

How to Form an AKC®-Accredited Dog Club

Published by The American Kennel Club



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB™**

PART I

General Information

Forming a new dog club? Thinking of establishing a new AKC-accredited purebred dog club in your area? Congratulations! Few activities provide greater fun and more satisfaction than the sport of purebred dogs. The American Kennel Club will be happy to help you get started.

Today's AKC family of affiliated and member clubs offers something for every purebred dog enthusiast. Here's a brief look at the types of clubs that serve the sport:

National specialty clubs (also called parent clubs) represent fanciers of a single breed. These clubs primarily hold dog shows, but many national specialty clubs also hold obedience trials, tracking tests and other performance events approved for their particular breed. The AKC approves only one national club for each breed. For information on a particular breed's national club, please view the information on the AKC's Web site (www.akc.org) or contact the Club Relations Department for the Secretary's name and address.

Local specialty clubs serve the interests of a single breed on a local level. These clubs may be eligible to hold shows, obedience trials, tracking tests, and performance events approved for their breed.

All-breed clubs welcome purebred dog owners of every breed registered by the AKC, and hold dog shows evaluating a dog's conformation to its particular breed standard. All-breed clubs may also be eligible to hold obedience trials, tracking tests, agility trials, and herding events.

Group clubs are open to owners of all breeds from one of the seven groups. Group clubs are eligible to hold shows, obedience trials, and performance events open to their particular group.

Obedience clubs are open to owners of all breeds. Members demonstrate the usefulness of purebred dogs as a companion of man and the ability to follow specified routines. In addition to obedience trials, obedience clubs offer classes and clinics on training. Many obedience clubs also offer agility and tracking.

Tracking clubs are open to owners of all breeds. Tracking demonstrates a dog's ability to recognize and follow human scent. Tracking clubs may offer classes and clinics in addition to licensed tracking and variable surface tracking tests.

Field trial clubs offer owners of retrievers, spaniels, pointing breeds, Basset Hounds, Dachshunds and Beagles the opportunity to train and compete with their dogs through competition in the field. Certain field trial clubs may also be approved to hold hunting tests.

Hunting test clubs are for owners of pointing breeds, retrievers and spaniels. Owners evaluate and grade the hunting abilities of their dogs against written hunting standards, under simulated but near-natural hunting conditions in noncompetitive hunting tests. Certain hunting clubs may also be approved to hold field trials.

Herding clubs offer both noncompetitive tests and competitive trials for owners of breeds eligible to compete (refer to Herding Regulations). These events help measure a dog's basic training as a herding dog and preserve and develop herding skills inherent in herding breeds.

Lure coursing clubs are open to owners of sighthounds. Lure coursing demonstrates a dog's ability to follow a lure over a laid-out course.

Agility clubs are open to owners of all registrable purebred dogs. Agility trials afford owners the opportunity to demonstrate a dog's willingness to work with its handler under a variety of conditions.

Earthdog clubs are open to owners of small terriers and Dachshunds. These clubs offer events that measure natural and working abilities of these breeds when exposed to hunting situations.

Coonhound clubs hold events that demonstrate the natural abilities of purebred coonhounds through competitive night hunts, field trials, and bench shows.

What Makes a Good Club?

Whatever type of club you are considering, we've found that every effective dog club:

1. Is composed of members who love purebred dogs and their sport and can work together to serve the best interests of the dogs and the sport.
2. Operates under an approved constitution and bylaws spelling out the orderly and democratic conduct of club business. The Club Relations Department will provide you with our approved sample.
3. Has members who reside in a relatively compact geographic area, and hold events in their community which promote the sport and purebred dogs.

AKC's Basic Club Policies

A word of caution: If you and your fellow enthusiasts seek to establish a new club where none currently exists, we will be happy to help you make it a reality. However, we cannot encourage the establishment of a new club if there is an existing club of the same type in the same area. Dissatisfaction with an existing club should not be the reason to form a similar club.

Membership: The minimum membership household requirement varies, depending on the type of club. Local membership must constitute the clear majority of club members. For more details, please give Club Relations a call at (212) 696-8211.

Geographic Range or Territory: There is no specified mileage radius; each club is evaluated on its own merits and circumstances. We recognize that in densely populated areas there may be a need for more clubs, while in sparsely populated areas more territory may be suitable. Again, if you have questions about your club's circumstances, please write Club Relations.

Continuity: We expect prospective new clubs to demonstrate ongoing viability by establishing a record of meetings, elections and activities before coming to the AKC for accreditation. Clubs should provide a detailed account of fun matches and activities, documented with flyers, catalog covers, newsletters, programs, etc.

Club Name: Your club's name should identify your geographic center of activity. The best rule of thumb: Would it be easily recognizable to fanciers in other parts of the country? We strongly suggest you receive written approval of the name from Club Relations before the club incorporates or prints letterhead.

Event Sites: Every club must have a suitable site for its events in its local area.

Specialty Clubs: Newly formed specialty clubs should always contact their parent club before contacting the AKC. Parent clubs can be extremely helpful to a new club. For help in contacting the secretary of your parent club, please visit our website or call Club Relations.

Taking Responsibility

We believe all clubs should take responsibility for promoting purebred dogs and work with the AKC and other clubs on issues of general concern to fanciers. Therefore, besides electing officers, your club is encouraged to appoint a Public Educational Coordinator to help educate your community on purebred dogs and responsible

dog ownership; a Breeder Referral Contact to support efforts to encourage prospective dog owners to get their dog from a responsible breeder; and a Legislative Liaison Representative to help keep members advised of current legislation affecting dog owners and breeders. The AKC has information available on all these positions.

Part II

Organization

The first step is to hold an organizational meeting. Try to contact all fanciers in your proposed area who may want to become involved. You may want to place an ad in your local paper. The catalogs for all-breed shows list the exhibitors' names and addresses. Ask your local all-breed clubs about announcements at their shows or meetings. At the first meeting we suggest you do the following:

- * Select temporary officers. For starters, all you really need is someone to chair meetings, and someone to take minutes.
- * Decide on a meeting schedule and location.
- * Choose someone to keep records of the club's development. This is very important because the AKC's evaluation of your club will focus on the records your club submits. You may want to designate this person as AKC Liaison. (Note: **Always keep copies of club records.** Clubs have unfortunately lost valuable records due to floods, fires, individuals moving, etc.).
- * Set up a program of activities. These should reflect your efforts to assist fanciers and promote the sport and responsible dog ownership.
- * Code of Ethics. The AKC does not require a specific code of ethics, but does expect all clubs and members to behave ethically at all times. If your club adopts a code of ethics, it should be

used as an educational tool, and should not be tied to the disciplinary section of the bylaws. It is our experience that when bylaws and codes of ethics are linked, clubs become needlessly involved in disputes that have nothing whatsoever to do with the welfare of the club or the sport.

Part III

AKC Accreditation

After holding an organizational meeting, electing temporary officers, drafting a set of bylaws, scheduling a date for the first annual meeting, establishing a schedule of meetings/events/activities until the first annual meeting and holding at least one "fun" match, your club will be eligible to apply for accreditation at the AKC, and to be approved for the holding of sanctioned match shows, and/or trials and tests. A presentation should be sent to the Club Relations Department, and should include the following information:

1. An outline of the club's development and history, including a list of meetings, elections, and activities.
2. A list of "fun" matches, including dates, sites, and number of entries.
3. A list of voting (regular and household) members' names and addresses, with the letter designations "B" (Breeder) — someone who has registered a litter within the past three years; "E" (Exhibitor) — someone who has handled a dog at an AKC-licensed event within the past two years, if you are applying for more than one type of competition the different types of exhibitors must be designated; "DO" (Interested Dog Owner) — someone who, although not actively breeding or exhibiting, is a dog owner of an AKC registered dog and active in the club; or "J" (AKC-licensed judge). The breed of dog owned should also be indicated, as well as the year in which each person joined the club.

Individual breeding and exhibiting records are not required. (Note: Performance clubs should refer to Part V of this brochure for more information.)

4. A list of club officers with addresses and day-time telephone numbers.
5. The New Club Profile Form (if not previously submitted).
6. A copy of the club's constitution and bylaws. If the sample bylaws provided by AKC are closely followed, little additional work will be necessary. If state laws require additional or different language please submit a copy of the applicable statute.

This information will be reviewed by a staff committee, and the club will be notified of its status. Upon approval, the club will be sent match applications, rule books, and (for show and obedience clubs) the AKC's Show/Obedience Trial Manual.

Holding Matches

Before we grant clubs a license and the authority to hold championship events, a series of matches must be held. These events help new members learn the details and mechanics of an event, and give inexperienced dogs valuable ring experience. The rings at matches are the classrooms of tomorrow's exhibitors and judges.

Generally, all-breed, specialty and obedience clubs are required to hold B (OB) matches and then A (OA) matches. Some field trial, hunting test, herding, lure coursing, agility and earthdog clubs may be able to conduct a modified match program, based on club experience.

Specialty clubs: Once the club has held one successful "B (OB)" match, the club is eligible to officially support the entry at an all-breed show.

How Many Matches?

Prospective clubs want to know: How many

B (OB) matches must we hold, and over what time period? The general guidelines are:

Two Plan B/OB/B-OB sanctioned matches must be held at least six months apart.

Companion and Performance Clubs should contact Club Relations for details on their programs.

Clubs may hold matches as frequently as they consider feasible. The **AKC may accelerate the B (OB) match program for clubs** that can document at least five years of activities prior to accreditation, or who are comprised of a high percentage of members who have long-term experience in the facet of the sport the club was formed to serve. Clubs which feel they qualify for the accelerated match program **must first contact** the Club Relations Department for the specific requirements.

Reports on B (OB) Matches

Clubs should submit reports of B (OB) matches within seven days of the event to Club Relations. Match report forms are sent to clubs upon approval of each event.

Advancement to A Status

Following completion of the club's program of "B (OB)" matches, a presentation requesting advancement for the holding of Plan A (OA) matches may be submitted.

The presentation should include the following:

1. A copy of your club's current membership list (voting members - regular and household only) with the letter designations given in Part III and if applicable, Part V.
2. An update of club activities other than matches.
3. A current copy of the club's constitution and bylaws.
4. A list of officers with addresses and daytime telephone numbers.

The review committee will consider a number of factors in making its decision, including your club's continuity and development of membership — for instance, has there been excessive turnover? Are members more active in the sport since joining? We also hope to see a core of members active in the sport. We generally feel that at least half the members should be active exhibitors in one facet of the sport or another. There is no minimum number of members who are required to be active breeders. Finally, we review the reports on activities and events, including B (QB) matches. Note: **Your club should not submit an application for an A (OA) match until the club has been notified that eligibility to do so has been established.** Every request for advancement must be reviewed by our committee. We do not want to see any club disappointed if its request is delayed and commitments have already been made.

Holding Plan A (OA) Matches

All clubs are required to hold two "Qualifying" Plan A (OA) matches, at least six months apart, prior to applying to hold AKC-licensed events. A (OA) matches are more formal than Plan B(OB) matches. Clubs should follow the "Match Regulations" carefully. Matches are evaluated on how closely the club adheres to the requirements outlined in the Match Regulations. If there are any questions concerning match regulations and rules, please call Club Relations. Matches are designed so that experienced members can work cohesively with each other and at the same time teach new members the mechanics of the events. It is easier for the club to call when a question arises than to try and remedy a situation which has already occurred.

Reports on A (OA) Matches

Sanctioned A (OA) Match Reports must be submitted within seven days of the event to Club Relations. The club should also submit all judges books, entry forms, the Premium List, and a marked and signed catalog. Please refer to the "Match Regulations" for additional details, or contact Club Relations for help.

Part IV

Advancement to License Status

After your club holds two "Qualifying" A (OA) matches, at least six months apart, it may submit a presentation requesting license status.

The presentation should include the following information:

1. A copy of the current membership list (voting members - regular and household, only) with the letter designations "B" (breeder), "E" (exhibitor), "DO" (interested dog owner) or "J" (judge).
2. A current copy of the club's constitution and bylaws.
3. A list of activities other than matches.
4. All Breed Clubs and Group Clubs must submit a list of facilities (with diagrams) located in their area which would be suitable for license events.
5. A list of officers with addresses and daytime telephone numbers.

The club will be notified of its status by the Club Relations Department. **Please do not contract for grounds, services, etc., until you have been notified that the club's request has been approved.** This will avoid problems if the request is delayed for any reason. Once approved, all necessary applications and forms will be forwarded to the club.

Part V

Approval of Performance and Companion Event Clubs

These clubs include tracking, field trial, hunting test, herding, lure coursing, earthdog, agility, and coonhound clubs.

We recommend you contact the AKC's Club Relations staff at (212) 696-8211 in the earliest stages of your development.

AKC World Wide Web site address:

www.akc.org

Our site provides information on AKC events and breeds, AKC news, and AKC departments.

HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS:

Please call: (919) 233-9767 or FAX (919) 816-3627.

- *Complete Dog Book* (Fee Item)
- *AKC GAZETTE* - One-Year Subscription, 12 issues (Fee Item)

SINGLE COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING BOOK-LETS ARE FREE OF CHARGE:

- "Developing an Effective Breeder Referral Program"
- "Spreading the Word"
- Event Rule Books - specify type
- Sample Constitution and Bylaws - specify type
- "Match Regulations"
- "A Beginner's Guide To Dog Shows"
- "Economic Impact of Dog Shows"
- "Disagree Diplomatically"
- "Working It Out ..."

Glossary:

Accreditation: Approval by the New Clubs Committee to conduct AKC-sanctioned events.

Bylaws (Constitution and Bylaws): The document under which the club conducts its business.

Catalog: A printed catalog containing the names of all dogs and their owners entered in an event. A catalog is mandatory for "A" level events, optional for "B" events.

Club Levels:

Inquiry: Clubs which have notified the AKC of their existence, but have not yet been approved for holding AKC-sanctioned events.

Sanctioned: Clubs which have been approved to hold sanctioned "B" or "A" events.

Licensed: Clubs which are approved to hold events at which championship points and/or titles may be won.

Member: Clubs which have been holding licensed events for at least 10 years are eligible to apply for membership in the AKC (only certain types of clubs are eligible to apply for membership). Member clubs select delegates to attend the AKC's quarterly meetings. Clubs are elected to membership by the sitting delegates.

Club Event Types:

Companion: Dogs perform a set of precision exercises or demonstrate their ability to navigate complex obstacle courses or recognize and follow human scent.

Conformation: Dogs are judged on form and structure — may also be referred to as "breed" competition.

Performance Events: Dogs are evaluated according to how they perform tasks for which they were bred, e.g., field trials, herding tests, lure coursing.

Fun Matches/Events: Events not sanctioned by the AKC, most often held by "inquiry" clubs. These events need not be held under AKC rules and regulations, although we suggest clubs use these events to become familiar with AKC procedures. AKC-sanctioned, licensed and member clubs may conduct "fun matches" only if they are limited to club members.

Parent Club: A specialty club representing one breed on a national basis. The AKC recognizes only one parent club for each breed.

Premium Lists: An advance notice brochure sent to prospective exhibitors, containing details of the forthcoming event. Premium lists are mandatory for "A" level events, optional for "B" events.

Sanctioned Matches and Events:

B (OB): Informal AKC-approved events at which no championship titles or points are earned.

A (OA): More formal sanctioned events which are held in order to establish eligibility to hold licensed events.

AKC Code of Sportsmanship

PREFACE: *The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.*

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.