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## Dogs to compete for Best in Show

*By Julie Ball*  
**EDITOR**

**FLETCHER** — More than 1,600 dogs will compete this weekend for a chance at the title of Best in Show at back-to-back dog shows sponsored by the Asheville Kennel Club.

The shows take place Saturday and Sunday at the WNC Agricultural Center.

Around 1,680 dogs of more than 145 breeds will compete in shows both days. Breed judging starts at 8 a.m. each day followed by group judging at 2:15 p.m.

Dogs competing in the shows are coming from as far away as Canada and Puerto Rico.

“I would guess that probably a third of the people that will be at the show are from North Carolina,” said Robert Anderson, treasurer of the Asheville Kennel Club.

Despite climbing gas prices, the number of competitors is up slightly over last year, Anderson said.

“The ones that are really serious about it will travel within their area. In most cases, they will go 300-400 miles,” Anderson said.

Some may travel to shows every weekend.

“The people that are really serious in campaigning a dog will be out just about every weekend,” he said.

Dogs that compete accumulate points, which lead to championship status.

Anderson said dog shows allow owners to network with like-minded dog lovers.

Lynn Duckett, of Fairview, has been showing Kerry blue terriers for the last 20 years.

“I visited dog shows just to watch from the time I was a teenager, and I always wanted to be able to show dogs,” she said.

Before a show, Duckett spends two hours grooming the dogs and getting them ready to go into the ring.

“I spend probably four hours at home a day or two before the show,” she said. “When they go in the ring, they look gorgeous, but they don’t stay that way long.”

But she says she doesn’t take the competition too seriously.

“You can’t take it too seriously. I always lie to my dogs and tell them they won whether they won or not,” she said.

Instead of competing at this year’s shows, Duckett is helping with an on-site health clinic that provides reduced-cost testing for dogs prior to breeding.

“We offer this year several different health screenings that you do on your dog prior to breeding,” she said.

The testing helps breeders make sure their animals are free of inherited diseases.

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## Want to go?

The Asheville Kennel Club will hold back-to-back breed dog shows Saturday and Sunday in the Davis Arena at the WNC Agricultural Center. The show starts at 8 a.m. each day, and breed judging will take place each day up until about 2 p.m. Group judging starts around 2:15 p.m. There is a \$3 parking fee, but no admission charge.

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