



Press release

FCI IPO World Championships

The World Championships for Utility Dogs

This competition demands fitness, nerves of steel and an excellent nose: the FCI IPO World Championships – taking place from 14–17 September in Rheine – will attract the finest competitors in utility dog sport from around the world.

Top teams from 42 countries will be competing in Jahnstadion, a modern multi-purpose stadium that can accommodate over 6000 visitors. The World Canine Organisation (FCI) has assigned the task of hosting the competition to VDH, the German Kennel Club.

VDH executive director Jörg Bartscherer comments: “Germany is the country where utility dog sport began. We are delighted to have the chance to present this fascinating sport to an international audience. And we are pleased to have found a place with such a long-standing tradition of hosting such events as our location of Rheine.”

More than a hundred competitors at the apex of the sport will be showing off their skills over four days. The FCI IPO World Championship for Utility Dogs is a tournament with three exciting disciplines: tracking, protection, and obedience. A maximum of 100 points can be gained in each area. Dogs scoring less than 70 in any one discipline do not pass.

Tracker dogs must find tiny objects, such as pieces of carpet, cork or wood that are only two centimetres long in the tracking ground. They must follow a confusingly winding trail that can be up to 800 steps long to discover them. The extremely acute sense of smell these animals have is their guide.

The demonstrations in the area of “protection” are more thrilling than a crime film. What is crucial here is the absolute obedience of dogs in extreme situations. The four-legged specialists search through a total of six hiding places, find the “criminal” in the last one and bark continuously to alert their handlers to his presence. Then they have to react to a simulated attack by biting and holding on. By the way: despite what many people think, these dogs are well able to distinguish between their tasks as protectors and their normal, everyday lives. At home, they are affectionate family members.

Absolute compliance with instructions is also important in the “obedience” discipline. Walking to heel, fetching, leaping over an obstacle (1 metre high) and the climbing wall (1.75 metres) are all tested, as is the dog’s ability to maintain its composure and avoid being distracted by people and dogs in exercises such as off-leash heeling (where the dog follows the owner, off the leash, through a group of people) and waiting ten minutes off the leash in an assigned place calmly while its handler is out of sight and another dog is retrieving, jumping and climbing.

Many experienced judges – even including an expert from Japan – will be in Rheine to assess the performance of the dog sport competitors. Only dogs who have passed a companion dog examination may take part. And the dog handlers must present certificates of competence, too.

Participating dogs mainly belong to the German Shepherd and Malinois breeds. These dogs are physically and temperamentally ideally suited to these tasks following generations of breeding since the beginning of the nineteenth century. For purely anatomical reasons, a dog like a dachshund would simply be unable to retrieve a wooden dumbbell weighing 650 grammes and surmount an obstacle with it.

On the 13th of September, visitors to the Jahnstadion will get a flavour of what it must be like to be at the Olympic Games: from 5 p.m. on, dog handlers and the top performers in dog sports will be introduced to the audience in a parade of all the nations.

But the excitement for visitors doesn’t begin and end with the competition itself. As well as a big food tent with delicious refreshments and music, there will also be stands with people selling everything a dog could desire from treats in many flavours to exciting toys, cosy baskets and outdoor clothing.

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Der Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen (VDH) e.V.

The Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen e.V. (The German Dog Federation) represents dog owners throughout Germany and is ultimate source of advice on living with dogs, dog sport and dog breeding in Germany. As the umbrella organisation for 176 organisations throughout Germany, the organisation represents more than 650,000 members.