

How dogs are judged, from puppy classes to Best in Show

"THE JUDGING OF DOGS AT AN AKC SHOW" is a leaflet distributed by the American Kennel Club, 51 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010. Slightly changed to fit competition in Dachshunds, the text follows:

As the judge goes over each dog in the ring, he compares it to a mental picture of a perfect specimen of that breed. He judges each dog on:

1. Physical structure (head, teeth, feet, bone structure, muscle tone, size, etc)
2. Condition (proper weight, condition of coat, animation, etc.)
3. Gait - as seen from front, side, and rear.
4. Temperament.

For judging purposes, all dogs are divided by breeds, each breed being again divided into two sexes: dogs and bitches. In each sex there are five regular classes: Puppy, Novice, Bred-By-Exhibitor, American-Bred, and Open. A full description of these classes appears in Chapter 6 of the Rules Applying to Registration and Dog Shows. In each of these classes four ribbons are given: Blue for first, Red for second, Yellow for third, and White for fourth.

When the regular classes in one of the sexes have been judged, all of the first prize winners in these classes are called in to compete in the 'Winners' class in that sex. From that class, the judge picks the best of the sex, which is called Winners Dog or Winners Bitch, as the case may be. A purple ribbon is given for that award. The second best of the sex, called 'Reserve Winners Dog or Reserve Winners Bitch', is awarded a Purple and White ribbon.

The Winners Dog and the Winners Bitch each receive credit for points towards a Championship, depending on the number of dogs and bitches in that breed for that particular geographic area as shown by the point rating schedule in the front of the catalog.

When the AKC has confirmed the fact that a dog or bitch has received 15 points at different shows, under at least three different judges, where at least two of the credits have been for three points or more, the dog becomes a Champion of Record and earns the title of Champion.

Winners Dog and Winners Bitch meet with dogs that have been entered for 'Best of Variety' competition who must be Champions. From these is chosen the 'Best of Breed or 'Best of Variety' (as is the case in Dachshunds, as each coat ends up with a 'Best of Variety' award). In Dachshunds the term 'Best of Breed' can be properly applied only to the one dog remaining undefeated in Dachshund Specialty shows that are held alone or in conjunction with specialty shows of other breeds. In such so-called independent specialty shows, the three 'Bests of Variety' meet, and from them one is chosen as Best of Breed. Now to get back to competition in all-breed or multi-breed shows.

When all breeds have been judged, only one dog in each breed or variety remains undefeated - the one chosen Best. These undefeated dogs are called to compete in their particular Groups - Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, or Non-Sporting. ^{Herding.*} One dog wins each Group.

These ^{seven} ~~six~~ Group Winners meet in the final competition and one is chosen "Best in Show." This dog alone at the end remains undefeated.

This is the end of the AKC leaflet. For the complete rules applying to the procedures described above, refer to 'Rules Applying to Registration and Dog Shows'. Single copies are available from Show Superintendents or The American Kennel Club. See 'The Complete Dog Book' for breed standards. Available from book shops and from Joe Heller's Mobile Pet book supply at dog shows.

* Herding Group has been added since this article was written, making a total of seven groups. ²³