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# Everything You Need to Know About the 20th Annual Thanksgiving National Dog Show

## A new breed is competing and we're already in love

by Gayle Jo Carter, [AARP](#), November 1, 2021



Simon Bruty/National Dog Show

A Biewer Terrier is the newest member of the competition for Best In Show at the National Dog Show, which NBC will broadcast following the "Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade," Nov. 25, 2021.

If it's Thanksgiving (and Santa has floated by at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade) then it's time for one thing: the National Dog Show. Is there anything more stress-reducing (and fabulous) than watching these top-of-breed canines and their handlers work the room? There isn't, so use our guide for this year's festivities to, um, bone up.

## How to watch this year's National Dog Show

The show kicks off at noon in all time zones on **NBC**, following the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and before the afternoon football games begin. It is the most widely viewed dog show in America.

**Bonus:** You can watch **past year's episodes** on Peacock!

## Is any of the National Dog Show broadcast live?

It isn't! The all-breed dog show, hosted by the Kennel Club of Philadelphia, is actually a weekend-long affair that takes place on Saturday, Nov. 20 — this is the taped-for-telecast portion — and Sunday, Nov. 21. The live event offers more canine competitions, enhanced athletic dog exhibitions, plus family-friendly activities and hands-on fun at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pennsylvania. The Kennel Club of Philadelphia has presented dog shows for more than 125 years.



Simon Bruty/National Dog Show

The National Dog Show, presented by Purina on air with NBC, is celebrating its 20th anniversary with co-hosts David Frei (on left), Mary Carillo (middle), and John O'Hurley (on right) who are pictured with a few canine friends.

## Was the movie *Best in Show* inspired by the National Dog Show?

Sort of the other way around, in fact. Jon Miller, president of programming for NBC Sports and NBC Sports Network, says Christopher Guest's beloved 2000 mockumentary *Best in Show* gave him the idea of airing the dog show on a national scale. Founded in 1879, the show has been an annual event since 1933, and NBC's first broadcast came in 2002.

**Don't Miss This:** [The 10 best dog movies of all time](#)

## How is the pandemic affecting the 2021 National Dog Show?

The event went ahead with cardboard spectators in the seats last year, but real-life spectators are back for 2021, which means the applause and cheers for the dogs will be real. Don't worry, though: All [attendees must be vaccinated](#), and no, spectators cannot bring their own dogs to the show.

## Which dogs get to compete in the National Dog Show?

The National Dog Show is sanctioned by the American Kennel Club, and only purebred dogs registered with the AKC can compete. The AKC recognizes 208 dog breeds and varieties, split into seven groups. More than 2,000 of the top AKC-sanctioned dogs from across the country will compete this year.

## How does the judging work?

The first-round dogs compete against their own breed for the "best in breed" title; then that winner goes on to represent the breed in competing for "first in group" (in the categories of sporting, terrier, toy, working, hound, non-sporting and herding). They compete not against each other but in how well they fit their breed standards. From there, the winners from each group go on to the coveted "best in show" round to compete for top dog.

## Fall in love with this new breed's first year in the National Dog Show

The Biewer terrier (pronounced “beaver”) is an elegant, long-haired, tricolored toy terrier, which according to the American Kennel Club has only one purpose in life: “to love and be loved.” The AKC describes Biewers as having a “charming, whimsical attitude well into adulthood” and as “dedicated, loyal, happy-go-lucky and a friend to all they meet.” While they may be small, the AKC declares them “hearty and athletic and able to keep up with the best of them on long walks, hikes or competing in the agility ring.”

## Which breed has taken best in show at the National Dog Show most often?

The only breed to take best in show more than once in the show’s history is the wire fox terrier, with back-to-back wins in 2011 and 2012. Two different dogs, same handlers.

## How to keep the canine fun going after the National Dog Show is over

The kids don’t fancy a football game? Good news: On Peacock, NBC’s streaming service, kids will host their own dog show for the first time. *The National Dog Show Junior* will combine highlights of the breed judging and best in show with features on the science of dogs, junior handlers, dog agility training and what makes them great pets.

## John O’Hurley knows why we love the National Dog Show so much

National Dog Show host John O’Hurley, known for his appearance as J. Peterman on *Seinfeld* and also the author of several books about dogs, says: “There’s something in it for everyone. Whether you’re 4 or 94, everybody loves to watch the dogs and their little faces. When they come in and do the close-ups, I defy anyone to change the channel on the remote.”

## Is your dog a National Dog Show fan?

While noncompeting dogs can’t come in person to watch the show, make sure if you’re watching at home that yours is nearby. Over the years, dog owners have sent in videos of their beloved pets watching fervently as the dogs compete, and even running around to the back of the TV looking for that doggie in the window they hear barking. Just Google it.

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