

Comparing Dog Breeds in Show

A Group or Best in Show judge determines which dog is the best representative of his breed standard.

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Q. How can you judge an Airedale against a Collie against a Poodle? Isn't that like comparing apples and oranges?

A. Each breed has a standard of excellence which describes the ideal specimen from his nose to the tip of his tail. Since the perfect specimen has not yet been produced – and most likely never will – the breed judge examines the dogs entered and evaluates them to determine which come closest to the ideal.

At the Group and Best in Show levels, where the judge is faced with a ringful of dogs of different breeds, his job is to determine whether the Airedale is a better representative of his breed standard than the Collie is of his. In addition to structural excellence, the judge considers such factors as conditioning, movement, handling and presentation, grooming and showmanship. It may seem a daunting task, but an experienced judge can assess the strengths and weaknesses of each exhibit and determine the ultimate winner on the day.