



**TOP TWENTY INVITATIONAL  
RULES, INFORMATION & GUIDELINES**

(last updated 3.5.25)

**I. General**

The Top 20 Invitational is a charitable fund-raising event, sponsored by the Irish Setter Club of America Foundation, Inc. The mission of the Foundation is to provide a continuing source of funds to develop and enrich the understanding and fostering of the well-being of Irish Setters through education and scientific research.

The Top 20 Committee shall be made up of the Foundation Officers and Board of Directors who shall appoint a Top 20 Chairperson from said board. The chairperson shall appoint a statistician with approval of the Foundation Chair.

**II. Information and Guidelines**

- A. Purpose: To encourage the showing of Irish Setters in conformation classes, and to provide an educational experience for judges, exhibitors, breeders, and fanciers. This event will provide a special recognition to those Irish Setters with the most outstanding records, as well as their breeders, handlers, and owners. It will also provide incentive to strive for Irish Setters excelling in structure, intelligence, type, soundness and good health.
- B. Statistics and Eligibility: There are no eligibility requirements other than being named among the final Top 20 Irish Setters for conformation in Breed Standings and All-Breed Standings.
- C. The Top 20 standings are based on show results provided by the AKC and obtained from the AKC Online Store. The tabulations are collected for shows beginning with the first show in January and ending with the last show in December in each year. The Top 20 Chairperson will be responsible for collecting the final standings from the AKC. The standings and scores are based on Breed Points and All Breed Points only with changes in standings to be made when there is a notification from the AKC of an error.
  - 1. All Irish Setters, including any and all ties through the 20<sup>th</sup> position will be invited. Death of a Top 20 candidate will not change the standings. In the instance that two Irish Setters are tied for one Top 20 position both will receive the ranking even if the total count goes to 21 or higher.
  - 2. Based on AKC's Reports, the Top 5 National Owner-Handled Series Irish Setters (Breed Standings)

will be invited to compete in the ISCAF Top 20 Competition. Current Rules and Guidelines will apply. Duplication of Breed Standing and All-Breed Standings and NOHS Standings DO NOT AFFECT THOSE INVITED TO COMPETE. Only the Top 5 NOHS are eligible.

- D. The uniqueness of the event: The event offers all who attend a chance to view “The Cream of the Crop.” Using a scale of points, each dog is evaluated according to how closely it conforms to the Breed Standard. The Irish Setters are observed from a positive approach; they are not fault judged. The event is educational, promoting discussion of the Standard, and encouraging the exchange of ideas.
- E. The judges: Selection of the three judges will be made by a nomination/vote of the owners of the Top 20 Irish Setters. Letters will be mailed to the first owner of record, as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, and owners and co-owners may decide together which judges to nominate. All judge nominees will reside in the ISCA Region that is hosting the event. Owners will vote for one person from each of the following categories. The statistician will count the top 20 judges ballots. Ties for Top 20 judges will be resolved by the statistician drawing between the tied names.
  - 1. Handler. A Professional Handler, past or present, having at least ten years’ experience.
  - 2. Breeder. An established Irish Setter Breeder or an established Irish Setter Breeder that is also an AKC-Approved judge, who has been breeding for at least ten years.
  - 3. Multi-Breed AKC-Approved Judge. An AKC-Licensed Judge approved to judge Irish Setters and at least ten other breeds in any group.
- F. Judges may include anyone eligible to judge but a member of a judge’s household may not show in the Top 20.
- G. The statistician will forward the name of the person with the highest number of votes (in each category) to the Top 20 Chairperson so they can determine eligibility of that person. If the person with the highest number of votes is ineligible or unavailable, the statistician will forward the name of the person with the second highest number of votes. This will continue until one judge is secured in each category.
- H. Scoring and evaluation: Each participating Irish Setter is individually evaluated by each judge, using a point scale on a score sheet. Half points may be given at the judges’ discretion. Score sheets will be tabulated by the Top 20 Chairperson and two other ISCAF Board Members, appointed by the Chair of the Foundation Board. The scores for each Irish Setter are tabulated in the following manner:
  - 1. The scores for each dog from each of the three judges are tabulated, added together, then divided by three, to determine the “Total Average Final Score.”
  - 2. In the event of a tie, the tabulators will determine a winner by consulting the “Average Placement Score” given by the judges. The Average Placement Score is the judge’s first impression of a dog prior to examination, and is based on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being the highest score. This score is ONLY USED TO BREAK A TIE, and is tabulated by adding the three Average Placement Scores together, and dividing by three, to determine the “Total Average Placement Score.”
  - 3. The Irish Setter with the highest “Total Average Final Score,” or in the event of a tie, the highest “Total Average Placement Score,” is the winner. If two dogs have the same “Total Average Final

Score” and the same “Total Average Placement Score,” there will be two Top 20 Winners. The winner of this event will not be announced until the evening of the Awards Dinner. The winner will be announced by the Top 20 Chairperson.

4. Upon the compilation of the ballots and the winner announced, all judges’ score sheets will be destroyed.
5. A People’s Choice Award will be selected from one of the Top 20 contenders. It will be selected by ballot at the conclusion of the Top 20 showcase event. Each ticket holder will be entitled to one voting chip per ticket. Voting chips will be placed in each contender’s designated collection vessel at the conclusion of the showcase. The People’s Choice voting chips will be counted by the event committee (minimum 3 people). The winner of the People Choice Award will be announced on the evening of the Top 20 dinner. In case of ties, each will be awarded “The People’s Choice Winner” Top 20.

### **III. Procedures**

- A. Notification. Upon obtaining the Top 20 standings from AKC records, the Top 20 Chairperson will mail a letter to the owners of the Top 20 Finalist, advising them of their qualification for this event. There is an Entry Fee of \$200.00 that must be returned within thirty (30) days of notification, with the Entry Profile Sheet and Judge Ballot Form that accompany the letter. Should the Chairperson receive less than 50% of the possible entries at the conclusion of the 30 day notification period, the event will be cancelled for that year and the entry fees refunded. The entry fee entitles the participant to 2 entrance tickets, VIP seating, 1 Top 20 Rosette and 1 Top 20 Gift, a two-page catalog spread, two Top 20 Catalogs and the option to purchase up to four (4) discounted meals. Letters will be mailed/emailed to the first owner of record, as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, and owners and co-owners may decide together which judges to nominate. All original entry documents will be destroyed 60 days after the Event. Top 20 Entry Forms will be placed on the ISCA and ISCAF websites in case the physical packet is lost in the mail. After the packets are mailed/emailed a follow up e-mail will be sent to the first owners to ensure the packet has been received. All Top 20 Photos submitted will be returned to the Owner within 30 days of the event.
- B. Catalog – A catalog, prepared exclusively for the Top 20 Event, will be available for purchase just prior to the scheduled starting time of the event. Contents of the catalog include a two-page spread highlighting each dog in the Top 20, score sheets, judging material, and a profile of each judge. (Beginning 2019) All dogs participating in the Celebration for Success will receive a bio space in the catalog (limited to 50 words).
- C. Armband numbers will be generated at random and will be published in the Top 20 Catalog. At the conclusion of the hands-on judging, the stewards will place all score sheets in an envelope marked “Score Sheets.” Tabulation of ballots will be completed on the night of the event with the results placed in an envelope marked “Winner Top 20.” All Score Sheets, both individual and composite, will be placed in one envelope and locked in the hotel safe or deposit box. Only the Chairperson of the Top 20 or the Foundation Chairperson will have access to this envelope. Once the showcase portion of the event is concluded, the envelope marked "Winner Top 20" will be handed to the emcee for announcement that evening. Any and all documents will be returned to the Top 20 Chairperson to be destroyed along with entry documents.
- D. Prizes – The winner of the Top 20 Invitational will receive a Special Recognition Award. In addition, the first owner of record of the Top 20 Winner receives a Top 20 Winners Pin. The Winner of the People’s

Choice will receive a special Rosette printed with "Winner People's Choice". Each entered dog will receive a Top 20 Gift and a Rosette. The Rosette will be inscribed with the dog's name, the date of the event, and the names of owners and breeders. The Top 20 participants and winner will be allowed to purchase additional Gifts and Rosettes but orders are limited to the breeders and owners of record at the time of the event. Replacement Gifts or Rosettes must be requested in writing and sent to the Foundation Board.

**IV. Celebration for Success**

- A. The Top 5 dogs for each of the venues or classes listed below will be eligible to be recognized at the Top 20 Event. They will have to submit an entry and check in just prior to the start time of the event to be presented.
- B. Venues or Classes
  - 1. Amateur Field CH
  - 2. Open Field CH
  - 3. Agility MACH
  - 4. Agility PACH
  - 5. Obedience OTCH
  - 6. Rally RACH
- C. The Top 5 dogs will be invited based on AKC Reports and Club Records from the previous year.
- D. A letter of invitation will be sent to the first owner of record of each dog.
- E. The ISCAF Board of Directors will set the criteria for this Celebration for Success

**V. Celebration of Top 5 Junior Handlers**

- A. The Top 5 Junior Handlers will be eligible to be honored at the Top 20 Event. Each Junior will be formally invited to participate and will need to submit their participation form prior to the event as instructed on the form. This celebration event will occur during the intermission following the Top 20 Showcase portion of the evening.
- B. There will be no fee to participate in this event.
- C. The Junior does not have to be a member of the Irish Setter Club of America to participate.
- D. The Top 5 Juniors will be invited based on the AKC Reports and Club Records for Irish Setters from the previous year (2024).
- E. A letter of invitation will be sent directly to the Junior Handler.

**VI. General**

- A. Every attempt should be made to have the event at the National Specialty but in a different location than the regular show.
- B. There will be a general admission charge for those spectators not attending the Top Twenty Dinner.

- C. All Top Twenties should be Semi-Formal; Men in business suit or Tuxedo and women appropriately attired in Cocktail/Evening dress.
- D. Conversations should be kept at a normal level. No flash photography is permitted until after judging is completed. Music may be played at a comfortable level.
- E. No photographs shall be taken of the entrants with the Judges until after the Official Photographer has taken his/hers.
- F. Complete information on the event will be placed on the ISCA and ISCAF websites.
- G. A description of the procedure shall be placed in the Top 20 catalog in order to educate the public.
- H. These Rules, Information and Guidelines may be changed no more than annually by the Foundation Board.