

The CSV and Conformation Showing in the UK

When people think of pedigree dogs, they often envisage primed and pampered dogs strutting their stuff around a show ring being judged on their looks alone. A lot of people also assume there is a lot of snobbery within the dog show world, but for those who are in it, it can be seen from an entirely different perspective.

For those wishing to produce dogs of a high standard, conformation showing can be an integral part of ensuring that the dogs being produced have genetically the best chance of having pain free and injury free lives. Judges are there to assess the skeletal structure of the dogs being shown under them to ensure they are free from exaggeration and meet the standard required to perform the tasks they were bred for as efficiently as possible. By assessing the dogs structure and movement, it can be seen if the dog has structural issues, is unbalanced or if indeed there are injuries or parts of the dog's conformation that mean the dog would not be able to perform the task it was originally bred for.

Along with structure the dogs skin, coat, eye, ear and teeth condition are also monitored to ensure again that the dog meets the standard and that it would be able to perform the task it was bred for with no problems. An incorrect coat type could be the difference between getting soaked through to the skin or the water being easily removed with a quick shake. Incorrect bite could affect good oral health and in vlcs a correct scissor bite would help in bitework, in-turned eyelids in some of the heavier skinned dogs can lead to eye infections and injuries. So whilst it may seem that often the 'prettiest' dog is selected to win, that is usually because the judge thinks that dog meets the standard to the closest degree.

It's also important to realise that the dog's temperament can also be assessed whilst in the show ring. Though most dogs will happily accept handling from strangers, there are some breeds such as German shepherds, Cane Corso's and our beloved Czechoslovakian Vlcaks, who are meant to be naturally aloof to strangers and so though they will have been taught to accept handling, they may not be happy about it and a judge will be aware of this and make allowances accordingly. A dog which shows outright aggression in the ring can be dismissed and ultimately banned from any future shows. So though a small amount of grumbling is ok for the CSV, baring of teeth or trying to bite is unacceptable. A judge that has been properly informed of the breed's temperament, will be able to assess what is correct or normal for the breed they are judging, this is why attending breed seminars is so important for a judge's career and for the breed overall as a good judge can help keep the breed correct to standard.

So how do we go about showing? Each Country will have its overseeing bodies such as the ENCI of Italy or CMKU (ceskomoravska kynologicka unie) of the Czech Republic, one of the founding countries of our much-loved breed. Then we also have the FCI or Federation Cynologique International which is international but does NOT cover the UK. FCI dogs can compete in the UK in shows if the breed is recognised but it has to be done via an authority to compete (ATC) which can be applied for via the UK Kennel Club.

Currently the CSV cannot be shown at Kennel Club shows in the UK as the breed is not recognised. Once recognition is approved the dogs will go onto the import register and will be able to show under import classes and is then able to go forward for group classes.



So how are UK Kennel Club shows run?

The Kennel Club has a variety of open and limited shows each year run by certain breed clubs or societies. Limited shows will be limited only to members of those specific clubs, however open shows are available to enter to all who have a breed recognised by the Kennel Club if there are appropriate classes available. Each society will usually put on specific breed classes which perhaps they specialise in and some similar. There are some clubs that focus on just one breed and their varieties, or perhaps it's a large all breed open show which caters to all breeds which have regular entries of 3 or more dogs. Any club or society which hosts an open show can also run A.V (any variety) classes or A.V.N.S.C (any variety not separately classified) which is for breeds recognised but doesn't have a dedicated class for its breed at the show. Only the AVNSC breeds can go forward for B.I.S (Best in Show) if they win their class. Some clubs or societies will also host import register classes, however as yet they cannot go forward for BIS.

Each breed group will usually have a number of separate classes to cater for opposite sex, puppies and veterans. In the UK Kennel Club the classes are usually organised as such:

Minor Puppy dog or Bitch 6-9 months

Junior Puppy dog or bitch 6-12 months

Post Graduate dog or bitch 12 + months dogs with no cc's or no more than 5 PG wins

Open dog or bitch any age and level

Limited dog or bitch no championship under KC shows or other, or have won 7 or more 1sts in any open or limit classes or 3 cc/*cacib/cac or green stars

Veteran dog or bitch dogs aged 7+

Winners of these classes will go forward for Best Of Sex, Best Puppy, Best Veteran and ultimately Best of Breed from the adult and veteran dogs and puppy, then Best Puppy of Breed. A Best of Breed can also be a best Veteran or Best Puppy if they meet that criteria, otherwise these will be awarded separately. At Championship shows, Challenge Certificates can also be awarded. These are most frequently given to adult dogs that meet the high standard required of that of a champion. A dog requires 3 CC's from different judges in order to gain its Champion title. Reserve CC's can be given or withheld. A RCC is usually given to a dog of the same or near same quality as that of the CC holder, so that in the event that the CC is removed, the RCC holder gains the CC title instead. CC's and RCC's can be withheld if the judge deems the merit is not there in the present dogs on the day.

Entering a show is usually done via the society or club holding the show. Usually the show secretary will deal with all entries including postal and online. It is up to the exhibitor to ensure they have entered their dog into the correct class as there can be no changing of this on the day of the show. If you are unsure it is best to speak directly with the show secretary before booking. Most KC shows can be booked via a service online called Fossedata which will have details of all the upcoming shows and show schedules.

NB: * CAC/CACIB and green stars are awarded by the FCI and IKC respectively and are equivalent to the UK's challenge certificates (cc/Rcc)

