

7 things to know about The National Dog Show

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Updated: Nov 11, 2019 - 3:00 PM



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The National Dog Show, one of the most anticipated dog shows in the nation, returns Nov. 16 and 17 in Philadelphia. Since 2002, television viewing of the [National Dog Show](#) has been a Thanksgiving tradition in homes across the nation.

Presented by Purina and hosted by the Kennel Club of Philadelphia, the show features more than 150 American Kennel Club-sanctioned breeds and varieties competing for Best of Breed, First in Group and the top-dog spot: Best in Show.

Here's what you need to know about the show that celebrates man's best friend.

1. You don't have to go to Philadelphia to catch the show.

There's no need to book a trip to The National Dog Show: NBC's top-rated broadcast of the show airs at noon Thanksgiving Day, immediately following the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The two-hour show features hosts John O'Hurley, Mary Carillo and David Frei and regularly reaches nearly 20 million dog-lovers in the comfort of their homes.

2. The show has been airing since 2002, but it's been around for much longer than that.

The Kennel Club of Philadelphia Dog Show has been in existence since 1879 with minimal interruptions. When NBC Sports began airing the show in 2002, it was rebranded as The National Dog Show.

The show is one of only three major dog shows in the nation, ranked along with the AKC National Championship and the [Westminster Dog Show](#).

3. There are seven groups of dogs.

There may be more than 2,000 dogs entered in the show, but when the coveted Best in Show competition takes place, you'll only see seven dogs. These canines are the best of the best, representing seven groups and the characteristics and functions for which the breeds were originally intended: the Terrier Group, the Toy Group, the Working Group, the Sporting Group, the Hound Group, the Non-Sporting Group and the Herding Group.

4. It's a diverse competition.

205 breeds and varieties are eligible to participate in the National Dog Show.

5. It's a benched show, and that's kind of a big deal.

An untrained dog-show enthusiast may be wondering why a benched distinction makes a difference. Participating dogs are required to stay on assigned benches when not in competition, an awesome feat of discipline and character.

The benching makes the canine competitors accessible to all on site and allows for interaction and provides an easy way to ask questions and share information.

The National Dog Show is one of the oldest and few remaining benched shows in the United States.

6. The judges are picky, and rightly so.

Over the course of the show, judges will have seen hundreds of dogs. But what exactly are these discerning individuals looking to find?

The questions are tough: Is the dog able to perform the job the breed was originally bred to do? Does the dog have all of the physical characteristics typical of their breed? How fit is the dog? Does the dog have the correct gait?

But wait, there's more: Judges are also looking for happy dogs that enjoy the competition so each dog's expression and general demeanor receives extra scrutiny.

7. Those long names may sound excessive, but there's a good reason for them.

Gia, a greyhound, was [2016's Best in Show](#), but her proper name is GCHS CH Grandcru Giaconda CGC. While it may seem a little crazy, there's a method to the madness of the competitor naming.

That long and hard-to-read name reads like a history lesson on the dog's life. Components of the dog's name can be pulled from many different places: the name of the kennel where the dog was born, notations about the dog's qualifications or prizes and a part of the name that's specific to the dog.