

What Class Do I Enter for Conformation at the National Specialty?

How exciting – our first AKC Nationals! With anything new, there are bound to be lots of questions about what classes to enter, as some of the classes offered at previous Nationals are no longer offered, and there are new classes available.

First, let's break down the types of conformation classes we are offering this year. There are four categories of classes, each of which we'll explain further. A single dog could be entered in each of these four types of classes.

1. Regular Classes and Single Entry Non-Regular classes. These are the classes that ultimately will compete for best of breed and championship points.
2. Multiple Entry Non-Regular Classes. These are classes that really showcase a breeder's/owner's groups of dogs.
3. Sweepstakes. These classes pay out money ^{^^}
4. Most Versatile Miniature American Shepherd class. This class is for the conformation evaluation for the MV-MAS entries.

Regular Classes and Single Entry Non-Regular classes

The AKC Rules Applying to Dog shows lists all the regular classes that can be held at a dog show. Dogs that show in these classes are often called Class Dogs/Bitches. In addition, at Specialty shows, additional regular classes can be offered if chosen by the parent club to be a standard regular class for specialties. Also, non-regular classes can also be offered that showcase certain aspects of the breed. Unless noted, the dog may not be a Champion of Record. One thing to remember when selecting a class to enter is that once a dog is defeated, it may not exhibit in the Best of Breed ring. For 2015, the following regular classes and non-regular classes are being offered (split by sex):

- *Puppy, 6 Months & Under 9 Months:* this class is for puppies ages 6-9 months. Typically, the judge is a little more accommodating to puppy antics for puppies entered in the puppy classes.
- *Puppy, 9 Months & Under 12 Months:* this class is for puppies ages 9-12 months.
- *Twelve to Fifteen Month:* this class is for dogs ages 12-15 months.
- *Fifteen to Eighteen Month:* this class is for dogs ages 15-18 months.
- *Novice:* This class is for dogs six months of age and over, who may be just beginning their show career. Prior to the date of closing of entries the dog must not have won three first prizes in the Novice Class, a first prize in Amateur-Owner-Handler, Bred-by-Exhibitor, American-bred, or Open Classes, nor one or more points toward their championships.
- *Bred-by-Exhibitor:* This class is a breeder's showcase class. The dog must be 6 months of age or over and it must be owned and handled by the breeder of record.

- *American-Bred*: This class is for any dog over 6 months that was bred and whelped in the United States.
- *Open,(Color)*: This class is for dogs 6 months and over. At our National Specialty, we will be dividing the open class by base coat color – Black, Blue Merle, Red, and Red Merle.

The classes are judged in the above order for dogs, and then the winners of each class are called back into the ring in order to determine Winners Dog and Reserve Winners Dog. In theory there could be 11 entries back into the winners ring! Normally only the Winners Dog will receive points towards their Championship; at our specialty the Reserve Winners Dog will receive points as well.

The process is repeated for bitches, with both Winners Bitch and Reserve Winners Bitch receiving Championship points.

Now, because this is a National Specialty, we have a few non-regular classes to showcase some special entries. The Veterans classes showcase our beloved veterans while the Herding Titled classes showcase those dogs that have proven they can do what our breed was bred to do. The winners of these classes will return to the ring for Best of Breed Judging.

- *Veteran Dog*: This class is for any dog over 7 years old and is intact. The dog does not have to have earned an AKC championship.
- *Veteran Bitch*: This class is for any intact bitch over 7 years old. The bitch does not have to have earned an AKC championship.
- *Herding Titled Dog*: This class is for any intact dog over the age of 6 months that has earned an AKC Herding Title (Herding Tested (HT), Pre-Trial Tested (PT), Started, Intermediate, or Excellent) on any stock. The dog does not have to have earned an AKC championship.
- *Herding Titled Bitch*: This class is for any intact bitch over the age of 6 months that has earned an AKC Herding Title (Herding Tested (HT), Pre-Trial Tested (PT), Started, Intermediate, or Excellent) on any stock. The bitch does not have to have earned an AKC championship.

The final class that can be entered in the regular competition is *Best of Breed*. This class is combined for dogs and bitches. The requirement for this class is that the dog has earned its AKC Champion of Record title as of the closing date. Move ups to this class are allowed if a dog finishes its Championship after the closing date.

Ring procedure for the above classes goes as follows:

1. Class Dogs are shown in the order listed above.
2. Winners Dog and Reserve Winners Dog are chosen.
3. Class Bitches are shown in the order listed above.
4. Winners Bitch and Reserve Winners Bitch are chosen.
5. Non Regular classes are shown in the order listed above.
6. Best of Breed entries are shown, along with the winner of each non-regular class and winners dog and winners bitch.

7. Best of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed, Best of Winners, and Awards of Merit are chosen.

After Best of Breed Judging, there are two additional awards that will be given out. The first is *Best Owner Handled*. Our show has been approved to be part of the National Owner Handler Series. To be considered for this award, you must check the box on the entry form that says "Owner/Handled Eligible?" The process for judging this entry is detailed in the premium list. The second additional award is *Best Bred By Exhibitor*. This award will go to the best breeder/owner/handled dog in the show. To be considered for this award, please enter "Best Bred By" under the owner/handled eligible question. The process for judging this award is also detailed in the premium list.

Multiple Entry Non-Regular Classes

- *Stud Dog Class*: This class has 3 dogs as one entry; the stud dog and two of his male get. The stud dog does not need to be entered in another class, but the get must be entered in one of the regular classes. The dogs do not have to be owned by the same person. The stud dog may be altered. The class is judged on the merits of the get.
- *Brood Bitch Class*: This class is the same as the Stud Dog class except it's for bitches and their female produce.
- *Brace Class*: This class is for two dogs that are similar in appearance, performing in unison, and presented by a maximum of two handlers (can be one handler). Both dogs competing in brace competition must have at least one common owner. Both dogs must be entered in a regular class.

Sweepstakes

Sweepstakes is a group of classes where the winners get a percentage of the entry fees back. The division of the winners' amounts is specified in the catalog. We will be having two sweepstakes at our Nationals.

- *Sweepstakes*: Most of us are more familiar with the term "Puppy Sweepstakes", but as the AKC defines a puppy as a dog under 12 months, the name changed. The Sweepstakes will be divided into the following classes for dogs and bitches - Puppy, 6-9 months, Puppy, 9-12 months, Junior, 12-15 months, and Junior, 15-18 months. All dogs entering Sweepstakes must also be entered in one of the regular classes.
- *Veteran Sweepstakes*: Veteran Sweepstakes will be divided by sex into two age groups - Veteran, 7-9 years and Veteran, Over 9 years. Veterans do not have to be entered in a regular class and may be altered.

Most Versatile Miniature American Shepherd Versatility Conformation Class

This class is for evaluating the conformation of the dogs entered in MV-MAS. Complete rules are located on the Nationals website at <http://www.mascusa.org/nationals2015.php>. Full AKC and FSS registered dogs may compete; PAL/ILP dogs are ineligible for the MV-MAS award. This class will be a scored evaluation only and no placements will be given. Altered dogs may participate, and do not need to be entered in any other conformation class.