



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB®

PARENT CLUB BEST PRACTICES

STAGING THE NATIONAL SPECIALTY

Who may hold a National Specialty?

Any AKC licensed or member parent club.

How many may a parent club hold See Rules Applying to Dog Shows Chapter 16, Section 1.

- The parent club may only hold *one* national specialty. There are items unique to a national such as
 - Reserve Winners winning 3-point majors under certain circumstances (Chapter 16, Section 1)
 - Crufts Invitation
 - Ability to have local specialties join up to 500 miles away from their territory.
- There is no limit to additional parent club specialties.

When may the national be held?

- Check your bylaws for any limitations on when this must be held.
- Spring and Fall are the most popular. This gives exhibitors greater freedom in travelling to the event. Extreme temperatures may make transporting dogs difficult.

Where will the national be held?

- Rotating around the country.

- This allows members around the country to have easier access to some nationals
- Allows members across the country to put on the event
- Can assist fledging or failing local specialties to piggy-back on a national to build a better base. See board policy “Show Conflict Distance Policy” which states that “specialty clubs joining the designated National Specialty are limited to 500 miles from the territory.”
- Review impact on other specialty or all-breed events in that area. Get permission to release the breed from the all-breed show.
- Generally, the show committee varies each year
- Some clubs require the region to “bid” on the national by supplying board- dictated information before selection. These elements could include
 - Hotel cost and amenities
 - Ease of transportation
 - Nearby airports

- Superintendent or show secretary
 - List of show committee
 - Projected budget
- Same location each year
 - Equipment, supplies, decorations, and other assets can be stored in one area and do not have to be transported to a new location each year.
 - Favorable long-term contracts may be obtained
 - Familiarity with a site makes preparations easier
 - The show committee could remain fairly constant which could build expertise.

Selecting a Show Chair

- Chosen by the Board of Directors
- Should be a person who has experience in putting on shows
 - Knows AKC Rules Applying to Dog Shows
 - Knows the Show Manual
 - Knows the club's specialty policies and/or show guidelines
 - Has chaired an all-breed show or local specialty
- Is organized
- Able to garner necessary resources
 - Personnel
 - Equipment and supplies

Event Committee – choose carefully at least five people

- People who are very familiar with the rules and regulations relating to the events offered at the national
- People who are very familiar with Dealing with Misconduct
- People who can remain objective

Show Committee

- Each aspect of the national could benefit from the establishment of subcommittees in charge of a specific task.

- Consult club rules for who gets to select and/or approve these subcommittees.
- Common subcommittees include
 - Trophies/ribbons
 - Vendors
 - Grounds
 - RV Parking
 - Hospitality
 - Judges
 - Exhibitors
 - Companion events such as obedience, rally and agility
 - Performance events such as lure coursing, herding trials, field trials, etc.
 - Grooming
 - Juniors
 - Judge's education
 - Breeder education and/or seminars
 - Health clinics and/or seminars
 - Banquets
 - Special attractions such as Top 20
 - Apparel and other show-specific items
- Establish authority limits and budgets for each. This may be in the club's standing rules.

Budgeting

- Generally submitted by show chair
- Board-approved
- Report periodically to the board; deviations should be immediately disclosed to the board

What kind of specialty

- The type depends on your club's needs.

- A low entry breed may not be able to afford a stand-alone event.
- A low entry-breed may not have enough club members to fill all committees
- You may need the experience of people outside the club to assist
- Types
 - Designated Specialty. The regular breed judging at an All-breed or Group show is designated as the club's specialty.
 - Recommend that you have a contract with the club that the judge will not be removed from the breed if the judge has an overload.
 - The essentials such as show site, grounds, etc. are the responsibility of the all-breed or group show.
 - Clubs may take advantage of events at the site for which the parent club is not approved. Examples include obedience, rally, agility.
 - Disadvantage is that many amenities are not available unless previously negotiated with the all-breed or group show.
 - Concurrent Specialty. A specialty club may offer an independent specialty on the same date and at the same site as an All-breed or Group show.
 - Limit of 100 total entries (includes sweepstakes and juniors)
 - Parent club is generally responsible for the superintendent or show secretary.
 - Evening specialty. A specialty club may offer an evening specialty on the same date and at the same site as an All-breed or Group show.
 - Limit of 50 total entries
 - Cannot begin until 30 minutes after Best in Show
 - Independent Specialty
 - Day before or after an All-breed or Group show
 - Gives the club some feeling of uniqueness

- Generally, eliminates the expense of a show site.
- A stand-alone event
 - All aspects of the event are chosen by the parent club
 - Venue

- Hotel
- Event Center
- Private facility or property

How much space do you need?

- Exhibition space
 - Check minimum ring size for events. See 4-4 of the AKC Show Manual for minimum ring sizes.
 - Size will be dependent of the number of dogs
 - Size will be dependent on the size of the breed
 - Besides rings for the event add room for
 - Ringside seating
 - Tables for trophies and fundraising
 - Indoors or outdoors
 - Check you club's show guidelines for any restrictions
 - Weather considerations
- Other space needed for
 - Meetings
 - Seminars
 - Health Clinics
 - RV Parking (check state to see if there are any restrictions to staying in the RV if it is parked in a hotel parking lot).
 - Vendors
 - Exercise areas for dogs

What events should we offer

- Space may dictate what events you can hold

- Anticipated weather may dictate what event you can hold
- Cannot offer an event for which you have not received approval from AKC.
- Types of events

- Conformation
- Companion such as obedience, rally and agility
- Performance such as herding trials, field trials, lure coursing
- Special attractions such as Top 20, performance events not recognized by AKC, etc.

Superintendent or Show Secretary

- Fully superintended by an AKC-licensed superintendent.
 - Stand-alone specialties. May only be available for the larger specialties
 - Current and evening specialties may be available if you use the superintendent chosen by the all-breed or group show.
- Package show.
 - A superintendent prepares the premium list, takes entries, sends out acknowledgements, prepares the catalog, prepares the judge's book, prepares armband.
 - Secretary is on site to correct judge's book; process show reports and results.
 - Equipment is usually the responsibility of the specialty club.
- Show Secretary

Equipment

- Source
 - Superintendent
 - Club-owned
 - Rented from a third party
- What kind
 - Ring gating
 - Mats
 - Tables or ramps
 - Scales or wickets

- Site negotiation – Know your buying power and come prepared
- Know your needs
 - Research past history per region. Some regions draw better than other regions.
 - Know space requirements
- Ballrooms
 - Offer free with a minimum number of room nights and food and beverage
- Meeting/Seminar Rooms
 - Offer free with a minimum number of room nights and food and beverage
- Sleeping rooms or room nights
 - Research other hotels in the area. Encourage your exhibitors to stay at your site and not cheaper hotels nearby.
 - Reserving blocks
 - Opening and closing of the block
 - Cancellations
- Food and beverage
 - Plan as many of your events around catered events to maximize the free rooms (ballroom, meeting rooms and free rooms for judges, hospitality, etc.)
 - Meals and drinks exhibitors buy in the restaurant do not help you.
 - Know past banquet numbers and cost/price of ticket
 - Research any limitations to bringing food from outside for hospitality.

National Souvenirs and apparel

- Choosing a logo
 - Artist in the club
 - Friend who is an artist

- Generally location-driven
- Board approval
- What kinds of apparel or goods?
- - guidance from previous shows. What sells and what does not sell. Including needed sizes. Generally, you need few small sizes but many large or extra-large sizes.
- Pre-sales of day of show sales. Choose what works for you.
 - Sometimes the sale starts at the conclusion of the current show when the details of the next year national is announced
 - Sometimes sale starts on line or at local specialties
 - Sometime only day of show.

Trophies

- Selection. Will it match the show theme?
- Procurement
- Donations

Catered events

- Welcome party
- Awards cocktail party or dinner
- Top 20
- Annual Meeting

Education – see section on education

- Judges
- Breeders
- Membership

Meetings

- Board meetings
- Annual membership meetings

- Committee meetings

Health Clinics and Seminars – see section on health

- Testing on site or at a nearby clinic during prearranged hours
- Blood draws
- Seminars

Junior activities - See section on juniors

- Junior showmanship
- PeeWee
- Social hour for juniors
- Education for juniors

Hospitality

- Judges
 - Transportation
 - Airport
 - Hotel to show site
 - Gift bags
 - Bottled water, bottled juice, crackers, chocolate, fruit – items that will make an evening alone in a hotel room more comfortable
 - Personalized gift. Judge's name tag. Something with their breed included on it.
 - Dinner arrangements
- Members/exhibitors
 - Goodie/welcome bags
 - Hospitality room for breakfasts
 - Ringside hospitality – especially beverages such as water and coffee
 - Pre-ordered lunches

Security

- Determine if it may be needed.
- Check crime rates in the area

Helpful links

- Show Trial Manual
- <https://images.akc.org/pdf/RESHOW.pdf>
- National Specialty PR Toolkit
https://images.akc.org/pdf/clubsToolKit_NatSpecialty.pdf
- Rules Applying to Dog Show
- <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RREGS3.pdf>
- Dealing with Misconduct
- <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RDMSC4.pdf>
- Obedience Regulations
- <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>
- Rally Regulations
- https://images.akc.org/pdf/AKC1193_ROR001_1217_WEB.pdf