St. Louis CITY SC to Welcome First-Ever Team Pet with Help of Partners at Purina

Certified facility dog will join official club operations in support of players, staff, fans and larger St. Louis community

First episode in four-part docuseries chronicling CITY SC and Purina's journey to selecting team pet premieres today

ST. LOUIS (July 23, 2025) – St. Louis CITY SC will welcome the club's first-ever team pet to support its players, staff and fans. In collaboration with the expert guidance of first founding partner and official kit sponsor, Purina, the team pet – a trained and certified facility dog – will illustrate the power of pets by providing wellbeing support for all clubs within the St. Louis CITY SC system, uplifting and spreading positivity and joy with CITY SC players, staff, fans and supporters, and serving as a valued community resource delivering positive impact to the region.

"Since announcing our partnership with CITY SC, we've envisioned a world where we work together to redefine the role of pets in sport. Since then, we've taken amazing strides toward our shared ambition to make CITY SC the most pet-friendly sports club in the world," said Andrea Faccio, President and Chief Growth Officer at Purina. "Assisting CITY to welcome a team pet that's certified as a facility dog will deliver something tangible and authentic to the soccer club, CITY fans and to our community as a whole. We're firm believers in the power of pets, and there may be no greater illustration of that positive impact than through a program like this."

Documentary Series Spotlights Selection of Team Pet

The journey to identify the first CITY team pet is chronicled in a short-form, four-part online documentary series "TEAM PET," with the first episode debuting today on the CITY SC YouTube channel and other club social platforms. The series, narrated by St. Louisan, former Major League Soccer MVP and U.S. Men's National Team player, and current MLS Season Pass Match and Studio Analyst Taylor Twellman, goes behind the scenes to illustrate the selfless work of trained puppy raisers and the role they play preparing each dog for a life of purpose, eventually offering viewers a look into the team pet's role with the club. To facilitate dog training and certification, Purina enlisted the support of CHAMP Assistance Dogs, a St. Louis-based nonprofit focused on utilizing the love and healing power of dogs to improve the lives of people in its community.

There are seven dogs being considered for the role of CITY SC team pet. Professionals from CHAMP will make the final determination on which is best suited for the team pet role with the consultation of Purina pet experts. Evaluation includes overall temperament, assistance skills development and adaptability to loud, crowded environments like CITY SC matches.

"TEAM PET" will follow the journey of the seven dogs seeking facility dog certification and the puppy raiser volunteers offering their homes, their time and their support to helping each dog reach its full potential. Once their training is complete, each of the seven dogs will be certified as either a therapy, service or facility dog and receive an important assignment in service of those in need across the greater St. Louis region, including the assignment of one being named CITY SC's official team pet.

"A lot of factors go into identifying the 'right' dog for a job like this – a combination of genetics, socialization

"A lot of factors go into identifying the 'right' dog for a job like this – a combination of genetics, socialization and training – and it's important for us to put the CITY team pet in a position to be successful and enjoy this work," said Dr. Annie Valuska, Pet Behavior Scientist at Purina. "Each of the dogs in consideration is confident, focused and attentive. It's been inspiring to see them in their training, and to watch the club's interactions with the dogs. That's what pet companionship is all about."

The Role of CITY SC's Team Pet

In support of coaches, players and staff across CITY SC – from the first team to Academy teams and front office personnel – the team pet will become part of matchday traditions at Energizer Park, join the players in day-to-day activities from training to recovery, spread joy to the front office staff and the sporting department, and represent a positive beacon for fans. Certified facility dogs can help reduce stress and anxiety, decrease feelings of loneliness, isolation and depression, and even lower blood pressure.

"A Major League Soccer season is long and can be grueling for our players, both on and off the pitch," said St. Louis CITY SC Sporting Director Lutz Pfannenstiel. "We are extremely fortunate to have a partner like Purina who is willing to support us – and our fans – in new and innovative ways. It's going to be a lot of fun for all of us having the team pet around and we are eager to welcome the dog to the CITY SC family."

The team pet will also devote significant time to positively impacting the St. Louis region through the club's community outreach events; engaging with supporters and fans during matches and events at Energizer Park; visiting schools, hospitals and nonprofits; and participating in the club's charitable activities.

"St. Louis has an unmatched charitable spirit and a desire to take care of each other," said Ken Earley, Director of Community Relations at St. Louis CITY SC. "Welcoming a team pet with the help of Purina is a tremendous asset that will enhance our club's ability to continue to be an exceptional club and neighbor and make a positive impact across our region."

About St. Louis CITY SC

St. Louis CITY SC, one of the few majority female-led ownership groups in all of professional sports, is Major League Soccer's 28th expansion team and plays at Energizer Park, an STLMade 22,500-seat world-class soccer-specific stadium. Energizer Park is part of a new world-class stadium district, which includes a practice facility, team store and team headquarters all within the same 30+ acre urban campus in downtown St. Louis to help further the region's continued growth and revitalization. St. Louis CITY SC's vision is to be an exceptional club and neighbor that brings people together through the power of sports.

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than $150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or subscribe here to get the latest Purina news.

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