

Understanding Your Dog's Pedigree

Understanding titles

When you begin to discuss getting a puppy from a breeder, he or she will often provide you with a pedigree. Your breeder should explain the relationships among the specific dogs you see, but one thing you will notice right away is that the pedigree is peppered with initials before and after the dogs' registered names. What does this alphabet soup all mean?

Countries

It is common to find titles from more than one country in a given pedigree. Abbreviations of country names before a title indicate the country in which the title was achieved. Often the same title is gained in more than one country. For example, "Can." means Canadian title, "Am." means American, "Eng." means English, "Ber." or "Bda." means Bermuda ... you get the idea. Breeders often do not state the country in which a title was earned when they make up pedigrees unless it is different from the breeder's home country unless otherwise indicated.

Each country has one main regulatory body for purebred dogs. Dog activity in the U.S. is governed by the American Kennel Club (A.K.C.). In Canada, it's the Canadian Kennel Club (C.K.C.). These abbreviations may appear before registration numbers to indicate which body has issued that number. Dogs titled in more than one country will have registration numbers for each country in which they have competed. The U.S. has alternative organizations which issue titles, but it will usually be specified if the title or registration number is from an organization other than AKC.

Conformation

There is only one title which a dog may achieve in conformation competition: that of champion (Ch.). This is a competitive title, and like championships in obedience and field, the abbreviation is placed in front of the dog's registered name. Abbreviations are often added to give more information about a dog's show career:

- BIS = Best in Show winner
- BISS = Best in Specialty Show (most common) -or- Best in Sweepstakes
- BPIS = Best Puppy in Show (Canada)
- BPIG = Best Puppy in Group (Canada)

*Note that these are NOT titles, merely a form of shorthand to pass on additional information about the dog in question.



Obedience & Tracking

In obedience, a dog may gain three different non-competitive titles with increasing levels of difficulty: the C.D. (Companion Dog), the C.D.X. (Companion Dog Excellent), and the U.D. (Utility Dog). Dogs must qualify three times at each level to be awarded the title. In the U.S., a U.D. does not equal an OTCh.; specific competitive criteria must be met to gain the OTCh. title. U.D.X. (Utility Dog Excellent) title is earned by qualifying in both Open and Utility at the same trial.

There are currently two non-competitive tracking titles in both the U.S. and Canada: T.D. (Tracking Dog) and T.D.X. (Tracking Dog Excellent). Tracking titles are often combined with a U.D. title when the dog has both. Thus we get U.D.T. (U.D. + T.D.) and U.D.T.X. (U.D. + T.D.X.). The Americans are in the process of adding a third tracking title to be earned in urban areas (as opposed to out in fields); at this point, I don't know what they are planning to call this title.



Field

Both competitive and non-competitive titles exist in the field area. The AKC has its own system of non-competitive field titles where dogs must earn a number of legs at a given level to acquire the title, similar to the way obedience titles work, with the exception that as the difficulty level increases, so does the number of qualifying legs required to earn the title. The three AKC hunting titles are J.H. (Junior Hunter), S.H. (Senior Hunter) and M.H. (Master Hunter).

Versatility

The CSCA offers a Versatility program,....

Other

The Outstanding Sire (O.S.) and Outstanding Dam (O.D.) titles are also awarded by the national CSCA clubs in the U.S. and Canada. These titles are achieved in quite a different manner than all other titles: instead of being awarded on the basis of a given dog's accomplishments, they are awarded on the basis of that dog's offspring's accomplishments. To qualify, a dog must produce a specified number of champion and/or titled offspring. The offspring may be all titled in the same area or may have earned titles in two or three different areas.