



WESTMINSTER
KENNEL CLUB DOG SHOW

PRESENTED BY



Dog Show 101

The basic purpose of dog shows, known as Conformation events, is to facilitate the evaluation of breeding stock for use by responsible breeders in preserving and producing the next generations of purebred dogs.

STANDARDS AND JUDGING

Each breed has a **STANDARD**, a written description of the ideal specimen of that breed. Standards are written, maintained, and owned by the national breed club or “parent club” of each breed and are approved by the American Kennel Club. Generally relating form to function, i.e., the original function that the dog was bred to perform, most standards describe the desired general appearance, movement, temperament, and specific physical traits such as height and weight, coat, colors, eye color and shape, ear shape and placement, feet, tail, and more. Some standards can be very specific, some can be rather general and leave much room for individual interpretation by judges. This results in the sport’s subjective basis: one judge, applying their interpretation of the standard, and giving their opinion of the best dog on that particular day.

BEST OF BREED CLASSES AND AWARDS

For 2022, The Westminster Kennel Club is once again a Champions-only competition. To become an AKC champion, a dog must win a total of 15 points at a number of AKC-sanctioned dog shows. All champions will be entered in the Best of Breed competition at Westminster in its corresponding breed or variety.

In the **Best of Breed** competition, the following awards are made by the judge:

Best of Breed (BOB) or Best of Variety (BOV): the dog judged as the best in its breed or variety. This dog advances to the Group competition.

Best of Opposite Sex (BOS): the best of the dogs that are the opposite sex to the BOB winner.

Select Dog and Select Bitch (SEL): After the judge awards the BOB and BOS winners, the champion dog and champion bitch judged next best are awarded Select Dog and Select Bitch.

Grand Championship Points (GCH): Wins at Westminster awarded by the breed judge (Best of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex, Select Dog, and Select Bitch) will earn points toward the AKC’s Grand Championship title. For details, see www.akc.org/grandchampionship.

Awards of Merit (AOM): At the discretion of the judge at Westminster, Awards of Merit may be made to recognize the quality of outstanding entries that are not judged to be either BOB / BOV, BOS or SEL.

TERMINOLOGY

Variety: A division of a breed based on coat, color, or size. For example, Poodles (size: Standard, Miniature, Toy), Cocker Spaniels (color: Black, Parti-Color, ASCOB); Collies (coat: Rough, Smooth).

Breeder: The owner of the dam (mother) when she was bred to produce this dog.

Breeder-Owner-Handler: An individual who bred, owns, and handles that dog.

Owner-Handler: Someone who handles a dog that they also own.

Judge: Someone licensed by the American Kennel Club (AKC) to judge dogs.

Breeder-Judge: Someone licensed by the AKC to judge dogs of their breed.

All Rounder: An individual licensed by the AKC to judge every breed and variety, which numbers 209.

Professional Handler: Someone who handles a dog for a fee.

Conformation: The structure and physical characteristics of a dog.

Stack: The pose itself or the posing of the dog by a handler in its natural stance.

Gait: The action of movement of the dog. Generally speaking, a sound and balanced gait usually indicate proper conformation and structure.

Breed Type: The manifestation of those unique traits and characteristics of a dog that distinguish it as a particular breed.

HOW THE JUDGING WORKS

Competition at The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show consists of three levels. At each level, each competitor is judged in comparison to that breed's Standard.

Judges select their winners based upon their opinion of how close the dog comes to fitting this ideal as described in the Standard. Another important factor in the process is "judging on the day" as dogs, like most performers or athletes, may perform or "show" better on some days than others. This results in the sport's subjective basis: one judge, applying their interpretation of the Standard and giving their opinion on which of the entries may be the best dog on that particular day. Judges may have different interpretations of the standard and may have certain points that they feel are more important than others.

At Westminster, the first level of competition is in the Best of Breed or Best of Variety competition. There, one judge officiates over an entry that consists of dogs of only one breed. The entry may be as few as one dog or as large as more than 50 dogs. All champions are entered in the Best of Breed Class. The Judge selects their BOB or BOV, BOS, SEL, and AOM winners. Only the BOB or BOV winner advances into the next level of competition, the Group.

Currently, 209 breeds and varieties are recognized by the American Kennel Club which are divided into seven groups (Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting, Herding). There, the respective Group judge examines all the dogs and chooses four placements, first through fourth with only the Group winner advances. This takes place in each of the seven groups so that there are seven Group winners that advance into the final round of the competition —Best in Show.

In the Best in Show competition, the judge will examine all seven finalists, first naming the Reserve Best in Show winner and then revealing their selection for the ultimate prize, Best in Show.

To learn how to get started in Conformation, visit AKC's website [here](#).