

# Young Royal Kennel Club



YRKC DOG GROOMING  
(GT & CTS)



DOG GROOMING COMPETITIONS  
RULES 2026 (CRUFTS 2027)



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## YRKC DOG GROOMING RULES - CHANGE LOG

1. Changes Dated 27/03/2026 – (v1.0 to v1.1).
  - i. Changed all YKC logos to YRKC.
  - ii. Changed all mention of YKC to YRKC.
  - iii. Changed all mention of Kennel Club to Royal Kennel Club.
  - iv. Added a new section (H) to the document to outline Crufts health testing requirement for RFG breeds.
  - v. B.6 – changed the word “an” to “a” for syntax



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## A: HANDLERS

1. The following two YRKC Dog Grooming competitions are available for members to compete in, each with three age subcategories:



### YRKC Groom Through

- Handler 06-11 Years
- Handler 12-17 Years
- Handler 18-24 Years



### YRKC Clip, Trim & Strip

- Handler 06-11 Years
- Handler 12-17 Years
- Handler 18-24 Years

2. Only current YRKC members may compete in YRKC competitions.
3. Use the YRKC member's age on the first day of the show to work out which age category a YRKC member should enter.
4. Handlers may not be swapped after the closing date of the show.
  - i. This means no on-the-day swapping of YRKC handlers at any dog grooming qualifier.
  - ii. If the entered handler is not grooming the dog, that entered dog must withdraw from the competition.

## B: DOGS

1. Dogs must be at least 12 calendar months to compete in YRKC Dog Grooming competitions.
2. Bitches in season will not be allowed to compete in any YRKC Dog Grooming competition.
3. Dogs must be registered with the Royal Kennel Club when entering Royal Kennel Club licenced shows.
  - i. Dogs can either be registered on the breed register or the activity register.
4. There are no restrictions on dog breed,
  - i. it is highly recommended that Groomers bring a dog that is suitable for grooming
    - a. You may enter a Chinese crested or Xoloitzcuintli [Mexican hairless], but you will not be able to score highly in many areas of the competition.
    - b. This also includes dogs with very little hair such as Greyhounds etc
5. Food shall not be carried in the hand or given to a dog in the ring.
6. Once a dog has competed with a given YRKC handler in a Dog Grooming qualifier, that dog may only compete with that handler in any future Dog Grooming qualifiers for the rest of the qualifying season.

## C: YRKC DOG GROOMING JUDGING CRITERIA

1. Both YRKC Dog Grooming classes will be will be judged on the following criteria and scored out of ten for each section:
  - i. Coat
  - ii. Skin
  - iii. Ears
  - iv. Eyes
  - v. Teeth
  - vi. Feet
  - vii. Handling
  - viii. Scope of Work
    - a. The marks are **NOT** to be added together, as some categories may be deemed more important to the judge than others.
    - b. The marks are designed to give the judge a method recording their thoughts in order to base their final results on.
    - c. The judge will rank the competitors based who they deem the best grooming with respect to the above criteria.



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## 2. The following rules regarding which dog grooming products may be used is in effect:

- i. No substance which alters the natural colour, texture or body of the coat may be present in the dog's coat for any purpose at any time during the show or used before the competition.
- ii. The use of block chalk is allowed in the preparation of dogs
- iii. Block chalk and talc is allowed should it be necessary prior to competition but the chalk/talc must be brushed out before exhibition.
- iv. The use of powdered chalk is NOT permitted
- v. No substance which alters the natural colour of any external part of the dog may be present on the dog for any purpose at any time during the Show or used before the competition.
- vi. Any other substance (other than water) which may be used in the preparation of a dog for exhibition must not be allowed to remain in the coat or on any other part of the dog at the time of exhibition.
- vii. Competitors may be disqualified at the judge's discretion if the dog is harmed or distressed (deliberately or accidentally) during the competition
- viii. Breaking any of the above rules will result in disqualification from the competition.



## 3. YRKC Groom Through competitions will be judged using the following criteria:

- i. Basic trimming of feet, ears and tail for the purpose of tidying the coat
  - a. this should not be the main focus of this assessment.
- ii. No dead hair remaining.
  - a. no loose hair or dirt should remain in the dog's coat
- iii. No knots or matts in the coat
- iv. Clean ears, eyes & teeth.
  - a. cleanliness of ears, eyes, mouth and other sensitive areas
- v. Nails of a suitable length
  - a. claws should be short
- vi. The dog should be bathed prior to the competition with no sign of shampoo or conditioner remaining in the coat,
- vii. skin should be healthy



## 4. YRKC Clip, Trim & Strip competitions will be judged using the following criteria:

- i. The handler will be judged on the ability they have shown with any grooming skills they have used to remove the coat.
  - a. The coat should be even in length for trimmed and clipped coats
- ii. Stripped coats should lie flat and give a smart appearance.
- iii. No dead hair remaining.
  - a. no loose hair or dirt should remain in the dog's coat
- iv. No knots or matts in the coat
- v. Clean ears, eyes & teeth.
  - a. cleanliness of ears, eyes, mouth and other sensitive areas
- vi. Nails of a suitable length
  - a. claws should be short
- vii. The dog should be bathed prior to the competition with no sign of shampoo or conditioner remaining in the coat,
- viii. skin should be healthy



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## D: YRKC DOG GROOMING CLASSES

1. YRKC “Groom Through” and “Clip, Trim and Strip” competitors will have 2½ hours to complete their tasks
  - i. Competitors are not required to use the full 2½ hours,
    - a. if a competitor completes the task before the time limit has expired, they should inform the judge by raising their hand
      - (1) the judge will complete the final assessment of their dog at this point.
    - b. After the final assessment has been completed, the judge will allow the finished competitor to pack their belongings and remove their dog & equipment from the ring.
2. There will be an optional interval during this competition to allow competitors a 10-minute break for their dog’s comfort.
  - i. During the break you may:
    - a. take your dog to an exercise area
    - b. Provide a drink for your dog
    - c. Use a restroom
    - d. Sit and relax
  - ii. During the break you may NOT:
    - a. Ask or receive advice relating to dog grooming
    - b. *(if you have accepted the break option)* have any additional grooming work completed on the entered dog by the competitor or any other 3<sup>rd</sup> party.
  - iii. The timer will be stopped for any competitors who opted to take a break.
    - a. Any competitors not utilizing the break will be expected to continue the competition, and will have no additional time added to their allotted 2½ hours grooming time.
3. Before any dog grooming commences, the judge will inspect each competitor’s dog
  - i. Competitors must not start any work before the judge says so.
4. While no official standard Royal Kennel Club rules exist for “dog grooming” as an activity, YRKC grooming competitions are still considered Royal Kennel Club class
  - i. All standard Royal Kennel Club rules that apply to all Royal Kennel Club competitions are in effect, this includes, but not limited to:
    - a. Competitors Conduct
    - b. Dog welfare
    - c. Etc



## E: YRKC DOG GROOMING QUALIFIERS

1. By entering a YRKC qualifier, the YRKC member and anyone representing them (parent/guardian etc) agree to abide by the YRKC's Code of Conduct
2. The qualification period for **Crufts 2027** is: **01-Nov-2025 till 31-Oct-2026**
3. YRKC Dog Grooming competitions can be scheduled at RKC and Non-RKC events.
  - i. **All judging should be conducted in a manner that would be found within a standard Royal Kennel Club event**
4. The YRKC reserves the right to amend this qualification method if we are vastly oversubscribed for the final at Crufts **OR** if not enough spaces were filled.
  - i. The YRKC will only amend qualification criteria in exceptional circumstances.
4. There will be a prize giving ceremony.
5. Members may enter YRKC Dog Grooming competitions even if they have already qualified.
6. There are to be no "Not For Competition" entries
7. A YRKC Member may only enter one dog into any YRKC Dog Grooming qualifier e.g:
  - a. **EITHER:** 1x Dog in [Groom Through] class
  - b. **OR:** 1x Dog in the [Clip, Trim & Strip] class
  - ii. Both the [Groom Through] and [Clip, Trim & Strip] classes will take place simultaneously.
8. Members entering any YRKC Grooming competition are expected to:
  - i. Bring their own grooming equipment
    - a. All required scissors
    - b. All required brushes
    - c. A Grooming table / accessories
  - ii. Members should note that no power socket/outlet will be available.
    - a. Should a member require a powered device, it must be battery powered.
9. YRKC Handling qualifiers are listed on the YRKC website
10. Only qualifiers listed on the website will be eligible for qualification, please ensure that you are entering a valid YRKC qualifier.

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## F: WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE YRKC DOG GROOMING FINAL?

1. **First & Second** place at any YRKC Dog Grooming qualifier during this season will guarantee a space in the final.
2. The YRKC reserves the right to amend this qualification method if we are vastly oversubscribed for the final at Crufts **OR** if not enough spaces were filled.
  - i. The YRKC will only amend qualification criteria in exceptional circumstances.
3. The handler may **NEVER** be substituted.
4. The YRKC will let you know which dogs you may pick from to enter each YRKC Dog Grooming final.

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## G: HOW MANY DOGS CAN I QUALIFY FOR THE YRKC DOG GROOMING FINAL?

1. You may qualify as many different dogs across both YRKC dog grooming competitions for the final at Crufts **HOWEVER:**
2. **A YRKC MEMBER MAY ONLY ENTER 1 QUALIFIED DOG THE YRKC DOG GROOMING COMPETITION AT CRUFTS**
  - i. **i.e.:**
    - a. **EITHER 1 x Dog in [Groom Through]**
    - b. **OR 1 x Dog in [Clip, Trim, Strip]**
  - ii. **This means a YRKC member cannot enter both Groom Through and Clip, trim & strip at Crufts.**
3. YRKC members may enter any dog that matches the breed that the YRKC member originally qualified for as their entry for YRKC Dog Grooming Finals at Crufts.



## H ■ NEW HEALTH ENTRY CRITERIA FOR BULLDOGS, FRENCH BULLDOGS AND PUGS AT CRUFTS

4. All Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs exceeding 14 calendar months on the first day of Crufts must have a valid Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Scheme assessment to attend. This requirement is mandatory for entry into the show, not just individual classes.
5. **VALID RFG SCHEME ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**
  - i. To gain entry, all eligible Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs must attach a valid RFG Scheme certificate dated within the last 24 months of the first day of the show to their entry.
  - ii. Dogs assessed as Grade 2 or 3 will be excluded and not allowed to enter or attend the show.
6. **CERTIFICATE UPLOAD AND VALIDATION**
  - i. The dog's RFG scheme certificate must be uploaded as part of your entry, including the expiry date and grade. The Royal Royal Kennel Club will validate and approve the certificate.
7. **EXEMPTIONS AND AGE REQUIREMENTS**
  - i. Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs not exceeding 14 calendar months on the first day of the show are exempt from needing an RFG Scheme assessment, and a certificate is not required.
  - ii. Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs aged 7 years or older on the first day of the show do not need a valid RFG Scheme assessment; however, they must upload the last certificate awarded to the dog
    - a. The corresponding certificate must be uploaded prior to entry, but it does not need to be dated within the last 24 months.
    - b. The last certificate awarded must have the dog assessed as either Grade 0 or Grade 1.
8. **OVERSEAS ASSESSMENTS**
  - i. International RFG Scheme assessments issued by licensed organisations, and carried out by approved assessors, will be accepted. Overseas exhibitors must upload a valid certificate prior to entry, and ensure certificates meet the same standards as domestic entries.
9. **CROSSBREED DOG BREED DETERMINATION**
  - i. A crossbreed that has characteristics of either a Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug will be asked to prove that there are none of the aforementioned breeds in the dog's breeding going back 5 generations.
  - ii. A crossbreed that has unknown lineage will be deemed as one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) if it has characteristics that are associated with those breeds respectively.
  - iii. Any Crossbreed that is deemed to be one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) is subject to the same health testing restrictions as outlined in H1 through H5 in this document.
  - iv. If there is any doubt whether a dog should be deemed as one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) AND that dog has been entered into Crufts without submitting a valid RFG scheme certificate, the judge of the competition will adjudicate.
    - a. The judge may ask for a second opinion from the YRKC show organisers.
    - b. If it is deemed that the dog is one of the designated breeds, that dog shall be asked to leave the show immediately.
10. **More Information**
  - i. For information on where the scheme is available, expected costs and more information on why the RKC is implementing these rules: please visit <https://www.royalkennelclub.com/rfgscheme>



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## YRKC DOG GROOMING FINAL AT CRUFTS

1. **By entering a YRKC competition, the YRKC member and anyone representing them (parent/guardian etc) agree to abide by the YRKC's Code of Conduct**
2. The YRKC Dog Grooming finals will at Crufts be held in:
  - i. The Crufts NEC Hall 3 - YRKC ring
3. YRKC Dog Grooming competitions at Crufts will be judged in the same manner as the qualifiers.
4. At Crufts, the YRKC will calculate the which age category each competitor shall be in based on the YRKC members age on the first day of Crufts.
  - i. This may be a different age category to the one the YRKC member qualified in.
  - ii. Handlers who turn 25 before the first day of Crufts are not eligible to compete at Crufts in the YRKC ring – any qualifications gained for the YRKC will be forfeit.
5. Members entering any YRKC Grooming competition are expected to:
  - i. Bring their own grooming equipment
    - a. All required scissors
    - b. All required brushes
  - ii. Bring their own grooming arm (If required)
  - iii. Bring their own grooming table.
    - a. The YRKC is able, in some instances, to provide grooming tables. These will often be fairly small, and only suitable for small / medium sized dogs. These grooming tables will have no other accessories (like grooming arms / mats etc).
    - b. If you require a grooming table to be provided for you, and it is not stated on the entry form whether there will be one available, check with the YRKC office.
      - (1) You may groom a dog on the floor if preferred / necessary
  - iv. Members should note that no power socket/outlet will be available.
    - a. Should a member require a powered device, it must be battery powered.

## CLOTHING, SPONSORSHIP & LOGOS @ CRUFTS

1. YRKC dog groomers should wear smart plain black or navy trousers with a smart plain short sleeve t-shirt/polo shirt/shirt of their choice.
2. YRKC dog groomers may also additionally wear a plain apron.
3. Footwear should be functional and comfortable for completing a 2½ hour dog grooming session. Plain trainers would be ideal.
4. Some YRKC members have managed to arrange personal sponsorship and branding deals. YRKC members who wish to have branding on their clothing at Crufts must follow the below rules.
5. The YRKC & Royal Kennel Club also have several sponsors in both the YRKC ring and the main arena at Crufts.
  - i. To comply with our sponsors, YRKC members may **NOT** have branding on display from the following companies:
    - a. Dog food or treat supplier
    - b. Car manufacturer
    - c. Insurance company
    - d. Dog grooming supplies
  - ii. If a YRKC member wishes to have branding from a company not on the above list on an item of clothing, that company's branding must be where a breast pocket would be and must be approximately breast pocket size.
    - a. This location could be applied to an apron if worn.
  - iii. This restriction on branding only applies in the following locations:
    - a. Crufts YRKC collecting ring, Crufts YRKC ring, Crufts YRKC Presentation Area.
    - b. Crufts Main arena collecting ring, Crufts Main Arena, Crufts Main Arena Presentation Area.



# YRKC DOG GROOMING

## **K:** YRKC DOG GROOMING FINAL - PRESENTATION

1. The following two awards will be presented in the YRKC ring for the YRKC Dog Grooming Final:



### YRKC Groom Through

- Handler 06-11 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>
- Handler 12-17 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>
- Handler 18-24 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>



### YRKC Clip, Trim & Strip

- Handler 06-11 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>
- Handler 12-17 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>
- Handler 18-24 Years
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>

**YRKC Dog Groomer of the  
Year**

**Overall Winner**

**YRKC Dog Groomer of the Year**

**Reserve**

2. All YRKC competitors in the YRKC Dog Grooming Final will receive a YRKC Finalist Rosette.