

SIX CROSSBREEDS HEADING TO CRUFTS FOR SCRUFFTS FINAL

The Scruffts Family Crossbreed Dog of the Year competition, exclusively supported by pet food makers James Wellbeloved, is the nation's favourite crossbreed competition. This year the final will once again be held at the world's greatest dog show, Crufts, at the NEC in Birmingham on Saturday 10th March 2018.

A crossbreed is a dog of mixed blood, whose parents are of two different breeds, or a mixture of several breeds.

Throughout 2017, 15 heats of the popular Scruffts contest took place at events around the country in search of crossbreeds with that extra special something. During the course of the year, over 1,300 dogs took part, raising nearly £4,000 for the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and the chosen charities of the heat hosts. The winners of each heat received delicious James Wellbeloved goodies for their dog.

The lucky finalists each won their class in the semi-finals at Eukanuba Discover Dogs at ExCeL London in October 2017. The six categories were Child's Best Friend, Good Citizen Dog Scheme, Prettiest Bitch, Golden Oldie, Best Rescue and Most Handsome Dog.

Comedian and dog lover Alan Carr as well as renowned dog judge Frank Kane will be making the difficult decision of crowning the winner in the main arena at 5.55pm.

Scruffts is run in support of the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, which has donated over £10m worth of grants to benefit the canine world since its inception in 1987. Its mission is to 'make a difference for dogs' through charitable grants and helping to fund research into canine health problems.

Catch all the finalists in *Scruffts: Britain's Favourite Dog* on Friday 16th March at 8pm, on Channel 4.

To find out more about Scruffts, please visit www.scruffts.org.uk. For tickets to Crufts, please visit www.crufts.org.uk.

The finalists in this year's competition are:

Honey and Dr Emma Williamson – Best Crossbreed Rescue

Six year-old Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross Honey didn't have the best start to life when she was found homeless on the streets of London. After being repeatedly rehomed by a number of different families, the rescue centre was worried whether she'd ever find her forever home. Despite her loving nature, Honey became nervous after being rejected so many times.

It wasn't until Dr Emma Williamson, a clinical psychologist working with the homeless in Lambeth, came across the young crossbreed that her luck started to change. Honey was recommended to Emma after she began looking around for a family dog, as well as a dog to help with her work. Emma has worked with Pets As Therapy (PAT) dogs in previous roles with children and people with head injuries but, recognising the benefits, had wanted to introduce a PAT dog into her current team to help put homeless people at ease with the psychologists.

It was love at first sight when Emma went to visit her at Foal Farm animal rescue centre in Kent in October 2015, but at the time another family had expressed an interest in rehoming her. After a tense 24 hours, Emma got the call to say that the family had decided not to rehome Honey and that she was able to take her home.

Honey started coming into work with Emma every day, giving homeless people the confidence to talk to the psychologists, and after taking the relevant assessments, Honey became an official PAT dog last year. Not only is Honey a family dog for Emma, but she helps others on a daily basis with her work with the homeless – proving that if she can find her forever home, so can others.

After their class win, Emma said: "I am amazingly proud of Honey to have won the semi-final at Scruffts, as well as gaining recognition for therapy work with homeless

people. It is also fantastic recognition of the lovely nature Staffies have, despite their bad reputation.”

Milo and Charley Henkey – Most Handsome Crossbreed Dog

Three year-old rescue Anatolian Shepherd/German Shepherd cross Milo is the first dog owned by Charley Henkey from Reading, Berkshire, despite growing up with them in her family. When she first started looking into different breeds, she had her heart set on a Jack Russell, but things soon changed when she saw a picture of Milo on social media, and it was love at first sight. Milo was rescued from Europe, presumed to be from the streets of Romania, but was brought over to the UK to be rehomed by a kennel in South Mimms, Hertfordshire. Despite seriously considering rehoming him, Charley’s mum pointed out that Milo would grow to a very large size, and managed to convince her not to take him.

However, Milo had made a big impression on Charley as she dreamt about him all the following night. She called the kennels at 9am the following morning and picked him up a week later.

But Milo wasn’t the happy, healthy puppy that every owner looks for in a dog, and was in a terrible state when Charley picked him up, as the kennels had only just begun his rehabilitation. He was starved and neglected, weighing only 12kg. For two weeks he wouldn’t even leave the house and was continually wetting himself in fear. But after lots of love, medical attention and training, he grew into a happy, healthy dog, who is very much a part of Charley’s family.

Charley is a chiropractor for humans, but will begin to train as a chiropractor for dogs in April.

After their class win, Charley said: “It’s an absolutely amazing feeling to have won in our category – I’m so excited to be a part of Crufts with my best friend.”

Jack and Josie Baldwin – Good Citizen Dog Scheme

Jack, a Shih Tzu/Maltese cross came into 16 year-old Young Kennel Club (YKC) member Josie Baldwin's life five years ago. Josie, from Deal, Kent had wanted a dog for many years and was finally allowed one so long as she trained him properly. After choosing Jack, Josie began training him at the Happy Hound Puppy and Dog Training club. Shortly after attending puppy classes, she began taking him to Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme classes, where they achieved their bronze, silver and gold awards. She also competes in competitive obedience and agility with Jack.

After their class win, Josie said: "I'm lost for words, it's so amazing to be going to Crufts!"

Missy and Anna Drinkwater – Golden Oldie Crossbreed

Rescue Bearded Collie cross Missy was found on a private rescue website by 45 year-old Anna Drinkwater, from Stoke-on-Trent, aged 11 months. Anna has always preferred to rehome or foster unwanted dogs to give them a second chance at life as she noticed that so many were either put to sleep or had to live out their lives in kennels, which broke her heart. When Anna drove up to Bradford to pick Missy up, she brought her other rescue dog, Bayley the Border Collie, to make sure that everyone got on. Since meeting nearly 10 years ago, Anna and Missy have become inseparable, and when Bayley sadly passed away, Missy became the only dog in Anna's life.

After their class win, Anna said: "I'm overwhelmed and can't quite believe it! I love Crufts and to actually be in it is amazing."

Hattie and Hanna Cunningham – Prettiest Crossbreed Bitch

One year-old Irish Setter/Welsh Collie cross Hattie found her forever home with 24 year-old Hanna Cunningham from Plymouth, Devon after she and her partner decided it was the right time to get a dog. Hanna grew up with the setter breed in her family, whilst her partner had collies. Once they met Hattie, a cross between their two family breeds, they knew she was the perfect dog for them.

After their class win, Hanna said: “I’m happy, shocked and so looking forward to seeing everything at Crufts. Discover Dogs was one of the biggest events we’ve ever been to, and we’re so excited for Crufts.”

Rufus and Dylan Kirke – Child’s Best Friend

12 year-old Dylan Kirke from Newport, South Wales always dreamt of having a dog of his own, and the summer before he was due to start secondary school, he finally got his wish. His parents wanted him to always have a companion to come home to after school, and decided that a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel/Poodle cross was the right breed for their lifestyle. Dylan chose Rufus out of the litter and they’ve been best friends ever since. Rufus also never leaves the side of Dylan’s new baby brother Maxen and is very much a part of the family. This will be the first time the family have been to Crufts.

After their class win, Dylan said: “I feel amazing – this is such an achievement for us. Rufus is my best friend and I’m glad the judge saw the bond we have. I can’t believe that I get to take him to Crufts – we watch it every year and now we get to take part. I can’t believe it!”