

Parade Pets

Meet the Giant Dog Breeds Competing in This Year's National Dog Show

Loyal, loving and larger than life, each of these pups are vying for the top spot.

By Nathan Hutsenpiller

Nov 11, 2025 6:33 PM EST



Key Points

- The National Dog Show features nearly 2,000 dogs from 205 breeds competing for top honors.
- Working group "Giant" breeds like Great Danes and Mastiffs showcase strength, loyalty, and agility.
- The event airs on NBC Thanksgiving, celebrating its 25th anniversary with athletic, entertaining competitions.

[The National Dog Show](#) is one of America's most beloved Thanksgiving traditions, held each year by the Kennel Club of Philadelphia and broadcast on NBC. What began in the early 2000s as the real-life inspiration behind Christopher Guest's cult classic *Best in Show* is now celebrating its 25th anniversary, and it's just as entertaining as ever.

Each year, nearly 2,000 of the country's top American Kennel Club–sanctioned [dogs](#) compete across 205 breeds from seven groups: Terrier, Toy, Working, Sporting, Hound, Non-Sporting and Herding; competing for titles like Best of Breed, First in Group and—the ultimate honor—Best in Show.

This two-day event kicks off Saturday, November 15 with *The National Dog Show Presented by Purina*, which is taped for NBC's nationwide Thanksgiving Day broadcast. Sunday then keeps the excitement going with more competitions, athletic dog exhibitions and fun-filled events.



The Working Group

While every dog in the show certainly deserves to be highlighted, there are just far too many to cover without dimming one of these good boys and girls' shine. Across all seven groups, there's a wide range of personalities and disciplines to account for, along with shapes, sizes and vocality. With tests of endurance, physicality, obedience and agility on the agenda, each dog brings something unique to the competition. And today, we're putting the spotlight on the Giant breeds from the Working group.

Working breeds are just like they sound: big, strong and built for action. These dogs are [bred](#) for tasks such as guarding, pulling sleds or rescuing people, as their muscle, stamina and intelligence easily sets them apart from other breeds. Loyal and dependable, Working breeds often steal the spotlight, commanding attention wherever they go.

Giant Breeds to Look Out For at This Year's Show

- [Great Dane](#)
- [Giant Schnauzer](#)
- [Mastiff](#)
- Saint Bernard
- Leonberger
- [Neapolitan Mastiff](#)



It's not just their strength and skill that set these big breeds apart. The giants in this group take these traits to the next level, combining impressive size with the loyalty, intelligence and presence that make Working breeds so unforgettable. Not to mention, their personalities are generally charismatic, playful and affectionate when they're not focused on work or competition.

But don't let their size fool you—these larger than life creatures move with surprising speed and agility. Smaller breeds may be quick, but the giants hardly let anything stand in their way. Take the Giant Schnauzer, for example: equal parts gentle giant and athletic powerhouse, with a personality that commands attention wherever they go.

Make sure to tune in on Thanksgiving to see which breeds rise to the top of their respective categories. And if you're lucky enough to experience the festivities in person, we'll see you there!