

Bulldogs



This month's guest columnist is Robin L. Stansell.

JUDGING THE WHOLE BULLDOG

As a breeder, exhibitor, and specialist judge, I have had different vantage points from which to study and focus on the Bulldog. In my current position with the AKC field staff, I have the opportunity to step back and see what is perhaps an even more objective view. I am sharing this perspective with hopes of helping breeders, breeder-judges, and judges coming from other breeds.

Bulldoggers sometimes focus on the individual issues of the standard, placing too much emphasis on the pieces rather than the whole dog. I have seen and perhaps presented programs and articles that concentrated on topline, tail-set, gait, or head features without pulling the entire presentation together into a meaningful view of the whole dog. Although this issue is applicable to all breeds, I will use the Bulldog for examples.

Often we hear, "How could that judge put up that dog with that bad (insert *jaw, topline, gait, front, rear*, or numerous other faulty features)?" My advice to exhibitors and judges is not to focus on individual issues but on the complete animal.

Breeder-judges may focus on "pieces" they recognize as a problem within the breed or specifically their own breeding program. Occasionally the better overall dog is overlooked because of this concentrated interest in correcting the specific breed problem. It is good to recognize this fault and judge it critically, but neither to the detriment of the complete animal nor more strongly than other faults or qualities. After gaining more experience in judging, I learned to step back and look at the whole class, following the individual

examinations. This provides an opportunity to see the total picture of the dogs, rather than dwelling on the last fault examined. Those issues are not forgotten but are placed in perspective when viewing the entire class.

Judges, handlers, and fanciers coming from other breeds may have a much different perspective. Some may be "generalists" who expect all toplines to be level and movement to have great reach and drive, while overlooking many of the characteristics that contribute to Bulldog type. They have learned some number of features that cause the Bulldog to be different from the "generic dog." But too frequently they define type as only the characteristic head, or topline, or other feature, and reward the dog that moves fastest around the ring. Another common misconception is that what is correct with Bulldogs is incorrect with other breeds. This is yet another attempted shortcut to applying their existing breed knowledge to the Bulldog.

There are no shortcuts when learning a new breed. Judges need a variety of educational experiences, including seminars, specialties, kennel visits, and breeder-judge mentors, so that their understanding encompasses the total dog rather than just one breeder's pet peeve. Bulldog judges require in-depth breed knowledge to perform satisfactory breed evaluations.

My advice to the fanciers, handlers, and judges of Bulldogs is to learn the details of this complex breed and evaluate the whole dog, not just the pieces. —R.S.

Thanks, Robin.

—Dr. Saul and
Edythe Schor, 8882
N. 82 Lane,
Scottsdale, AZ
85258 ♦

Chinese Shar-Pei



Our guest columnist is Karen Kleinhans, the president of the Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America.

*MENTORING AND BREEDING PROGRAMS

Mentoring and breeding programs are two concepts that are continually mentioned in books and articles and are, unfortunately, not being utilized nearly enough in our breed right now. Why? Both take effort and planning, a willingness to be open and flexible. We seem to have too many in our breed who want to breed Bitch A to big-winning Stud Dog B and have their own "great" show dog. Now, that's not necessarily bad, but how does it benefit the breed as a whole?

When I became involved in Shar-Pei, there were no breeders who had been involved in the breed for longer than 20 years. I picked the brains of the breeders who had been breeding



DONNA J. COSS

Boston Terrier

