

'Greatest American Dog' Judge Offers Final Pointers

Allan Reznik gives advice on how to choose the right dog for you.

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If watching "Greatest American Dog" for 10 weeks has inspired you to buy a first dog, or perhaps add a puppy to your multi-dog household, here are some points to ponder from Allan Reznik, a judge on the reality show and editor-at-large of DOG FANCY, before you take the big leap.

Determine what activities you want to pursue with your dog and then choose accordingly, says Reznik. As you saw on the show, some dogs are naturally more athletic and agile than others. But often those breeds are also high-energy and demand equally athletic owners. If your idea of strenuous exercise is mowing the lawn, scratch Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Dalmatians, Weimaraners, and many other active Sporting breeds and Herding breeds off your list.

By the same token, don't fall prey to stereotypes, he says. Andrew the Maltese proved to viewers that Toy breeds don't have to be treated as ornaments and can be all dog. They don't belong in a household with toddlers who can accidentally injure them, but in a family with adults or older children, they can take part in agility, flyball, rally and any number of other dog sports.

Sign up for a puppy kindergarten or basic obedience class. These offer your new dog valuable exposure to different people, dogs and experiences in a controlled setting, while building your own confidence as a trainer.

Reznik will be on DogChannel's message boards at 10 a.m. PDT on Thursday to talk about the season finale and field questions from visitors about the show.