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News Release

For Immediate Release

2025 AKC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGING PANEL NOW AVAILABLE

NEW YORK, NY (March 13, 2025) – The American Kennel Club® (AKC®) is pleased to announce the judging panel for the **25th AKC National Championship Presented by Royal Canin** to be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida on Saturday, December 13 and Sunday, December 14, 2025.

The 2025 event will showcase the top canine athletes and will also include popular attractions such as the Best Bred-by-Exhibitor competition, the AKC National Owner-Handled Series Finals, and the AKC Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes. The show will once again take place alongside the AKC Agility Invitational, the Obedience Classic and the AKC RACH Invitational, with junior events in Conformation, Agility, Obedience and Rally, as well as special attraction North America Diving Dogs (NADD) Santa Splash.

Leading the charge as Best in Show judge for the 2025 National Championship is **Mrs. Rosalind Kramer** of High Point, NC and **Mr. Thomas Coen** of Great Barrington, MA will judge Best Bred-by-Exhibitor in Show. The judges for the National Owner-Handled Series Finals and the AKC Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes will be announced at a later date.

“The AKC National Championship has had remarkable judges for 25 years, and this year is no exception,” said Dennis Sprung, Show Chair, President and CEO of AKC. “With Roz and Thomas at the helm, this year’s show is sure to be an exhilarating display of quality competition for breeders, exhibitors and judges.”

Judges for the seven variety groups and the Miscellaneous Classes at the AKC National Championship are:

SPORTING – Dr. Donald Sturz, Jr. – Brooklyn, NY
HOUND – Ms. Deirdre Petrie – Strasburg, PA
WORKING – Rita J. Biddle, Esq. – Eagle, MI
TERRIER – Elizabeth “Beth” Sweigart – Bowmansville, PA
TOY – Patricia Proctor – Yarmouth Port, MA
NON-SPORTING – Mr. Fred Basset – Broken Arrow, OK
HERDING – Mr. Carl Gene Liepmann – Flushing, MI
MISCELLANEOUS CLASSES – Mr. Michael Canalizo – Mill Neck, NY

BEST JUNIOR HANDLER – Ms. Patricia Anne Keenan – Chehalis, WA

JUNIOR PRELIMS – Amanda Swanson and Angela Lloyd

Judges for the seven Bred-by-Exhibitor variety groups are:

SPORTING – Mr. David Kittredge – Rochester, NY
HOUND – Mr. Richard Reynolds – Tenafly, NJ
WORKING – Barbara Bruns – Winsen Niedersachsen Lowe, GER
TERRIER – Mrs. Allison Sunderman – Hanover, MI
TOY – Pamela Bruce – Niagara Region, CN
NON-SPORTING – Mr. Desmond Murphy – Monroe, NY
HERDING – Ms. Janina K. Laurin – Ashford, CT

BREED JUDGING FOR THE AKC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP:

SPORTING GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Ms. Britt Jung	Barbet, Bracco Italiano, Lagotto Romagnolo Pointer, Vizsla, Wirehaired Pointing Griffon, Wirehaired Vizsla
Beth Sweigart	Brittany, Retriever (Labrador)
Mr. Frank Kane	Retriever (Chesapeake Bay), Retriever (Curly-Coat), Retriever (Flat-Coated), Spaniel (Welsh Springer), Spinone Italiano, Weimaraner
Ms. Elizabeth Muthard	Pointer (German Shorthaired)
Ms. Patricia Anne Keenan	Pointer (German Wirehaired), Spaniel (English Cocker), Spaniel (English Springer), Spaniel (Field), Spaniel (Irish Water), Spaniel (Sussex)
Ms. Cynthia Collins	Retriever (Golden)
Ms. Claire Wisch Abraham	Retriever (Nova Scotia Duck Tolling), Setter (English), Setter (Gordon), Setter (Irish), Setter (Irish Red & White)
Mrs. Meghen Riese-Bassel	Nederlandse Kooikerhondje, Spaniel (American Water), Spaniel (Boykin), Spaniel (Clumber), Spaniel (Cocker – all varieties)
HOUND GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Mr. Michael Canalizo	Afghan Hound, Whippet
Mr. Daniel J. Smyth, Esq.	American English Coonhound, American Foxhound, Azawakh, English Foxhound, Redbone Coonhound, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Saluki, Treeing Walker Coonhound
Dr. Donald Sturz, Jr.	Basenji, Bloodhound, Bluetick Coonhound, Borzoi, Cirneco dell'Etna, Greyhound, Harrier, Irish Wolfhound, Plott Hound, Sloughi

Mr. Frank Kane	Basset Hound
Mrs. Debbie Melgreen	Beagle (both varieties), Black and Tan Coonhound, Ibizan Hound, Norwegian Elkhound, Otterhound, Scottish Deerhound
Mrs. Jane Fowler	Dachshund (all varieties)
Dana Cline	Grand Basset Griffon Vendeen, Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen, Portuguese Podengo Pequeno
Mr. Dominic Carota	Pharaoh Hound
WORKING GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Mr. Andrew Ritter	Akita, Alaskan Malamute, Bernese Mountain Dog, Boerboel, Bullmastiff, Greater Swiss Mountain Dog, Komondor, Kuvasz, Leonberger, Newfoundland, St. Bernard, Tibetan Mastiff
Ms. Elizabeth Muthard	Anatolian Shepherd Dog, Black Russian Terrier, Danish-Swedish Farmdog, Dogo Argentino, Giant Schnauzer, Mastiff, Neapolitan Mastiff, Standard Schnauzer
Mrs. Vicki Seiler-Cushman	Boxer, Cane Corso, Dogue de Bordeaux, German Pinscher, Great Pyrenees
Ms. Janina K. Laurin	Chinook, Doberman Pinscher, Great Dane, Rottweiler
Robin Stansell	Portuguese Water Dog, Samoyed, Siberian Husky
TERRIER GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Ms. Kathy Ferris	Airedale Terrier, Bedlington Terrier, Norfolk Terrier, Norwich Terrier, Russell Terrier, Scottish Terrier, Sealyham Terrier, Skye Terrier, West Highland White Terrier
Grace Fritz	American Hairless Terrier, Cesky Terrier, Fox Terrier (Smooth), Fox Terrier (Wire), Parson Russell Terrier, Rat Terrier
Mr. Fred Basset	American Staffordshire Terrier, Bull Terrier (both varieties), Dandie Dinmont Terrier, Glen of Imaal Terrier, Irish Terrier, Kerry Blue Terrier, Miniature Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier
Ms. Patricia Anne Keenan	Australian Terrier, Lakeland Terrier, Manchester Terrier (Standard), Miniature Schnauzer, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Welsh Terrier
Mr. Richard Reynolds	Border Terrier, Cairn Terrier
TOY GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Pamela Bruce	Affenpinscher, Biewer Terrier, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Russian Toy
Mr. Ray Filburn, Jr.	Brussels Griffon, Chinese Crested, Shih Tzu

Mr. Tim Catterson	Chihuahua (both varieties), Italian Greyhound
Ms. Deirdre Petrie	English Toy Spaniel (all varieties), Havanese, Pomeranian, Silky Terrier
Beth Sweigart	Japanese Chin
Dr. Steven Keating	Maltese, Miniature Pinscher, Pekingese, Pug, Toy Fox Terrier
Ms. Patricia Anne Keenan	Manchester Terrier (Toy)
Mrs. Angela Pickett	Papillon
Dana Cline	Poodle (Toy)
Robin Stansell	Yorkshire Terrier
NON-SPORTING GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Grace Fritz	American Eskimo Dog, Chinese Shar-Pei, Chow Chow, Coton de Tulear, Keeshond, Lhasa Apso, Norwegian Lundehund, Schipperke
Dr. Valeria Rickard	Bichon Frise, Boston Terrier, Bulldog
Dr. Charles Garvin	Dalmatian
Ms. Elizabeth Muthard	Finnish Spitz, Löwchen, Tibetan Spaniel, Tibetan Terrier, Xoloitzcuintli
Mrs. Angela Pickett	French Bulldog
Dana Cline	Poodle (Miniature & Standard), Shiba Inu
HERDING GROUP	**BREED ASSIGNMENTS**
Dr. Thomas Davies	Australian Cattle Dog, Belgian Laekenois, Belgian Malinois, Belgian Sheepdog, Belgian Tervuren, Bergamasco, Berger Picard, Polish Lowland Sheepdog, Pyrenean Shepherd
Dr. Steven Keating	Australian Shepherd
Dana Cline	Bearded Collie, Beauceron, Briard, Canaan Dog, Cardigan Welsh Corgi, Entlebucher Mountain Dog
Mrs. Linda Clark	Border Collie, Bouvier des Flandres
Ms. Marie Ann Falconer	Collie (both varieties), Shetland Sheepdog, Spanish Water Dog, Swedish Vallhund
Mr. Ray Filburn, Jr.	Finnish Lapphund, Icelandic Sheepdog, Norwegian Buhund
Pamela Bruce	German Shepherd Dog, Lancashire Heeler, Miniature American Shepherd, Mudi, Puli, Pumi
Ms. Elizabeth Muthard	Old English Sheepdog
Beth Sweigart	Pembroke Welsh Corgi

*Panel subject to final approval.

About Best in Show judge Mrs. Rosalind Kramer: Rosalind Kramer started in the sport as a child showing her Wire Fox Terriers. She has bred National Specialty, Best in Show winners, and many top-ranked dogs over the years. She handled top-winning Terrier and Toy dogs.

After ending her career as a professional handler, Mrs. Kramer went to work for the American Kennel Club as an Executive Field Representative and Judges Education Chair. She retired from the AKC when she married Dr. Andrew Kramer, a fellow Terrier enthusiast, and began her judging career. She has judged the Terrier Group, Toy Group and Best in Show at Westminster Kennel Club, as well as BIS at Montgomery County Kennel Club, and the Terrier and Toy Groups at the American Kennel Club National Championship, as well as numerous shows internationally.

Mrs. Kramer is a long-time member of the American Fox Terrier Club, Wire Fox Terrier Club of the Central States, Middle Peninsula Kennel Club, and the Virginia Terrier Club.

About Best Bred-By-Exhibitor judge Mr. Thomas Coen: Tom Coen became interested in the world of purebred dogs at the age of 12 and whelped his first Sheltie litter in 1964 while still in high school on Long Island. Over the past the past six decades, Macdega has bred or owned eight National Specialty Best of Breed winners, eight All-Breed Best in Show winners and more than 20 Register of Merit producers, including the breed's All-Time Top Sire. In 2004, Tom and his wife, Nioma, were named AKC Herding Group Breeders of the Year.

After graduating from college, Mr. Coen taught art on the Junior High level outside of Woodstock, New York. In 1970 he applied for his handler's license and that was the beginning of an exciting career that spanned 30 years. He retired from handling and received his judge's license in 2000. He judges all Herding Breeds, Dachshunds, and Best in Show. Mr. Coen has had the honor of judging Best of Breed at the Collie National, the Australian Shepherd National, the Pumi National and twice at the Sheltie National. His assignments and his seminar "Quest For Quality" have taken him to Canada, Japan, China, Denmark, Norway and Brazil. He lives with his wife, Nioma, in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts.

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ABOUT THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 26,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred and mixed breed dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, scent work, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests.

Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite, the AKC Museum of the Dog, and the AKC Purebred Preservation Bank. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

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About Royal Canin USA
Royal Canin USA, a subsidiary of Mars, Incorporated is a leader in science-based cat and dog health nutrition. Founded by a veterinarian in 1968, Royal Canin has more than 50 years of experience in delivering individualized nutritional solutions. In collaboration with an expert team of nutritionists, breeders, and veterinarians from around the world, Royal Canin places cats and dogs at the central point of the innovation process. The Royal Canin product line offers a range of diets based on size, age, breed, lifestyle, and therapeutic requirements. Royal Canin diets are available at veterinary hospitals and pet specialty stores nationwide. To learn more about Royal Canin, visit www.royalcanin.com and follow us on Instagram at @royalcaninus.

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