

The Boxer

By Shirley Bell

For the Boxer Club of Canada

There are many schools of thought as to why, and how, the Boxer came into existence. We do know this was a man-made breed in the late 1800s. His ancestors, the "Brabant Bullenbeisser", a Mastiff-type dog, were originally bred in Germany. The breeders of that time wanted dogs suitable for hunting and holding prey, so these dogs were out-crossed with a small Mastiff-type dog (the originator of the English Bulldog). These dogs possessed a wide undershot lower jaw, a nose that was set further back, and was a smaller and more active dog than the Bullenbeisser.

This dog's strong and wide undershot jaw and strong teeth were needed in order to have him lock onto his prey and to continue holding it until his master arrived. His nose, with its large, open nostrils was set back in order that he could breathe while holding on to his quarry. The wrinkles on each side of his muzzle were also there for a purpose - to keep the blood of the animal away from his eyes. This criterion for the perfect Boxer head still stands to this day!



The Boxer was later used as a guard dog, and he can acquit himself quite readily to the job if trained to do so, but his temperament is more suited for Obedience and Agility work. He should be able to cover great distances at good speed and be a splendid jumper. Any faults that would hamper this ability should be penalized far greater than any other.

This breed has a smooth coat; therefore, it is a dog that can be judged by eye (except for his mouth and hardness of muscles). A wide breeder and/or judge will learn to do so and it can be as easily done from outside the ring as in, simply by looking for TYPE, BALANCE and SOUNDNESS.

The standard states: "The first thing to consider when you look at the Boxer is general appearance." And general appearance is the combination of type, balance and soundness.

When considering this dog as a whole, also consider WHY he was bred. He must look like he is able to fulfill his original purpose, even though not required to do so in our modern world.

Type is the embodiment of a Standard's essentials. It doesn't matter whether you are an official in the ring, an interested spectator, or just appraising dogs in your own kennel - judging dogs is an art based on observation. Once can read a Standard and even quote it verbatim but that doesn't enable one to have a proper mental picture of an ideal dog, or to appraise the dog in front of you.

We put much emphasis on conditioning and handling in the show ring today. To be sure, fine conditioning and good handler are things we all like to see. Judging at a show, in every country, is by comparison only with the other dogs entered on that particular day. When it comes to judging an individual dog, only the degree to which he measures up to his breed Standard counts.



Temperament

In the Show Ring

Adults should exhibit constrained animation. His bearing should be alert, dignified and self-assured. He should look happy to be there. A puppy may exhibit signs of being unsure of his surroundings and he may lack attention, sometimes being distracted by the surroundings and activity. Time and experience will take care of this. Adult or puppy, must never exhibit fear, especially of people, men included. Deliberate and wary with strangers, he will exhibit curiosity but, most importantly, fearless courage if threatened. He should respond promptly to friendly overture honestly rendered. A Boxer should be penalized for showing poor temperament. Fear, of people, judge and/or surroundings is not proper temperament and is unacceptable. Aggression to other dogs, while not encouraged, is not to be considered a fault.

Working & Having Fun

Easily trained for agility, obedience and tracking and they enjoy it immensely! They love to jump and to run and they love to please their owner so it makes for many enjoyable moments together. This breed has proven invaluable as Search and Rescue dogs and excel as Therapy dogs too. They take pleasure in their original purpose as a guard and defender and enjoy training for Schutzhund work, which is popular in Europe and becoming increasingly popular in the U.S.

The Pet

Temperament is of utmost importance as the majority are sold as companion animals. His clean habits and short coat make him ideal as a housedog. The well-bred Boxer can be easily



trained to be a good housedog and are at their best as part of a family. They're wonderful with children and a great protector of their own territory, when necessary.

The trait in his temperament that makes him distrustful of strangers does not mean he is a shy dog...it just makes him a good guard dog. If properly raised and trained he'll be alert, dignified and self-assured, playful yet biddable. He must, above all else, be easy to live with.

Colour and markings

Their coats come in differing shades of fawn or brindle and all of these colours are permissible for the "show" Boxer in every country throughout the world. Pets can be any colour, including white, check, parti-colour, fawn and brindle (plain or flashy). The colour of their coat has nothing to do with their wonderful personality!

The White Boxer

White, or more than one third white, is a disqualification in the show ring and for many years most breeders culled white and check puppies at birth. Their reasoning being that the white colour was always associated with deafness and congenital defects. This has been disproved but because breeders didn't keep, or sell, their white puppies, many people believe the white was rare, which is simply not the case. Around 20% of all puppies born are white, being most common in flashy to flashy breeding, due to the original Boxer ancestors being white.

Although there's a tendency to deafness in all white dogs and cats, deafness can be discovered at a very young age and deaf animals can be placed in loving, caring homes. All white and check (mismarked) Boxers are placed on a spay/neuter agreement. They are not bred, and should not be shown in conformation. Extra care must also be taken to protect them against sunburn.

Disqualifications

Boxers with white ground colour, or entirely white, or any colour other than fawn or 2 types of brindle. White markings that exceed one-third of the ground colour.

The Head

The Standard, even though explicit about the head qualities desired, is also confusing to many people. It's the head that gives judges, and breeders alike, the most trouble.

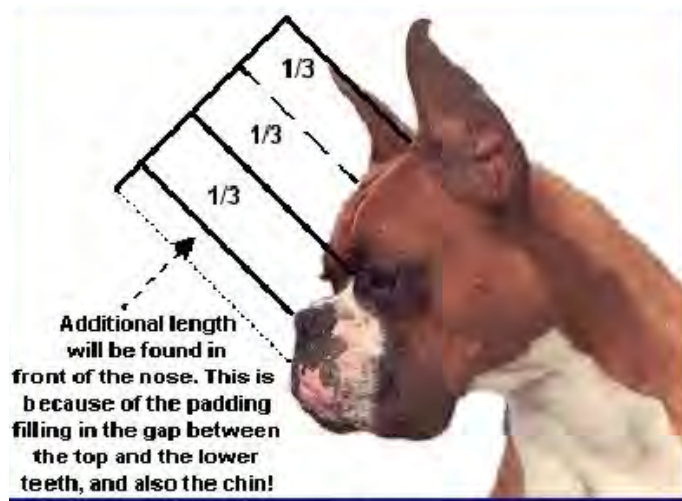


The blueprint of the Boxer head should be the MUNICH SILHOUETTE. This was the profile of the head as laid down by the country of origin and most breeders still regard it to be of excellent type. You can run a ruler on the balance of skull to muzzle and it will come out 1:3. The depth of muzzle is correct and so is the depth of skull. Heavy wrinkles are not evident anywhere on the skull. Note the

planes of the head, with the deep stop and tip tilted nose. The Standard calls for the tip of the nose to be higher than the root of the muzzle! Note also the rounding out of the upper lip and chin in front of the nose.

How to measure the head

The head is measured from the TIP of the nose to the STOP, and then from the STOP to the OCCIPUT.



The Bite

Their bite is undershot. The lower jaw protrudes beyond the upper and curves slightly upward. The incisor teeth of the lower jaw are in a straight line, with the canines preferably up front in the same line to give the jaw the greatest possible width. The upper line of the incisors is slightly convex with the corner upper incisors fitting snugly back of the lower canine teeth on each side. Constant and/or excessive licking is often a good indication there is something not correct with the bite.

Expression

Beautiful dark, almost human shaped, tight-rimmed eyes look straight at you with confidence. The eyes set well to the front under a definite brow.



Unpigmented Third Eyelids (Haws)

Unpigmented third eyelids (nictating membrane) can spoil the expression, but are purely a COSMETIC FAULT only, (in the same vein as uneven head markings, uneven brindling etc.).

Some dogs have a large membrane, which can look to cover a large part of the eye; others have smaller ones, which go almost unnoticed, particularly if the dog has tight eye rims. Most breeders prefer a dog to have 2 dark "haws" but will accept one or both unpigmented eyes on an otherwise good dog. Although it's possible to have fully pigmented eyes with



white head markings, the incidence of unpigmented third eyelids occurring is more common in these dogs, than in dogs with "plain" faces.

Therefore as a judge, if the dog in front of you is a better specimen STRUCTURALLY, than the other dogs in the class, the unpigmented eye(s) should be ignored.

Ears

Cropped ears should stand firmly erect, if natural (uncropped) they are medium sized, and high set, carried slightly lifted and tilted forward towards the side of the cheeks. In both cases the ears are very mobile.

Head Markings and Lack of Markings

Never let "off center" or "uneven" head markings distract you from appreciating an otherwise good head. These markings are very common and quite acceptable on a Boxer. Look closely at the plain black faces (lack of markings), as these can be very lovely.

General Appearance

A medium-sized, sturdy dog, of square build, with short back, strong limbs, and short tight-fitting coat. His musculature, well developed, should be clean, hard and appear smooth (not bulging) under taut skin. His movement should denote energy. The gait is firm yet elastic (springy), the stride free and ground covering, and the carriage proud and noble. Only a body, whose individual parts are built to harmonious whole, can respond to these combined demands. Therefore, to be at his highest efficiency he must never be plump or heavy and, while equipped for great speed, he must never be racy. The head imparts to the Boxer a unique individual stamp peculiar to him alone. It must be in perfect proportion to his body, never small in comparison to the over-all picture. His muzzle is his most distinctive feature and the greatest value to be placed on its being of correct form and in absolute proper proportion to the skull.

Movement

Moving away from you do his rear pasterns stay firm as his hind feet converge slightly to his centre of his gravity under his body,

then drive firmly to the rear, with good thrust.

As he returns to you do you see his front feet reach well forward, again converging slightly to his centre of gravity keeping his legs in a straight line from shoulder to paw.

Side Gaiting

Movement is free. Easy and ground covering at a steady pace... not too fast and not too slow.

At full extension his front legs reach well forward keeping a straight line from shoulder blade to front foot keeping a 45% angle to the ground.

The rear legs extend well to the rear keeping a straight line from hip joint to rear pad.

The head carried forward, to balance his stride.

The topline stays level and true.

The tail is carried high. 🐾

