

Cat shows : A Comparison Between Different Federations by Marie-Bernadette PAUTET (la Chocolaterie)

Most of the cat shows organized in France are done according to the rules of the French federation LOOF. But there are many other ways in which these feline beauty contests called cat shows can be handled. After having summarized how a "traditional" cat show works (shows organized under LOOF, FIFe, WCF or GCCF rules for instance), the "American" type of cat shows (CFA, TICA) is described and the way in which the cats gain their championship titles is compared in these different federations.

« Trad » or « Ring » ?

In a so-called "traditional" cat show, each cat is evaluated by a single judge per show day. This judge must look in detail at all aspects of the cat and write a report where he describes how the cat conforms to its breed standard.

Depending on the cat show, this evaluation may be done in presence of the cat's owner to whom the judge may want to explain what he thinks of the cat, or in a more anonymous fashion without the exhibitor being there. The extreme case is the one of GCCF (Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, a British federation), where all exhibitors must leave the show hall while the judges examine the cats.

In all cases, at the end of the show, the exhibitor keeps a copy of the judge report.

On the opposite, in an "American-style" show, the judge officiates in a "ring", and the stress is put on the cat handling and presentation in front of the public. There is no detailed written report per cat, but each cat will see every judge in turn. The judges will sort the cats by preference order within each of a number of classes, which are quite different from those used in the "traditional" shows (for instance, males and females are compared together).

So, the traditional judgement is probably better at giving the cat owner a more detailed idea of what his or her cat is worth compared to its breed standard, but this evaluation may vary according to the proficiency of the judge for this breed... On

the contrary, the American-style judgement avoids this drawback, since the result of the day will not be the evaluation of one single person, but a sum of the cat results in all the rings. However, the cat must be able to stand being moved all day long and being handled a dozen of times a day !

« Traditional » Shows

In a traditional European-style show, whether following the LOOF rules like most cat shows

held in France, the rules of the Fédération Internationale Féline (FIFe), the ones of the World Cat Federation or those of any other independent club, the way it works is very similar. Every cat is being evaluated by a single judge, who writes a report on the cat describing its qualities and defaults compared to the relevant breed standard, and decides to award a certificate to the cat or not (obtaining its

certificate is often called "getting its point" for FIFe members). This certificate of aptitude is awarded for a given level, according to the titles the cat has won already. If several cats of the same breed and colour compete in the same class, only one of them can gain its certificate, even if the others would be worth it should there be no competition. I witnessed once a cat show where 10 chartreux females (obviously of the same colour : blue !) were competing in the CAC class (the first open class for adult cats) : only one got her CAC certificate. When several cats, like in this example, compete in the same class, the judge sorts them out by order of preference and gives them the mentions "excellent", "very good" or "good" followed by a number indicating their rank among the cats having had the same mention. For example, if 7 cats were competing together in the same class, one possible outcome could be "excellent 1", "excellent 2", "excellent 3", "excellent 4", "very good 1", "very good 2", "good". Only the cat classified "excellent 1" would get the championship certificate.

These terms are chosen to please the exhibitor (her cat being the most beautiful in the world,



that's well known !!!). In fact, their meaning is as follows (ref. to the LOOF rules) :

- excellent : cat very close to the breed standard, presented in perfect physical condition, harmonious, balanced, i.e. whose little imperfections are negligible compared to its qualities ;
- very good (understand average...) : cat having the major breed characteristics but showing some important faults, though not eliminatory, compared to the breed standard ;
- good (understand not quite good !) : cat not having enough type, without any major quality or in bad condition.

With certain clubs, it is possible to two judgements the same day, by two different judges ; this is the case in some German or Swiss shows. Only one of the awarded certificates will be recognised by LOOF (which does not preclude the cat to register for both, in order to have a double advice or maximise its

chances of having its certificate abroad). The FIFe also applies this general principle of "one day, one certificate (maximum)".

These certificates are awarded to adult cats. In LOOF cat shows, a cat is deemed adult as soon as he is 10 months old on the day of the show. In FIFe cat shows the same rule applies. In other federations, the age to be an adult cat may vary, for instance it is often 9 months old in Belgium. Younger cats are called kittens and can also participate in cat shows, but the certificates they obtain do not build up to reach a championship title. According either to LOOF or FIFe rules, the minimum age to participate to a cat show is 3 months old. Some clubs, in Belgium or Switzerland for instance, allow even younger kittens to take part, in a so-called "baby" class (as individual cats) or "nest" class (the whole litter together), and this as young as 10 weeks old !

Les particularités des expos GCCF (Royaume Uni)



The rules of GCCF are very strict as long as judges have not finished to evaluate the cats : the "decoration" of the cage must be restricted to a white bowl for water, a white litter pan, a white blanket without any identification of the cat or cattery. Exhibitors must not talk to the judges as long as they are not finished judging ALL cats, under the penalty of being disqualified.

Both exhibitors and visitors must leave the show hall while the judges are proceeding with judging the open classes.

In fact, the judges typically move a trolley along the aisles, and get each cat in turn out of its cage onto the trolley where they judge it. This method applies for all open classes (those for which certificates are awarded), and this process usually takes more or less all morning.

Once having finished all the open classes, then everybody can relax a bit : cats are allowed some food in their cages, as well as a few toys. During the afternoon, the show goes on with the "side classes", some of which are really just fun classes. Many different combinations

can be imagined for the side classes, such as age groups, competition level, month of birth, club affiliation, distance travelled to attend the show, or even tail length, best Abyssinian smile, most cute Somali, etc. Every cat must register in several classes, typically between 4 and 6 classes.

The strict rules explained here do not apply to the "Supreme Show", where only the best cats of the season may attend, and where cages are lavishly decorated. In this very special (and famous) show, the cats are held by assessors and brought to a ring where the judge performs its evaluations in front of the public, but always (at least theoretically) in an anonymous fashion.

There are quite a few differences between the championship titles awarded by the different federations, and these differences most often concern the number of certificates necessary to obtain the corresponding title, as well as the

number of points the cat must score compared to a total of 100 (for the "perfect cat" described by the breed standard). The following table compares the conditions to obtain titles in LOOF, WCF and FIFe (according to 2007 rules). For

each of these federations, the table includes two columns: the first one gives the number of certificates required for each title, and the second

one gives the minimum number of points the cat must score for this level of certificate.

	LOOF		FIFe		WCF	
Champion	3 CAC (≥ 2 judges)	93	3 CAC (3 judges)	93	3 CAC (3 judges)	93
International Champion	3 CACIB (3 judges) in 2 different countries (including France)	95	3 CACIB (3 judges) in 2 different countries	95	3 CACIB (3 judges) in 2 different countries	95
Great International Champion	4 CAGCI (≥ 3 judges) in 2 different countries (including France)	96	6 CAGCIB (≥ 3 judges) in 3 different countries or 8 CAGCIB (≥ 4 judges) in 2 different countries	96	3 CAGCIB (3 judges) in 2 different countries	97
European Champion *	5 CACE (≥ 4 judges) with at least 2 abroad	97	9 CACS (≥ 3 judges) in 3 different countries ou 11 CACS (≥ 6 judges) in 2 different countries	97	3 CACE (3 judges) in 3 different countries	97
Great European Champion	5 CAGCE (≥ 5 judges) with at least 3 abroad in 2 different countries	98	-	-	3 GCACE (3 judges) in 3 different countries	97
World Champion	-	-	-	-	3 CACM (3 judges) in 3 different countries spanning 2 continents	98

* The European Champion title has been renamed Supreme Champion in FIFe

CAC = "Certificat d'Aptitude au Championnat", Championship Aptitude Certificate

CACIB = "Cert. d'Apt. au Championnat International de Beauté", International Beauty Championship Aptitude Certificate

CAGCI (LOOF) or CAGCIB (FIFe, WCF) = "Cert. d'Apt. au Grand Championnat International (de Beauté)", Great International (Beauty) Championship Aptitude Certificate

CACE = "Cert. d'Apt. au Championnat d'Europe", European Championship Aptitude Certificate

CACS = "Cert. d'Apt. au Championnat Suprême" (FIFe equivalent of CACE)

CAGCE (LOOF) ou GCACE (WCF) = "Cert. d'Apt. au Grand Championnat d'Europe", Great European Championship Aptitude Certificate

CACM (WCF) = "Cert. d'Apt. au Championnat du Monde.", World Championship Aptitude Certificate.

As obvious from the table above, it is harder, especially for the Great International Champion title upwards, to get a title in FIFe than in LOOF or WCF.

In addition to the titles above, corresponding to an international career, some national careers exist as in LOOF where, since January 1st, 2007 the cats who take part in shows without crossing borders can still progress in their titles. The national progression is parallel to the international one: it requires the same number of certificates and the same minimum score at each level, but the titles obtained bear different names: champion, double champion, triple champion, quadruple champion and supreme champion.

During a traditional cat show, the most spectacular moment for the visitors is the presentation of the "Best of Variety" and "Best in Show" cats. Whereas the certificates for getting titles as explained above are strictly regulated by

each federation, the organisation of the show for the choice of the "Best" awards is often left to the organising committee's choices. Hence different clubs may do it in different ways. These "Best" awards are often the occasion of giving a rosette, cup or of a cat-related present to the cat owner. They are highly prized by the exhibitors, but do not result in any specific mention on the pedigree of the cat. They are mostly aimed at offering visitors a lively show with the presentation of the "nicest cats of the show" on a stage.

In general, a "Best of Variety" award is given to the cat estimated the best within its breed and colour, regardless of sex and age, but under the condition that at least 3 cats of the same breed and colour take part in the show. However, this award is not given systematically, even if there are 3 or more cats competing for this breed and colour, if the judge estimates that none is really worth it. When there are less than 3 cats but the judge wants to single out a truly exceptional one,

he may award this cat a "Special Prize", which is often called "Best of Variety".



As for the "Best in Show", there is no strict rule but I will describe a typical way in which it is done. Each judge selects the cat (or more rarely, cats) he found most beautiful in each of the following categories : 3-6 months male kittens, 3-6 months female kittens, 6-10 months male kittens, 6-10 months female kittens, adult males, adult females, neutered males, neutered females, and he does so for each coat length category. These cats are said to be "nominated for Best in Show". The judges then assemble together and vote to choose, among the nominated cats of each category, the one they prefer, for example the best semi-longhair adult female, the best shorthair neutered male, etc.: they are their "Best in Show". Among all the "Best in Show" cats for a given coat length category, the judges then choose the "Best of Best".

In LOOF shows, there are 3 categories for coat length: longhair cats (only Persians), semi-longhair cats (Maine Coons, Sacred Birmans, Norwegian Forest Cats, Somalis, Turkish Angora, etc.) and shorthair cats (Chartreux, British Shorthair, Sphinx, Bengals, Abyssinians, Burmese, etc.). In general, three "Best of Best" are then awarded : the best Persian, the best semi-longhair cat and the best shorthair cat of the day. In some cat shows, a further step consists in choosing between these three cats the favourite one who is the "Best Supreme".

Other categories may be defined. For instance, in FIFe shows, there are 4 categories instead of 3 (and so, 4 series of Best in Show):

- cat. I (Persians and Exotic Shorthairs) ;
- cat. II (semi-longhair cats) ;
- cat. III (shorthair cats) ;
- cat. IV (Siamese and Orientals).

The daughter breeds always remain in the same category as their origin breed, which explains why exotic shorthairs are with Persians in category I, Somalis with Abyssinians in category III instead

of with other semi-longhair breeds, and Balinese or Mandarin (Javanese) cats in category IV.

During a show, the organisers may also have planned a "breed special" to compare between themselves the cats of a single breed, or of a group of close breeds. These specials, which are prized by amateurs and breeders alike because the number of cats of the breed is much more than usual, may result in an additional series of "Best in Show", dedicated for this breed. But they can also be handled in a "ring" where the judge will order his 10 best cats, regardless of age or sex. This type of judgement is directly inspired from the American-style CFA or TICA shows which will now be described.

American-style judging

The way in which a TICA show and a CFA show are handled is fairly similar. Every judge is installed in a "ring", i.e. a space with a table in the middle where the judge will manipulate one by one all cats in competition in the show.

In contrast with traditional shows where an assessor (a "helping hand" for a judge) comes to the cage to take each cat or ask the owner to take it to the judge, cats are being called on a microphone by their entry number in TICA or CFA shows. Announcements go like "cats 120 to 128 are being requested on ring 4 for Mrs X". The exhibitor takes her cat to the ring, where a semi-circle of cages is arranged behind the judge table. On top of each of these cages, the clerk will have displayed the numbers of the called cats (typically, with a blue card for males and a pink one for females). The exhibitor puts her cat in the cage bearing the cat number, and can then wait in front of the ring to follow the judging.

With TICA rules as well as CFA rules, cats are deemed adult as soon as they are 8 months old. In TICA, males and females compete together (as for the "Best of Variety" in traditional shows), whereas in CFA they are being evaluated separately to determine the best in colour.

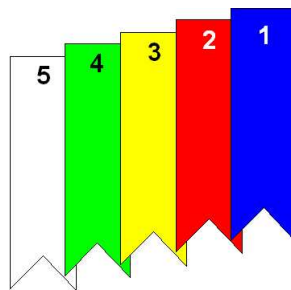
TICA rules

TICA judging will partition the cats in 5 classes:

- kitten: kittens of breeds eligible for championship (they must be at least 4 months old, and not more than 8 months old) ;
- championship: adult cats in the breeds and colours recognized for championship ;
- alter: neutered cats ;
- household pet (HHP) : non-pedigreed adult cats ;

- HHP kitten : non-pedigreed kittens between 4 and 8 months old ;
- new trait (NT) : cats of a colour not yet recognised for championship but in a breed already recognised ;
- new breed (NB) : cats of a breed not yet recognised for championship, but part of a breeding program approved by TICA. This class is further sub-divided between PNB (Preliminary New Breed) and ANB (Advanced New Breed). For example, during the 2006-2007 season (the season goes from May 1st to 30 April the following year), Savannah was a PNB and Toyger was ANB.

For a given breed, cats of the same colour are first compared between themselves. After having handled them all, the judge selects a maximum of 5 cats which he ranks from first to fifth by putting on their respective cages coloured ribbons inscribed with the words "Best of Color". Colors are as indicated on the picture at right, the best one getting the blue ribbon, the second best one the red ribbon, etc. These ribbons (or cards) are called "flats".

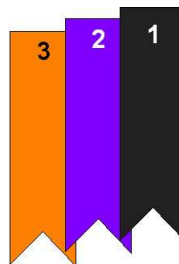


This first selection lets the cat earn respectively 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 points for the 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 1st place within the colour. These points will add up with the others won by the cat and serve as a basis to reach the championship titles.

The color selection described above is done for all coat colors represented in each breed. Then the judge groups the best cats together for a given division (see the table of divisions). For example, abyssinians and somalis belong to two divisions : the "tabby" division (for non-silver cats) and the "silver/smoke" division (for silver cats). The judge will then compare all the cats of a given

TICA Divisions	
solid	
tortoiseshell	
tabby	
silver/smoke	
particolor	

division having received a "Best of Color" flat. He keeps a maximum of 3 of them and ranks them, awarding them a coloured ribbon with the words "Best of Division". Colours for these flats are: black for the 1st one, purple for the 2nd



one and orange for the 3rd one. And the selected cats earn more points: respectively 15, 20 and 25 points for the 3rd, the 2nd and the 1st of division.

The judge may then select, among his "Best of Division", the best cats of the whole breed (the "Best of Breed"). However, this is purely indicative and doesn't add up any more points for the cat.

Once the judge has performed all his selections for all breeds, he proceeds with his "final". The goal of a final is to select the 10 best cats. This number of 10 is not systematic ; it requires that at least 25 cats be in competition in this ring, otherwise the number of cats who can earn points by being selected in the final is reduced to less

than 10. The selected cats will be ordered from e.g. 10th to the first one. Every judge does this choice independently from other judges, therefore some cats may be selected for a final with a judge and not with another.

TICA distinguishes between two types of finals, depending on the ring being an "allbreed" or "specialty" ring.

For an "allbreed" final, all the cats of a given class compete together, whereas for a "specialty" final, longhair cats and shorthair cats are handled in 2 separate finals. It's worth noting for European people that longhair cats in TICA is not restricted to persians but also includes all the breeds called "semi-longhair" in traditional shows.

A cat selected among the 10 best ones in a "specialty" final earns automatically 60, 70, ..., 140, 150 points respectively for the 10th best cat, the 9th best cat, ... the 2nd and the first best cat, plus a certain number of points depending on how many cats have been chosen with lesser ranks. In an "allbreed" final, the same principle applies but the amount of points is higher: it starts at 110 for the 10th cat and, with 10 more points for each rank, it leads to 200 points for the first one. Being selected in a final is not only a way to earn points

quick, it is also part of the necessary requirements to get TICA championship titles. The table on top of the next page summarizes the criteria to obtain the different TICA titles.

Titre	Points	Minimum criteria regarding selections in finals
Champion	300	participation to one final
Grand Champion	1000	6 finals with 4 different judges, including 3 finals where the cat is among the 5 best ones (specialty) or the 10 best ones (allbreed).
Double Grand Champion	2000	1 final as a Grand Champion where the cat is among the 5 best ones (specialty) or the 10 best ones (allbreed).
Triple Grand Champion	3000	1 final as a Double Grand Champion where the cat is among the 5 best ones (specialty) or the 10 best ones (allbreed).
Quadruple Grand Champion	4000	1 final as a Triple Grand Champion where the cat is among the 5 best ones (specialty) or the 10 best ones (allbreed).
Supreme Grand Champion	6000	1 « Best Cat » as a Quadruple Grand Champion.

TICA Titles

CFA Rules

CFA is a bit more complex than TICA regarding the classes where a cat can be engaged for a show. In fact, there are several sub-classes within the championship categories, or premiership categories. The term "premier" is used as an equivalent of "champion" for neutered adult cats. Judges will then evaluate separately the following classes:

- **kitten:** 4 to 8 months old kittens, whether whole or already neutered ;
- **championship:** full adult cats in the breeds and colors accepted for championship in CFA, subdivided in classes: novice: cats eligible according to their breed/color but not registered with CFA ;
 - **open:** cats registered with CFA and not yet champion ;
 - **champion:** cats registered with CFA and for whom a request for a champion title has been made ;
 - **grand champion:** cats registered with CFA and for whom a request for a grand champion title has been made.
- **premiership:** neutered cats in the breeds and colors accepted for championship in CFA, subdivided as above in classes: novice: neutered cats eligible according to their breed/color but not registered with CFA ;
 - **open:** neutered cats registered with CFA and not yet "premier" ;
 - **premier:** neutered cats registered with CFA and for whom a request for a premier title has been made ;
- **grand premier:** neutered cats registered with CFA and for whom a request for a grand premier title has been made.
- **household pet:** non-pedigreed pets ;
- **veteran:** cats aged more than 7 years old, whether full or neutered. Their owner may choose to have them compete in this class or in the relevant championship/premiership class.
- **provisional breed:** cats belonging to a breed whose standard has been provisionally approved by CFA (the only case in 2007 is LaPerm, shorthair or longhair).
- **miscellaneous:** cats belonging to a breed which is not recognised for championship but accepted for registration by CFA (the only case in 2007 that I know of is the RagaMuffin).

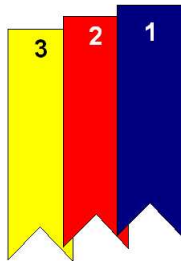


A CFA ring

The whole picture is in fact even more complex, because on top of the above classes, there are "AOV" classes ("Any Other Variety") in some breeds, for those cats whose ancestors are eligible for championship but whose phenotype

(e.g. color, hair length, ear conformity, tail length, etc.) is not authorised by the breed standard. This is for example the case for "shorthair Somalis" (also called Abyssinian variants), which are part of the Somali "AOV" class.

For a given breed, cats are first compared between them within a given class and color, separating males and females (which wasn't the case in TICA). The judge selects his three best cats (maximum) in each category and gives them ribbons for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place according to the color code represented here : dark blue for the first one, red for the second one and yellow for the third one. For example, he will determine his three best ruddy male Abyssinians in open championship class, then his three best ruddy female Abyssinians in open championship class, then his three best ruddy male Abyssinians in champion class, etc.



The winner often also gets a red, white and bleu ribbon in addition. These winner ribbons will enable a cat in the open class to reach the status of champion (resp. premier) once he gets 6 of them with at least 4 different judges.

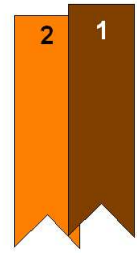
Once the judge has finished to see all the cats for a coat color group, in all classes and for both sexes, he will award the "Best of Color class" and "2nd Best of Color class" ribbons which are respectively black and white.



Then, after having seen all the cats of a breed (or all the cats of a color division for those breeds belonging to several color divisions, which is not the case of Abyssinians or Somalis in CFA), the judge will choose his "Best of Breed" and "2nd

Best of Breed" and award them respectively a brown and an orange ribbon.

The judge will also choose the best among all champions and premiers and give him or her the ribbon of "Best Champion/Premier of Breed", which is purple.



These awards will enable a cat who is already Champion (resp. Premier) to earn points towards his accession to the Grand Champion (resp. Grand Premier) title, and these points are computed according to the number of

cats he has defeated.

After he has finished judging all the cats in a given class, the judge will make a kitten final, a championship final and a premier final in which he will select his ten or fifteen best cats of the category (the number depends on the number of cats competing in the show). The distinction between "allbreed" and "specialty" rings is the same as in TICA (shorthair and longhair cats competed separately in a "specialty" final). It's worth noting that in CFA as well as in TICA, Somalis like cats of their "mother breed" - Abyssinians- compete as shorthair cats and will then participate in the same finals together. In some shows, there may be additional rings which are dedicated to a breed or a division.

Being among the 10 best cats of a final earns points for the cat to reach the next championship title: the first cat earns as many points as there are cats he defeated in this final, the second one earns 90% of the first one's points, the third one earns 80% of the winner's points, etc. To become a Grand Champion, a Champion must accumulate 200 points.

If you wish to know more...

If you wish to know more about the rules of any of these federations, here's a table with direct links to the web sites and show rules of the major federations listed in this article (LOOF, FIFe, WCF, CFA, TICA).



www.loof.asso.fr

direct link to the show rules:

http://www.loof.asso.fr/expos/reglt_expos-en.php



www.fifeweb.org

direct link to download the English version of the show rules:

http://www1.fifeweb.org/dnld/rules/show_rules_fr.zip



www.wcf-online.de

direct link to the show classes:

http://www.wcf-online.de/en/Rules/Shows/show_classes.htm



www.cfa.org

link to order the show rules (7 US\$)

<http://cfa.org/client/exbnewexhibitors.aspx#showrules>



www.tica.org

direct link to download the show rules

http://www.tica.org/members/publications/shw_rules.pdf