

# Sanctioned Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition Regulations

*Last amended by AKC Board of Directors August 2025 (effective January 1, 2026)*

## Section 1 - Classifications

The Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition shall be for dogs that are four months of age and over but under six months on the day of the event. Classes will be offered for breeds and varieties and divided into Groups as described in Chapter 3, Section 1 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* and the Miscellaneous Class breeds as listed in Chapter 3, Section 23. The Miscellaneous class competition will be the equivalent of Group competition, and the winner will be eligible to compete in Best Four-to-Six Month Puppy in Show. The FSS competition will be the equivalent of Group competition, and the winner will be eligible to compete in Best Four-to-Six Month Puppy in Show.

## Section 2 - Entry and Eligibility

Entry and eligibility requirements include:

- A Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition may be offered at licensed, or member dog shows or conformation B- matches at the option of the show giving club.
- AKC licensed and member clubs sanctioned to hold all-breed conformation dog shows may offer a Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition with any AKC sanctioned companion or performance event. When held with a companion or performance event, classes must be offered for all registrable breeds and varieties and for any breed eligible for entry in the Miscellaneous class and all FSS recordable breeds.
- A Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition must be listed in the premium list, entry form and judging schedule, if offered.
- Closing date and time for this competition may be listed as any date and time prior to the event including the same day as the event and must be listed in the premium list, entry form and judging schedule.
- AKC registration number or an AKC litter number will be required for entries of an AKC recognized breed as listed in Chapter 3, Section 1 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*.
- A foreign-born dog may enter this class if they are registered in the country of origin.
- FSS number or FSS registered litter number will be required for Miscellaneous and FSS breed entries.
- All entrants are to be vaccinated (including rabies) in accordance with their veterinarian's protocol.
- Professional handlers, members of their household and current assistants to professional handlers may personally exhibit a dog they own as "Exhibition Only" in the Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition. "Exhibition Only" entries are not eligible to earn awards in this competition.
- Dogs that are owned or co-owned by a professional handler, members of their household, or current assistants to professional handlers may compete for awards in this competition but must be handled by a non-professional handler. *Professional handlers are defined as any person who belongs or has belonged to a professional handlers' organization, distributed rate cards, or otherwise advertised or represented themselves as handling dogs for pay within the last five years. Dogs may not be exhibited by current assistants and household members of a professional handler.*
- Minors (under 18) with amateur status who reside with professional handlers and current assistants to professional handlers that are eligible to compete in Junior Showmanship (meet age and amateur status requirements) may personally exhibit dogs in the Four-to-Six Month (Beginner Puppy) Competition.
- A change to modify an entry to Exhibition Only, or from Exhibition Only to be eligible to compete for awards may not be made after closing.

## Section 3 - Titles

The Certificate of Merit (CM) title is an introductory title to AKC conformation events. Entrants in each FSS (including Miscellaneous Class) breed **excluding Exhibition Only entries** shall compete for Best

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of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed. Winners of the Best of Breed in each of the individual FSS (including Miscellaneous Class) breeds or varieties will be awarded points toward the CM title based on the number of dogs competing in their breed or variety, **excluding Exhibition Only Entries**. Winners of Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed in each of the individual breeds or varieties will be awarded points toward the CM title based on the number of dogs competing in their sex **excluding Exhibition Only Entries**. FSS & Miscellaneous Group winners will be eligible for the highest number of points earned by any breed within that Group. Best Four-to-Six Puppy in Show will be eligible for the highest number of CM points earned by any breed entered.

The Certificate of Merit requires 15 points awarded in accordance with the following points structure.

| Dogs Competing | Points |
|----------------|--------|
| • 2            | 1      |
| • 4            | 2      |
| • 8            | 3      |
| • 12           | 4      |
| • 16           | 5      |

The Puppy of Achievement (POA) certificate is an introductory certificate to AKC conformation events. **Excluding Exhibition Only entries**, entrants in each breed or variety listed in Chapter 3, Section 1 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* shall compete for Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed. Winners of the Best of Breed in each of the individual breeds or varieties will be awarded points toward the POA certificate based on the number of dogs competing in their breed or variety, **excluding any Exhibition Only entries**. Winners of Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Breed in each of the individual breeds or varieties will be awarded points toward the POA certificate based on the number of dogs competing in their sex, **excluding any Exhibition Only entries**. Group winners will be eligible for the highest number of points earned by any breed within that Group. Best Four-to-Six Puppy in Show will be eligible for the highest number of POA points earned by any breed entered.

The Puppy of Achievement requires 10 points awarded in accordance with the following points structure.

| Dogs Competing | Points |
|----------------|--------|
| • 1-2          | 1      |
| • 3-4          | 2      |
| • 5 or more    | 3      |

## Section 4 - Ribbons

Ribbons for Groups and Best Four to Six Puppy in Show will be as follows:

- Best of Breed - Orange
- Best of Opposite Sex - Lavender
- Group 1 - Rose
- Group 2 - Brown
- Group 3 - Light Green
- Group 4 - Gray
- Best Four-to-Six Month Puppy in Show - Pink & Green

*It is recommended that all participants receive a token of participation in this event.*

## Section 5- Administration

Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition will be offered in a separate ring(s) from the regular class judging in order to avoid delays in the judging of regular classes. Classes will not be divided by sex in this

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competition. Exhibition Only entries will be included in the same class as all other entries for their breed and must be denoted by an "E" preceding the armband number in the judge's book, catalog and on the exhibitor armbands. (i.e., "E17"). Exhibition Only entries may not be changed to be eligible to compete for awards after the close of entries.

Entry fees will be determined by the show-giving club. The show results and event service fee of \$3.00 per entry, **including Exhibition Only entries**, must be submitted to AKC Event Operations within seven (7) days of the event (electronic results submissions are preferred).

When Four to Six Month Beginner Puppy competition is held in conjunction with a B-Match, the breeds (all breeds, breeds of a specific group, or breed only) offered at the Four to Six Month Beginner Puppy competition must be the same or fewer than those offered at the B-Match.

Clubs holding Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition will receive credit for completing both a Major Activity as well as an Additional Activity for judges gaining experience on their unapproved breeds by judging at the event. *Dealing with Misconduct* will be applicable to any person and dog entered at this competition. All applicable rules found in *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* will govern the conduct of this competition unless these regulations state otherwise.

## Section 6 - Judging

- Individuals that have an AKC conformation judge's number (approved breed or FSS/Open Show Judge) are the required judges for the Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition.
- A non-approved individual approved to judge the regular classes at a specialty may judge the Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition held in-conjunction with the same specialty show.
- Judges assigned regular classes may not judge the Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition if it interferes or delays the judging of regular classes, Groups or Best in Show.
- The judging conflict requirements of 30 days and 200-mile between assignments will not apply to the Four-to-Six Month Puppy competition.
- A change in the listed judge will not result in a return in the entry fee.
- Judges will be credited with an enriching component for breeds judged in the 4-to-6 Month Puppy competition.
- Judges of this competition may also exhibit on the day(s) they judge.
- Exhibitors should open their dog's mouth for examination. If the judge finds it necessary to open the mouth, they should disinfect their hands prior to examining other dogs. Judges will comply with the *Rules, Policies and Guidelines for Conformation Judges* except the speed of judging may be reduced to 20 dogs an hour.
- Male puppies without 2 fully descended testicles need not be disqualified or excused but the judge's book must describe the condition and Certificate of Merit points must be withheld.
- Dogs with breed standard disqualifications should not be excused but may not receive placements.
  - However, dogs with age related disqualifications such as color (as related to age), height, teeth etc. are permitted to receive awards in the 4-to-6 Month Puppy classes.
- Dogs must be excused for attacking a person or other dogs.
- No dog is to be judged if it is brought into the ring bandaged, taped, glued or stitched anywhere including ears or tail. These dogs must be excused from judging but, at the judge's discretion, may return to be judged after the tape or bandage is removed.
- Exhibition Only entries will be judged as all other entries (examined and gaited) but may not be considered for Best of Breed/Variety or Best of Opposite Sex.