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Asbury Park's "Jake" is top greyhound

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By SHANNON MULLEN

"Jake," a 3-year-old greyhound well-known to shoppers and merchants in downtown Asbury Park, won best of breed today at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden.

Jake's victory propelled him to the hound group competition, which will be broadcast live tonight at 8 p.m. on USA network.

"I'm thrilled. He did great," said Jake's co-owner Jim Modica, 51, who owns Asbury Bark, a pet boutique at 353 Bangs Ave, in Asbury Park, where Jake is the greyhound in residence.

Modica and his partner, Jeff Winton, 50, have residences both in Asbury Park and Long Valley, in Morris County.

The couple have shown dogs for 17 years, including at least seven prior appearances at Westminster. But this is their first best of breed winner.

In the hound group tonight, Jake will go up against 25 other best of breed winners representing dog breeds such as beagles, basset hounds, Rhodesian ridgebacks and whippets.

In that group, Jake will be facing Uno, an energetic tri-colored beagle, who has become the early sentimental favorite to win best of show this year.

"This is a show where there are big upsets all the time, so we're realistic, but optimistic, about Jake's chances," said Winton.

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