Lisa Arnett, of Michigan, blow dries 1-year-old clumber spaniel Rahna on Tuesday at the Clumber Spaniel Club of America 2019 National Specialty dog show at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center.

National dog show comes to Sanford

BY JASMINE GALLUP
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Dog owners from across the globe gathered in Sanford this week to show their dogs, talk to other owners and compete in a national show.

The Clumber Spaniel Club of America 2019 National Specialty started Saturday and continues through Thursday at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center.

A lesser known breed of spaniel, the rare clumber spaniel originated in the mid-1700s in England and got its name from Clumber Park, the estate of the Duke of Newcastle who bred the large dogs for hunting, according to the American Kennel Club.

The Sanford event gives residents a chance to catch a glimpse of the burly, furry spaniels.

“IT attracts (dog owners) from literally all over the country, as well as we have some people from Finland coming, possibly from England, Australia,” said club treasurer Benjamin Hoyle. “It’s really an international attraction for people who are breeders and exhibitors of clumber spaniels.”

Hoyle said the clumber is the largest of the spaniel breed. They were bred to flush birds out of dense brush for hunters.

During the 2019 National Specialty, the dogs were judged on their abilities in hunting, scent tracking and agility. This week, the judges will name regional and national Best in Show, People’s Choice and Top 10 Gala winners.

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Betsy Harringer of Silver Spring, Maryland, and her 3-year-old clumber spaniel Gus, run obedience drills in the Clumber Spaniel Club of America National Specialty dog show Tuesday. Gus was a participant in the dog show’s Novice Class-B Obedience competition.
SHOW
FROM THE FRONT PAGE

"We're kind of a small group, so to speak, and we know most everybody. It's nice that this one time a year we can all come together and socialize and be with our dogs," Hoyle said.

A trainer himself, Hoyle said he's been working with dogs since he was in high school. A lot of people start out as owners, he said, and then may get drawn into the circuit if, for example, a breeder encourages them to show the dog or they start more in-depth training.

"The big attraction is the love of their dogs, they just absolutely love the dogs. They love the breeds and they enjoy being around other people who also love and enjoy clumber spaniels," he said. "It's nice to trade stories."

The breed is known for more than just its size, history and distinctive look and color, Hoyle said. Owners often laugh as they share stories about their dogs' notorious chewing.

On Wednesday, the club will hold its Regional Specialty at 9 a.m. and Top 10 Gala Event at 6 p.m. On Thursday, the National Specialty will be held at 9 a.m., with a banquet, auction and awards to follow at 6 p.m. More events will be held throughout both days at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center, 1801 Nash St.

Visit clumbers.org for more information about the club, National Specialty and clumber spaniels.

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