



WESTMINSTER
WEEK

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PRO PLAN

DOG SHOWS AND HOW THE JUDGING WORKS

The basic purpose of dog shows is to facilitate the evaluation of breeding stock for use in producing the next generations.

JUDGING AND STANDARDS

Each breed's parent club creates a **STANDARD**, a written description of the ideal specimen of that breed. Generally relating form to function, i.e., the original function that the dog was bred to perform, most standards describe 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 his or her interpretation of the standard, giving his or her opinion of the best dog on that particular day. 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.

BENCHED SHOWS

The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show is one of the few benched dog shows in this country. Originally, most shows were "benched" in some fashion, where the entered dogs were required to be in assigned areas (on benches) at all times when not being judged in the ring. This allows for interaction of dogs and their owners with spectators and other owners and breeders as an educational process.

CLASSES

Once again in 2018, the Westminster Kennel Club is offering competition for dogs that are not yet AKC champions. To become an AKC champion, a dog must win a total of 15 points in a number of shows. A dog can win as many as 5 points at any one show, depending on the number of dogs of the same sex entered "in the classes." In those 15 points, a dog must win two "majors," defined as at least 3 points, and those majors must be won under two different judges. To be eligible for entry in the classes at Westminster, a dog must have won at least one major in a previous AKC show. When a dog becomes a champion, it is eligible to be entered directly as a champion in the Best of Breed competition at any show and no longer needs to compete "in the classes."

The following classes are offered in each sex by the Westminster Kennel Club for dogs that are not yet AKC champions:

- **Bred By Exhibitor:** For dogs that are handled by their owner and breeder
- **American Bred:** For dogs born in the United States from a breeding that occurred in the United States
- **Open:** For any dog of the breed

In each sex, after these classes are judged, the dogs that won first place in a class compete again to see who is the best of the winning dogs. The male selected as the best of those class winners is **Winners Dog (WD)** and the female similarly selected is **Winners Bitch (WB)**. These dogs earn points toward their AKC championship title and then advance into the Best of Breed competition with the champions.

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 Winners (BOW): the dog judged as the better of the WD and WB.

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): With the addition of class entries, wins at Westminster awarded by the breed judge (Best of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex, Select Dog and Select Bitch) will win 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, an additional award made to outstanding entries that are not judged to be either BOB / BOV or BOS.

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.

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 indicates 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 is held in three different levels. At each level, each competitor is judged in comparison to that breed's **Standard** (see above).

Judges select their winners based upon 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. Different judges may have different interpretations of the standard, and may have particular points that they feel are more important than others.

At Westminster, the first level of competition is in the **Breed** or **Variety**. There, one judge officiates over an entry that consists of dogs of only one breed. The entry may be only a few dogs or it could be many dogs (more than 40). The judge begins by judging the class dogs and selecting a **Winner's Dog (WD)** and then a **Winner's Bitch (WB)** as described above. Those dogs advance into the Best of Breed competition against the entered champions.

From these dogs, the judge ultimately selects one as **Best of Breed (BOB)** or **Best of Variety (BOV)**. The judge will also select a **Best of Opposite Sex (BOS)** winner, the **Best of Winners (BOW)** award, a **Select Dog** and a **Select Bitch** (see Grand Championship points above), and a number of winners of **Awards of Merit** for additional dogs in competition of outstanding quality.

The BOB or BOV winner advances into the next level of competition, the **Group**. Currently, 202 breeds and varieties are recognized by the American Kennel Club and those are divided into seven different groups (**Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting, Herding**).

There, the **Group** judge examines all the dogs and chooses four placements, 1st through 4th and 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 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**.

HOW THE JUDGING OF JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP WORKS

Junior Showmanship competition is for children ages 9-18 years of age. In this competition, the young people are judged solely on their handling skills independent of the traits of the dog. But while handling, care and responsible ownership are important lessons of Junior Showmanship, so is learning social skills and sportsmanship, as well as the opportunity to bond with one's dog.

These young handlers must demonstrate breed knowledge in presentation of the dog as well as economy of motion. The judge is considering how well the handlers present their dogs with regard to control, teamwork as well as composure and unexaggerated movement. The goal for the Juniors, like the best adult handlers, is to enhance their dog's qualities to the judge without using distracting, unnecessary motions.

At Westminster, each Junior Handler competing has won at least 7 Best Junior Handler awards during a one year qualifying period. The juniors compete in preliminary classes with the top eight advancing to the final competition at Madison Square Garden. Here the best Junior in show is awarded along with 2nd, 3rd and 4th placements and all finalists receive scholarship awards ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 for the Best Junior Handler.