

2/3 SEASON POINTS ANALYSIS -

We've arrived at the end of December – two-thirds of the way through the show season. While the analysis for the top of the standings is provided, most interest is where will the bottom be for the top 25 in championship, kittens, and premiership. First, let's analyze the impact of the National Show on standings overall. Then we'll go over each competitive category's potential year-end requirements. Since this is based on only 2/3 of the show season, the predictions are the ones with the most likelihood of error; however, it usually carries an accuracy of plus or minus 10 percent of the final outcome.

NATIONAL SHOW IMPACT

A lot of people have lamented over the fact that only the cats at the National Show would be the ones in the top standings. They base this on the fact that in the only two years where there was no International, and the shows that weekend were scored, there were 167 and 106 kittens for those two years, 109 and 99 championship cats, and 76 and 48 premiership cats. This compares to the National show's 215 kittens, 153 championship, and 84 premiership cats present. However, placements were all over the place at the National show: ten different cats got best cat in Championship; nine different kittens got best kitten; and seven different cats got best cat in Premiership. While that certainly did help those 26 different cats and kittens in their quest for a National win, it really wasn't that much help compared to shows like National Capital and Garden State in past years – those same kinds of cats/kittens present were at those shows. However, this year, counts are again down (they've been on a downward slide for as long as I've been looking at statistics - about 9 years). What's interesting is to take a look at those 26 cats/kittens and see how many already are in the top National standings. In Premiership, all but two of those bests went to cats already in the top 10 nationally, with the other two spots going to a cat that finished third in Championship nationally and the other is currently 37th. Only three cats were able to garner more than 1 best, with the current number one getting 6 and the current number two getting 2. The other cat garnering 2 bests was our former third best in Championship. In Kittens, again only one cat wasn't already in the top 20. The cat that got the most was the cat at the top of the standings. Only two kittens got more than one best, and they are currently first (got 5) and second (got 2) respectively in the National Standings. Championship is a little more spread out. Only four cats in the top 15 earned a best. In fact, the top three cats in the final show results in Championship aren't currently in the top 25, including the cat that got the most bests. This is because even with a count as high as 153, there have been several shows during the show season with relatively high counts. Based on this analysis, it doesn't look like a significant impact on the standings – the cats at the top were already at the top – except in Championship – where the cats placing in the top at the National show weren't even in the top spots currently in the national standings.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Over the eight years from 2003 to 2010, cats have averaged a pickup of 2,127 points from the end of December to the end of the show season; but that wasn't the case last year. Last year, that pickup was only 1,912. Last year, from the end of December to the end of the show season, there was at least one show every weekend (with two exceptions) with a

championship count present of over 90, and seven of the 17 weekends were well over 100. If you look at that year vs this year in championship, the counts over the last four months are down about ten percent (except for that National show spike of almost double the count for the previous year). One can assume it will stay down - but I wouldn't if you want to be safe. If you add the average pickup to the current score for 25th, you would come up with an end-season value of 6,197. However, if you factor in that potential decline of 10 percent in the counts, that score would drop to under 6000 (5800). I wouldn't consider myself safe with less than 6,300 just in case something surprising were to happen. It is very safe, however, to assume that this will be another year where the 25th highest scoring cat in Championship will finish with less than 7,000 points, making it the fourth out of the last five years under 7,000. Realistically, with the averages being down thus far, I don't think we'll see more than about an 1,800-point pickup, so that really would peg 25th at 5,870, or under 6,000 points for the first time ever. Again, I don't put a lot of confidence in that number at this point of the season as there are too many variables. I do know that if the counts stay in the low-to-mid 80s for the top count shows till the end, the bottom will bunch up considerably, and a show with just a 15-point net gain for a cat may be meaningful. However, last year, while we only had five shows with counts over 100 at this point in the season, we finished with a total of 13 – that means there were 8 in just the last 17 weeks. That's why I wouldn't feel safe unless I were up around 6,300. One of the BIG variables in this is what the top runners will do if the counts stay in the 80s. Eventually, there will be no point gain to go, and they may just stop showing. That will open up those spots for cats to get point pickups they would not otherwise get, and cause the bottom to rise. Now let's look at the top. This year's top cat has the lowest point total ever, by more than 1,300 points less than any previous top cat at this point. If those show counts go up between now and the end, there would be no incentive NOT to continue showing as there would still be lots of points to pick up, and those 300 point margins between first, second, third, and fourth could easily be overcome. It looks like 8,500 for COTY will be a tough reach. With a race at the top, the likelihood of those cats dropping out is slim. Again, this supports the final result number of less than 6,000. Regarding potential increases in counts, this hasn't been a good year so far for kitten counts – but kitten season is still underway. The likelihood of a big infusion of kittens to raise the counts between now and the end is slim at best. In the past, cats running for a National win in championship could usually expect to “keep” only about 30% of the rings they scored before the first of January. This year, that percentage will be higher, but how much higher is anyone's conjecture. That's what makes predicting a final score at this point so difficult. I'm working off of average/maximum point pickups between now and the end for that prediction. I'll have a much better value when the predictor program comes in with its results at the end of March. It is always good to within less than 1% of the final score value. Again, 6,300 to be safe, but more likely around 5,800 is the prediction at this point. I'll also update this prediction at the three-quarter-season point in early February.

KITTENS

This is the fourth year of scoring with cross-seasonal kittens, and already every one of them has been knocked out of the top 25. At the top, the recently deceased KOTY will set the record for the most points ever earned by a kitten with 4,560.80. No other kitten

has ever scored that many points, so it is safe to say he will be the highest scoring kitten not only for this season, but for all past seasons since ring point scoring started in 2001. On the bottom of the top 25, it has rarely looked good to be in 25th place at the end of December unless one is still garnering points and has not aged out. In the past nine years, a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 new kittens (last year) have cracked into the top 25, meaning if you're currently in the top 17 – YOUR IN! Given that the National show is over, only shows coming up for the rest of the year will yield on kitten points. However, we are still in kitten season (this can be seen with the first three weekends in January having entries over 100 for two of those shows). Last year at this point I said that I only saw three kittens on the horizon to knock out current holders of top 25 spots. In fact, eight kittens came up and knocked out cats in the bottom 8 spots (18-25). Based on that, I'm not going to predict the number of kittens capable of passing those currently in the top 10, I'll go back to point predictions. Given the National show, this will be difficult. Right now, the current kitten in 25th place has more points than the cat that finished in that spot last year at the end of the season – and the bottom kitten score went up 208 points between now and the end of the season. I certainly don't see that kind of climb this year, so it may be that all of the current kittens are safe. I certainly wouldn't count on that, but that potential exists. On the average, the bottom of the kitten standings has gone up by 182 points between now and the end of the season. Last year's was the third highest increase, while the year before it was the lowest (68 points). If we assume this year's increase will be a median between those two, we should expect kittens to finish no higher than 2,438, which would mean three to four added to the current standings. My guess is that the top 21 are safe, 22 is iffy, and 23-25 will need some prayer to stay put if they can't pick up points. Given the wild swings caused by kitten season, the predictions in this category have the highest probability of being wrong. Last year, I said that "if you're above 2,260 you're safe." In reality you wouldn't have been safe even if you had 2,299.

PREMIERSHIP

I don't see Premiership this year picking up that many points between now and the end because there have been so few shows with counts over 50. Over the past two years there were ten shows last year and twelve shows the year before with counts over 50 between the start of the show season and the end of December. This year, even with the National show, there have only been seven. In both of those previous years, the number of shows over 50 dropped from 12 in 2010 to 8 in 2011 (of the remaining 17 weekend dates). The resulting point pickups for those two years also showed a considerable drop. For the top cat, it went from 993 points earned in 2010 to 357 points earned in 2011. For the cat in 25th place it went from 1,020 earned in 2010 to 795 earned in 2011. Again, I don't see a sudden surge in show counts over 50 for this year for one reason – as in Championship, the kittens feeding into Premiership aren't there this year compared to previous years. Last year, between now and the end of the show season, the top premiership count shows averaged in the high 40s, with only seven having counts in the low 50s (50-52 max) and only one show over 60 (that's out of 17 weeks). This year's counts thus far, not counting the National show, have looked just slightly worse than last year. Therefore it is most likely that the pickup in points between now and the end of the show season will be about the same or slightly less than last year's lowest increases ever. That would put the top cat

in premiership at about 5,620, and the 25th best cat at about 3,230. That would bring our 25th best in with the lowest total ever since individual ring scoring started in 2001. Personally, I wouldn't feel safe unless I was over 3,500, but it does look like this will be the record low score for a Premiership national win.

You have my take on things at the 2/3 point. I'll do one at the 3/4 point, but after that is when making assumptions based on placements starts to get dicey, and the only real way to actually predict the bottom score is to predict individual scores for all of the cats, and then look at where the 25th placing cat's score ends up. That's what the predictor program does, and I'll start loading data into it starting with the last week in February (it needs four weeks worth of data).

Numbers Nerd over and out until mid-February.