

Top Dogs Descend on Southern California

Thousands of dogs competed at the annual AKC/Eukanuba National Championship.

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Spoiler alert: The AKC/Eukanuba National Championship will be simulcast on Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel on Jan. 31, 2009, from 8 to 11 p.m. (EST/PST). This article reveals the winners of the show.

It was a weekend of intense competition at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, Calif., as well as a display of the human-animal bond.

Recognized as one of the most prestigious dog shows in the world, the event on Dec. 13 and 14 mixed education with entertainment. The highly anticipated AKC Agility Invitational and the AKC National Obedience Invitational featured nearly 3,000 dogs vying for top prize and a piece of more than \$225,000.

In addition to a range of canine sports, the dog show offers an opportunity for the general public to meet with breeders and learn the good and the bad about various dog breeds. An entire level of the Long Beach Convention Center was dedicated to the "Meet the Breeds" portion of the event, which featured a vast array of breeds, from tiny Papillons to Great Danes.

Karen Thompson traveled from Eau Claire, Wis., with her husband, Rod, especially for the dog show. They were mainly interested in the obedience and watching how the dog handlers perform before the judges, she said.

"How these people can handle the pressure is just amazing to me," she said.

According to event organizers, earning a \$50,000 cash prize and the title of Best in Show was Cookieland Seasyde Hollyberry, a Pointer known as "Holly" owned by Sean McCarthy and Tammy McCarthy and Helyne Medieros of New York, N.Y. Holly was named the nation's top dog by Best in Show judge Dr. Robert Smith.

Best in Show Finalists and Group Winners

After winning Best of Breed competitions, the following dogs went on to win in their respective groups and compete for Best in Show:

Hound: Jaraluv Ouija, a Scottish Deerhound known as "Ouija," owned by Ray and Jana Brinlee and Steve and Eileen Biles of Acampo, Calif.

Working: Silverice Dancing in the Dark, an Alaskan Malamute known as "Justin," owned by Alisa Syar of Granite Bay, Calif.

Terrier: Efbe's Merci Pour Le Poivre, a Sealyham Terrier known as "Merci," owned by June and Tom Fraser of Calgary, Canada. (Merci is the brother of last year's Best in Show winner Charmin).

Toy: Cilleine Masquerade, a Brussels Griffon known as "Lincoln," owned by Mamie and Evalyn Gregory and Anne and Harlowe Jahelka of Louisville, Ky.

Non-Sporting: Randenn Tristar Affirmation, a Standard Poodle known as "Yes," owned by Toni and Martin Sosnoff of New York, N.Y.

Herding: Coventry Vanity Fair a Pembroke Welsh Corgi known as "Carly," owned by D. Salow, K. Kirtley, K. Foist and B. Shelton of San Bernardino, Calif.

The event will be simulcast on Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 8-11 p.m. (EST/PST). Highlights from the AKC Agility Invitational will air on Animal Planet on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 8 p.m. (EST/PST).