

Europe's Canine Club

The FCI aims to protect and preserve standards for breeds throughout the world.

Dawne Deeley

Ask a North American to name a familiar kennel registry and the first letters likely to spring to their mind are AKC (American Kennel Club). One could also include the performance-driven United Kennel Club (UKC), the Kennel Club of Great Britain (KC) or the federally guided Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). Clubs and their monikers run the gamut, and if a person looks long enough, the assembled acronyms look like they belong in a bowl of alphabet soup. What sets the aforementioned organizations apart from most private registries is their recording integrity and consistent governance.

Cross the Atlantic Ocean, however, and the purebred fancy becomes the devil we don't know. From its home in Thuin, Belgium, the Fédération Cynologique Internationale dictates the workings of purebred dogs in virtually every developed nation.

From the outside, the FCI looks like a nebulous system of convoluted rules and regulations. On the other hand, purists and students of cynology (the study of dogs) are attracted to the sheer number of dogs and variety of awards. Hard-core fanciers looking to add jewels to their performance crowns, or add qualifications to their title rosters, will find endless opportunities with FCI.

Those looking for something completely different in the canine-competition universe would do well to check out the FCI – arguably the greatest conglomerate entity in the purebred dog world.

History of preservation

In 1911, World War I loomed closer with each passing month. With hostilities approaching, the future of Continental canines looked to be on shaky ground, but five countries were determined to form an alliance dedicated to maintaining the study and protection of canines.

Based on a mutual desire to promote and further the cause of both cynology and purebred dogs, Germany's Kartell für das Deutsche Hundewesen, Austria's Österreichischer Kynologenverband, Belgium's Société Royale Saint-Hubert, the Société Centrale Canine of France and Raad van Beheer op Kynologisch Gebied of the Netherlands joined forces on May 22, 1911, to become the FCI.

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