

“...THE JUDGES ARE THERE TO

HELP. THEY RECEIVE NO PAY

FOR THEIR HOURS OF

CONSCIENTIOUS LABOR.

THEY ARE HUMANS WITH A

STANDARD SET OF FAULTS TOO,

BUT ARE WORKING AS

AMBASSADORS OF THE MCA.”



NATIONAL HEAD JUDGE

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SHOW PARTICIPANT PROTOCOL

Judging Mustangs at MCA National Shows is a passion for me. I have attended more than four dozen such shows as a judge at all levels. It has been fun, rewarding, and instructive. I thoroughly enjoy seeing classic, modified, and late model Mustangs and talking with their owners—learning as much about them as the cars they so proudly display. The friends my wife Gail and I have made over the years are a treasure to us both.

Lately, though, I have been disturbed by a number of incidents wherein a few participants have treated judges with a venomous attitude that is difficult to understand. These folks, disappointed with their award, or lack thereof, have vented their wrath on MCA staff, officers, judges, or anyone else who is handy. At a recent show, as an example, a Mustang owner singled out a young lady who had judged his car and berated her so badly after the awards ceremony that she was in tears. Others often complain about how their car was classified, believing that their car “could have done better” in another class. After one such a complaint, Wally Short, our National Head Judge wrote to our Head Classifier, Lark Bragg, and said, “Many folks blame the classifier, but I challenge them to go out on the front line for eight hours in all kinds of adverse weather and do what you do. You have to know all types of Mustangs, be a diplomat and a persuader of some stubborn Mustangers to put their car in the most correct class. Before people criticize the Classifiers, they should ‘walk the walk and talk the talk.’ If they do that they would quickly realize you have the toughest job at the shows.”

There are two areas that are difficult for the average show attendee to understand. The first of these is the Modified Classes. Some cars are slightly modified from original, and therefore wouldn’t do well as a modified Mustang. On the other hand they differ from the original enough not to do well in a Concours class. These in-betweeners then go in one of the driven

classes. The second difficult area is that of the Daily Driven and Occasional Driver classes. These two classes represent about half of the entrants. The classes are highly competitive inasmuch as there are few awards in each class. There may be as many as 20 Mustangs in one of these classes and there are only first, second, and third awards (with some ties) given. We see many extremely nice cars, which do not place. The judging rules for concours classes, on the other hand, allow each entrant to receive an award if the car merits it in stiff authenticity competition.

There is a judges’ meeting at every National show, and often one or more seminars for judges. At these meetings the judges are always admonished to treat each car and its owner with respect, never to sit in the car, never to smoke while judging, never to lift carpets or trunk mats, never to make disparaging remarks about a car or its components, and always to be a diplomat for MCA. Some of us have heard these and a host of other do’s and don’ts many times, while new judges may be hearing these admonitions for the first time. Yet, we judges are not infallible. We make mistakes, hopefully not major ones. We will not knowingly offend a participant.

One might well ask, “Then why not hold meetings for participants wherein the protocol for showing of Mustangs could be outlined, particularly for those who believe that they are entitled to an award?” And yet, I know that the vast majority of the men and women who show their cars are proud of their Mustangs, know how to treat others, and like me, are there to have a good time, learn more about Mustangs and the people who own them.

Remember, the judges are there to help. They receive no pay for their hours of conscientious labor. They are humans with a standard set of faults too, but are working as ambassadors of MCA. Remember the “Golden Rule”—Please treat all judges and other show officials as you would like them to treat you and your Mustang.

Allen Stewart

ALLEN STEWART
Head Judge
3rd-5th Generation

