valid concerns of its members.*

Article I — Personal Conduct and Sportsmanship

The term “sportsmanship” might be strictly defined as the art of playing fair; accepting defeat without complaint and victory without boastfulness. Personal conduct is an important aspect of “sportsmanship” but may go a step further as it pertains to behavior not only strictly regarding competition. Members should make themselves familiar with the AKC’s Code of Sportsmanship, as well as, the following additional concepts of sportsmanship and conduct. These, when practiced, can enhance the pleasures of participation and the respect afforded the Basenji Fancy. These concepts will also work to ensure the longevity of our Fancy today and into the future.

Section 1: Personal Conduct and Sportsmanship. Every Basenji enthusiast should conduct him/herself at all times in such a manner as to reflect positively on the sport of purebred dogs, including but not limited to breeding, conformation, and performance events in general and on the Basenji breed in particular.

A. When in public, competitors and fanciers are encouraged to conduct themselves in a fashion that is complementary to our sport. Though there may be times when you are frustrated (competition can be stressful) always consider what your demeanor communicates. At no time should you berate assistants, dog owners, fellow competitors, members of the public or treat animals in a way that might be considered cruel or with unnecessary harshness. If your conduct is videoed and made public and it might reflect poorly on you or our sport: *don’t do it.*

B. Principled competitors act with grace both in triumph and defeat. Malicious criticism (hurtful or mean-spirited comments) should never be made in public forums or social media. Avoid derogatory comments meant to devalue wins or standing of a competitor or breeder.

C. In the course of any contact, whether in person, by telephone, by mail, email, social media, or other communications, an ethical breeder should never refer in a derogatory way to the methods, animals, or reputations of other breeders or competitors.

D. *At no time* should you misrepresent your dog as a Service Dog, Emotional Support Dog or Therapy Dog for personal convenience or gain. This is not only disrespectful of those with true disabilities, but it is unethical and unlawful.

E. Responsible Basenji owners should always make certain that their dogs are safely and properly contained and cared for when on show or performance competition grounds, within vehicles and/or at any lodging where you are staying. This includes, but is not limited to making sure that they have clean crates or pens, adequate water and food, and maintained in appropriate conditions (including heated or cooled as necessary) to ensure their well-being. Dogs should not be left unattended in situations where predictable harm may occur, such as in a grooming noose on a table, or inside vehicles without proper cooling gear or necessary warmth.

F. You alone are responsible for cleaning up after your dogs: ***Anywhere, Anytime.***

G. Whether in the ring, on the field, seated on the sidelines, traveling, staying at hotels/motels, or dining out, ***do not*** be so rude as to leave your animals unattended to inflict damage to the environs or excessive noise on other people (or dogs!).

Section 2: Mentorship. When requested to do so, experienced breeders, competitors, and exhibitors should willingly engage the novice and offer advice, constructive criticism, or assistance with problems. However, keep in mind that unsolicited “constructive criticism” can cause great pain.

A. **Mentor’s Role.** Mentors should be open and honest with prospective mentees. Knowledge should be shared freely with no expectations. Mentors should also be honest about what they are able and/or willing to offer. When offering critiques, mentors should be careful to avoid derogatory statements.

B. **Mentee’s Role.** Mentees must be aware and appreciative of the effort and time given by the mentor. Information should be received gracefully and with respect for the mentor’s experience. Effort should be made to consider and internalize what has been imparted. While the mentor’s efforts must be respected, mentees have no quid pro quo obligation. A show of gratitude for the mentor’s contribution is appreciated.

Article II — Lifetime Responsibility

Section 1. Responsible Basenji owners should familiarize themselves with the *AKC's Care and Conditions of Dogs Policy*. It is also the responsibility of the responsible owner to provide for dogs in their care:

- Proper nutrition, shelter, grooming, bedding and general good husbandry
- Proper vaccinations and veterinary care
- Basic training such that they and their charges maintain a positive public image, including but not limited to cleaning up after their dogs and not allowing them to be a public nuisance.

Section 2. A responsible breeder should be willing to take back, rehabilitate (if possible) and replace in a suitable home any dog they have bred and sold when the original purchaser is unable to keep the dog at any time during the dog's lifetime. Contracts and written agreements should include provisions for the dog being returned to the breeder. If an animal is needed, or expected to be re-homed by the owner, contracts should provide for the mutual agreement between owner and breeder. If an animal is beyond rehabilitation, the breeder should be willing to either advise humane euthanasia or be responsible for such if the owner is unwilling or unable to do so.

Article III — Breeding Considerations

Section 1: Prerequisites. The first and foremost consideration should always be the desire to preserve and advance the breed.

A. Every breeding should be done selectively, incorporating:

- Careful analysis of the temperament of the sire and dam, including all possible research into the temperaments in their individual backgrounds, including dogs within the pedigree, both vertical and horizontal.
- Careful study of canine anatomy, the breed standard, the breed's history and function and the basic principles of genetics. Application of these studies through thorough research of the pedigrees of the prospective parents.

- Familiarity with and adherence to the BCOA's recommended tests and screening as outlined in the *Health Statement*

B. Ethical breeders should discuss openly and honestly the genetic and physical concerns that have occurred in their lines. This should include the potential of these concerns to be inherited, especially in cases where testing can indicate only that a dog is currently free of a health concern, but cannot determine the genetic status or potential heritability of the issue. Stud dogs or brood bitches who produce offspring of consistently poor quality should have their value as breeding stock seriously reconsidered.

- Dogs with health concerns known or believed to be genetic in nature should be used cautiously.
- Dogs with issues for which there is a reliable DNA test should be used wisely and with the best interest of the breed in mind.
- Dogs with health concerns for which there is NO reliable way of determining genetic status should be used only under the greatest of care or possibly omitted from breeding.

C. Breeders are encouraged to join the AKC Breeder of Merit and/or the Bred with H.E.A.R.T programs and to participate in breed related and breed-health related research.

Section 2: Legal Requirements. Every potential breeder must be aware that the American Kennel Club requires (AKC *Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline* [6-1-2018], Chapter 4) that all breeders keep accurate and thorough breeding records and follow such practices as will preclude any possibility of error in identification of an individual dog, or doubt as to the parentage of a particular dog or litter. Contact AKC as to what are considered acceptable methods of identification.

Section 3: Health and Husbandry. All dogs and bitches should receive routine health checks and/or be examined by a veterinarian before breeding to determine that they are healthy and mature enough for this purpose including, but not limited to, brucellosis, heartworm, and fecal exams as applicable. In addition, the following are recommended:

A. Owners of the sire and dam should freely and openly exchange health information. **Breeders should comply with the BCOA's recommended tests and screening as outlined in the *Health Statement*, available on the BCOA website. [<https://www.basenji.org/index.php/health-issues>]**

B. Breeding should be undertaken only when the breeder is in a position to properly care for the bitch and litter. The breeder should recognize that it may be necessary to house offspring for some time and that they must be prepared to provide suitable facilities and socialization during this period.

C. Bitches should preferably not be bred before the age of two years. The health and wellbeing of the bitch and any litter she may produce should always be of primary concern. Her welfare should always be taken into account in any breeding decisions.

D. Stud dogs should be bred selectively. The stud owner should discourage the individual who wants to breed a bitch unsuitable for the stud in question and explain why. Breeding of strictly pet quality animals and/or those with no demonstrable contributions to the breed should be strongly discouraged.

E. The stud owner also should ascertain that the owner of the bitch has the required knowledge and the necessary facilities to care for the puppies for however long it may take to properly place them.

Article IV — Selling and Sales Practices

Section 1: Contracts and Agreements. Problems resulting from sales and sales agreements are perhaps the greatest source of dissatisfaction and ill will in any breed. It is important that the seller be honest with both the buyer and themselves.

A. As part of sale or placement, individuals doing so should make certain that dogs and/or puppies are registered with the AKC. Every person who sells or places a dog should provide the new owner a signed transfer or signed agreement between buyer and seller documenting the transfer of ownership as needed (*AKC Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline* [6-1-2018], Chapter 4, Section 5).

B. All agreements and stipulations should be recorded either in sales contracts or by a simple written exchange of mutual expectations. The AKC will only uphold a legal judgment obtained in a court of law; it cannot adjudicate sales contracts or agreements.

C. Breeders should be knowledgeable about and comply with all local, state, and federal laws.

Section 2: Breeding Arrangements. Breeding arrangements are often confusing; they are best written and agreed upon by both seller and buyer in advance. Breeding arrangements should be a part of the sales contract/agreement as described in Section 1.

A. Occasionally, a breeder feels it is necessary to sell an animal of such superior quality that it is desirable for the breeder/seller to maintain said animal as part of a well-planned, ongoing breeding program. In such instances detailed and clearly-worded contracts are a must.

B. It is strongly advised that all puppies the breeder has determined should not be part of a breeding program be sold on spay/neuter contracts and/or with an AKC Limited Registration.

C. Breeding arrangements should never be required which compel the companion buyer to breed a dog or bitch without prior contractual arrangements. Breeders must acknowledge that most companion buyers are not familiar with dog breeding practices and must take care to explain their requirements carefully prior to the sale of any puppy.

Section 3: Educational Responsibility. The ethical breeder/seller should be honest in informing the prospective buyer of the Basenji breed's and the individual dog's particular personality and idiosyncrasies. They should also disclose all breed health concerns as well as each specific animal's physical, mental, and nutritional needs and history.

Section 4: Conditions of Sale. Prices of dogs and puppies should not be dropped for the purposes of expediting sales. This is not the practice of an ethical breeder.

A. No puppy should be released or shipped to a new home without having received vaccinations in accordance with veterinary recommendations and seen by a veterinarian. New owners should be provided with a three-generation pedigree, complete inoculation records including booster due dates, the name and address of the seller's veterinarian as applicable, and complete written instructions on diet and care.

B. Any health guarantee should allow the buyer a specified period of time (usually two weeks) within which to have the puppy examined by a veterinarian of their choice.

C. Ethical breeders do not consign Basenjies to pet stores, animal brokers, or commercial kennels. The practice of direct online sales is not one of an ethical breeder. This is not to be confused with meeting prospective buyers via the internet.

D. All breeders should be careful in the placement of their stock and should not knowingly deal with unethical persons. An ethical breeder should not sell to nor, aid in procuring a Basenji for any person who they have reason to believe will not provide the proper care and environment, or who may use the dog in any fashion that is detrimental to the breed. Sales conducted exclusively over the internet or social media should be done with the strictest of caution. Whenever possible,

breeders are strongly encouraged to meet buyers in person: All sales must be conducted in compliance with federal, state, local and all applicable laws.

Article V — Advertising

Section 1. All advertising of puppies, adults or stud service should be factual and without misleading implications. Likewise, advertising of show wins and breeding records should be neither false nor misleading.

Section 2. All advertising and promotion, written, oral, or electronic/online should be confined to the specific aspects of the seller's stock and should not allude in a derogatory way to the methods, animals or reputations of other breeders.

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