

Show Time

Your cat doesn't have a pedigree, but you think he would do well at a cat show. Find out how to enter one near you.

Wendy Bedwell-Wilson

When you and your cat are ready, sign up for your show debut. As early as possible, contact the entry clerk to obtain the forms. Complete them, provide medical information if necessary and get ready for the big day.

"When somebody sends an entry form, they will receive confirmation that it has been received and processed," Tartaglia said. "If the cat owner sends it well in advance, he'll get confirmation before the show."

To get Tiger looking his best, he'll need a good grooming session. Before the show, Vandre recommended that you bathe your cat and clip his nails. "Get him all pretty," she said. "After all, it is a fashion show."

Once you arrive at the show, check in with the clerk and find your cat's cage, designated by a number. Put up your cage curtains (a cat-show must to give your cat privacy), and look over the schedule. To ease a first-timer's nerves, the master clerk can connect you with a mentor.

"Mentors will help newbies with the show," Vandre said. "After you've done an hour or so in the show with them, you'll know what you have to do and where you're supposed to be at what time."

Depending on the show, your cat will pass through four to eight rings, or judges. In each ring, the expert will look at your cat's beauty and temperament and award him points. The cat with the most points in that ring wins a rosette.

Even if your cat is not a winner, you are sure to find a lot of fun, Vandre said. "Everybody in the cat show is there because they love cats."