

What's Wrong with the White Boxer?

A presentation to the Bluebonnet Boxer Club of Cypress TX, Inc 07-12-89

Mr President, officers and members of the Bluebonnet Boxer Club ... good evening. My name is Audrey Schnell, of Pax Inc., and these are my credentials. I have been a Boxer aficionado, breeder and exhibitor for thirty years and I dearly love to talk; therefore, I'm considered qualified to present this Club programme on **What is wrong with the White Boxer?**

The title was calculated to be provocative and I hope that it has already evoked some response. There are folk who say, "Let sleeping dogs lie ... it's better not to raise controversial matters." and these people expect that such a fiat will make the problem go away. It won't. I think that such an attitude is wrong; our members deserve more respect than is implied by that stance. I believe that we, the Bluebonnet Boxer Club, owe it to our members, especially the newer ones, to provide a forum where our more difficult rules, strictures and constraints may be addressed.

This is my attempt to provide a balanced account of the situation of the White Boxer within the pure-bred Boxer world. A question, answer and discussion time will follow ... I appreciate the chance to start with the complete presentation.

Initially, please bear with me while I run out a few definitions and some delineations. Older members are very familiar with them, but our newer members may know them less.

AKC The American Kennel Club, Inc.

This organisation is the Jockey Club of the pure-bred dog. Its primary function is "to regulate the breeding and exhibition of pure-bred dogs". (AKC Gazette, May 1989.) To that end, AKC warrants that it will register the get of two registered dogs, of an AKC registered breed. That is the AKC credo and do not forget it. This most basic tenet underlines many AKC rulings.

ABC The American Boxer Club, Inc.

It is the national Boxer Club and our parent Club; it is a member of the American Kennel Club. The American Boxer Club's main purposes are to "establish the Standard for the Boxer Breed ... to promote quality breeding of pure-bred Boxers." (ABC Constitution and By-Laws, current July 1989).

The Boxer Standard.

A written description of the ideal Boxer. It was composed by the American Boxer Club, following member input, and it has been approved by AKC. It defines how a Boxer should look and behave and functions as our blueprint.

The White Boxer.

The White Boxer

A Boxer whose white markings exceed one third of its ground color. (AKC Boxer Standard, under Disqualifications.). This means that such a Boxer may be disqualified in a conformation AKC Match or Show. The precise percentage of white is subject to observer determination; one recommendation advises picturing the dog on its back, with legs extended for calculation of the total flash. In the strict sense of the rule a Boxer whose hair coat is more than one quarter white is a White Boxer. (Figure the ground color as fawn; that is three thirds; suppose that it has one third of that ground color as white (flash); a total of four thirds; that equals one quarter, or 25% of the hair coat.). Few judges are that exacting, but, it happens. A brindle Boxer, one whose coat is brindled with a darker color, is technically entitled to less flash than a fawn, regardless of which color is treated as the ground color.

Yes, that is the impact of our rules. If the Boxer has more than one third of its ground color as white, (one fourth of its whole hair coat), it is a White Boxer.

Some people differentiate between the solid white, the albino (entirely without pigment) and the check (one with minimal markings such as a spot, a few colored hairs or a patch. That division, however interesting, is academic in our present context. A Boxer with more than one third of its ground color white is manifestly a White Boxer.

Back to our theme. **What is wrong with the White Boxer?**

My answer. Nothing! I'll add a lot more, but, before I do, let's say a little bit about the outcast. Is he healthy? Probably. Is he defective? Probably not. One proviso; if he's a true albino, unpigmented, the sun will be cruel to him; his eyes, with their pink irises, will be poorly protected, and, with albinism, there tend to be other associated defects such as cardiac anomalies and deafness. The other White Boxers share the same genetic background as their littermates; faults and virtues. Remember, a few extra white hairs over the desirable markings give you a White Boxer.

The faults of your generic White Boxer are those by which he fails to meet the Boxer Standard. The Boxer Standard is the blueprint that we use for modelling the perfect Boxer; it is binding upon us as Boxer breeders, exhibitors and as members of the Bluebonnet Boxer Club, Inc.. Remember the Club membership application that you signed?

The color prescriptions found in the Standard may seem arbitrary, but, just as the head and formation of the Boxer were chosen by those who wrote, and those who have revised, the Standard, so, too, were the allowable colors chosen. The Boxer that is delineated in this way is our schematic, our map and our gauge.

We do have democratic process in our hierarchy. Movements come from individual members, or member clubs, to ABC and, if sufficiently supported, a matter will be put to a referendum. If the Club votes favourably on such a matter as changing the Boxer Standard, it is then sent to AKC, for their approval. No

substantive color change, such as eliminating the White Boxer disqualification, has drawn enough support to be put to an ABC vote. All such motions have failed.

Again. **What's wrong with the White Boxer?**

Here are the other answers. 1. It falls outside the AKC approved Boxer Standard. 2. The registration, or the sale, of White Boxers is prohibited by the ABC. *(The registration with the American Kennel Club, or the sale by any member, or member of a member Club, of any Boxer, or Boxer within a litter, with white ground color, or entirely white, or any color other than fawn or brindle, or the registration or sale of a litter by a dog or bitch, as above described, shall cause forfeiture of membership in the American Boxer Club. ABC Constitution & By-Laws 1989).* This is a serious and stern manifesto by the American Boxer Club and they mean it.

If any member of our Club sells, or registers, a White Boxer, or one of its get, our Club, the Bluebonnet Boxer Club, is subject to forfeiture of its ABC membership. It is neither here, nor there, to discuss the merits of ABC's position ... these are the facts.

At our beginnings, and throughout our nine and a half year existence, the Bluebonnet Boxer Club has sought, and has prized, membership in the American Boxer Club. While our Club maintains that membership, each individual BBC member is bound by the ABC Constitution & By-Laws, the Boxer Standard and ABC rulings. Those, fellow members, are our precepts.

One more time, **what is wrong with the White Boxer?** Since we have delineated what is wrong with it, what can each of us do to minimise its occurrence? There are steps that breeders should consider.

1. Be cautious in breeding extremely flashy individuals to like ones.
2. **Stud dog owners.** Always include a statement in your stud dog contract that white puppies (those having more white than one third of their ground color) will not be registered. You might even go so far as to file a copy with AKC. (AKC will honour such agreements, see Chapter 3. of AKC Rules on Registration & Dog Shows.) But, first they must know. It is only fair to inform the bitch owner before the moment of truth; many, who are not bound by ABC rules, have great difficulty with them.

It is true that only the owner(s) of the bitch register the litter. Against popular belief, the stud owner only attests to the mating. Although many stud owners will not sign their section of the AKC paper until the pups are whelped, it isn't kosher.

You should also know that, without a disclaimer for registration of white puppies, AKC can, and will, compell you to complete your section of the registration blank ... unless you care to lose your AKC privileges.

Now you have prevented your male from acquiring a reputation as a sire of rare white puppies.

3. **Bitch owners.** What about your bitch who produces one, or more, of these rejected ones? **What's wrong with the White boxer?** Now it hurts. This is no academic proposition; it's a living, sturdy white puppy.

Fortunately, ABC no longer requires that we keep each one or kill it; we are only enjoined from selling, or registering them. My choice is to kill them at birth, with intra-cardiac drugs. If you don't have this capability, please have your veterinarian do it; I think it cruel to let them smother in their sacs.

To those who would give away white puppies I say, "Look ahead, what value will be placed on a free puppy? See the throw away pets on our highways! They were cu-u-u-u-te puppies such a little time ago. Think twice".

We live in a flawed world and our goals are difficult ... a flashy Boxer, but no more than one fourth white. We lay a great difficulty upon ourselves and that is part of being a Bluebonnet Boxer Club member.

Yes, we know that AKC has a space on its individual Boxer registration form and it gives white as a choice. We deplore it, but AKC will not delete it. It reflects their policies, and their warranty to register the get of pure-bred dogs. We, as Boxer breeders, have the responsibility to restrict registration of White Boxers by using the methods I have described.

What is held by the future? Since July 1, 1989, the American Kennel Club has offered a new, limited registration. This will preclude use of these animals in breeding since their get would be unregistrable. The dog's status would only be changed to full registration upon application by breeder and owner.

I talked to Marge Archibald, ABC President and ABC's delegate to AKC, about the possibility that limited registration might answer some of our problems with the White Boxer. She had already talked to some AKC people about it and their feeling was that dogs having breed fault disqualifications were not eligible for this classification.

Thank you for inviting me to give this programme, for your encouragement and for your courtesy. I hope that I've been able to shed more light than heat upon the White Bocer.