

## What is wrong with the white Boxer?

*This paper was first given to the Bluebonnet Boxer Club on July 12, 1989. It has been revised to be in line with the changes to the Boxer Standard adopted, by ABC and AKC, in 1989 and further revised, in June, 2000, as the American Boxer Club no longer bans the the placement of white Boxers. **Their placement was banned before the last changes in ABC's Constitution.***

Madam President, Officers and members of the Bluebonnet Boxer Club. Good evening. My name is Audrey , of Pax Inc., and these are my credentials. I have been a Boxer aficionado, breeder and exhibitor for some forty years, and, I dearly love to talk; therefor I'm considered qualified to present this Club program on what is wrong with the white Boxer.

The title of this paper was calculated to be provocative and I hope that it has already evoked responses. There are folk who say, "Let sleeping dogs lie .. it's better not to raise controversial matters."; these people expect that such an attitude will make the problem go away. It won't. It is wrong to take such a stance; our members merit more respect than that . I believe that we, the Bluebonnet Boxer Club, owe it to our members, especially the newer ones, to provide a forum where our difficult rules, constraints and strictures are 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 your forbearance until the presentation is done.

Initially, please bear with me for a few definitions and delineations. Our older members are very familiar with them, but, some of our newer members may not know them.

### **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 & current). To that end, AKC warrants that it will register the get of two registered dogs, of an AKC recognised breed. **That is the AKC credo and do not forget it!** This most basic tenet underpins most AKC registration rulings.

### **ABC. The American Boxer Club Inc..**

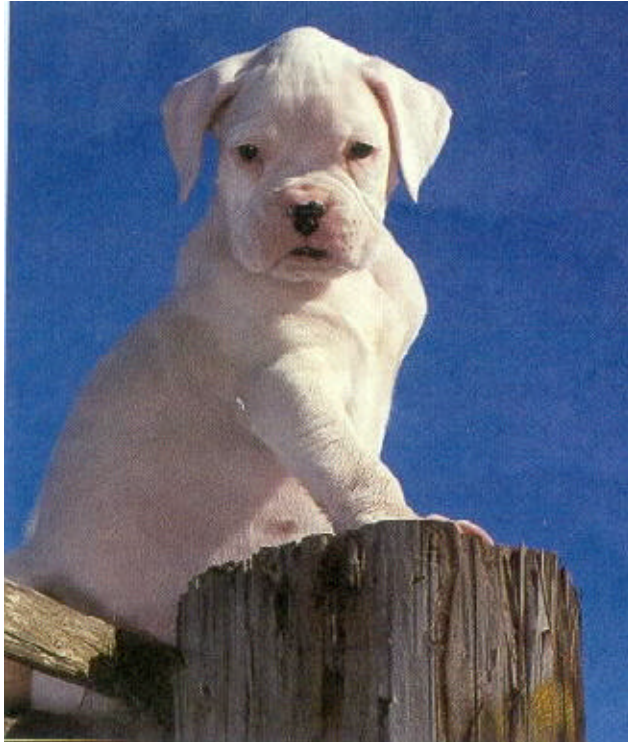
It is the national Boxer Club and our parent Club: it is a member of the American Kennel Club. The American Boxer Club's main purposes are "to establish the Standard for the Boxer breed .. and to promote the quality breeding of pure-bred Boxers".(ABC Const. & By-Laws, extant 1997.). It also maintains a Code of Ethics.

### **The Boxer Standard.**

A written description of the ideal Boxer. It was composed by the ABC, following input from its members, and was approved by the AKC. It defines how a Boxer should look and behave and functions as our blue print. It is revised occasionally.

### **The White Boxer.**

A Boxer whose white markings exceed one-third of the entire coat (AKC Standard, extant 1997 under color.). Such a Boxer is subject to disqualification at an AKC approved conformation Match or Show. The precise percentage of white is assayed by observer determination; one calculation pictures the dog supine, with legs extended, and then mentally dividing into thirds.



Yes, that is the impact of our rules (the Standard); a Boxer having more than one-third of its coat color white is a white Boxer.

We may differentiate between the totally white or albino (entirely without pigment) and the check (one with minimal colored markings such as a patch). That division, however interesting, is academic in our present context.

Back to our theme [What is wrong with the white Boxer?](#)

My answer? **Nothing!** There is more, but, before that, let's say a little bit about the outcast. Is he healthy? Probably. Is he defective? Probably not. There is 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 against light and he is more likely to have associated defects such as deafness, and, possibly, cardiac anomalies. Non-albino or check Boxers share the same genetic background as their litter mates, both faults and virtues. Remember, it can be just a small, extra amount of flash that puts him beyond the pale. Think about it; surely a few more white hairs than one third of his hair coat could hardly change his genetic make up!

The faults of your generic, white Boxer are those by which it fails to meet our Boxer Standard, which is the blueprint that we use for modeling the perfect Boxer and is binding upon us as breeders, exhibitors and members of the Bluebonnet Boxer Club. Remember how you pledged to uphold the rules of both the American Boxer Club and the Bluebonnet Boxer Club, in your membership application? This exclusion of the white Boxer is one of the toughest precepts to follow.

The color prescriptions defined in our Standard may seem arbitrary but they were chosen in the same way that the Boxer head, and its formation, was defined, by those who have written, and revised the Boxer Standard. The Boxer that has been so delineated is our schematic, our map and our gauge.



We do have democratic process in our Boxer hierarchy. Motions come from individual members, or member Clubs, to the American Boxer Club, and, if there is enough support, the matter will be put to a vote. If the ABC votes to change the Boxer Standard, the change goes to the American Kennel Club, asking 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. However, the ABC is about to send a referendum to its members on this matter.

Again .. [What's wrong with the white Boxer?](#)

Here are some other answers.

It falls outside the AKC approved Boxer Standard.

Registration, or using such Boxers for breeding, is banned to its members, or members of member Clubs, by the American Boxer Club (ABC Code of Ethics). It is inimical to ABC's purposes and could, under complaint, cause our Club's expulsion from the American Boxer Club. This is a serious, and stern, position of ABC and they *do* mean it.

Should a member of our Club sell, or register, such a Boxer, or one of its get, the Bluebonnet Boxer Club was subject to loss of its ABC membership. It is neither here, nor there, to discuss the merits of ABC's position - these were the facts and they are our parent Club.

At our beginnings, and throughout our twenty years, BBC has sought, then prized, membership in the ABC. While we maintain that membership, each Bluebonnet member is bound by the ABC Constitution & By-Laws, their Code of Ethics and the Boxer Standard.

One more time. [What is wrong with the white Boxer?](#)

Since we have defined its faults, what can we do to minimise its occurrence? Here are steps that breeders might consider:

Be **cautious** in breeding very flashy Boxers together.

**Stud dog owners:** Include a clause in your stud contract saying that white puppies (those having more than one third of their coat white) shall not be registered with AKC, and you might even file a copy of each contract, with AKC. AKC, by their own rules, are obliged to support you but they must know about your contracts. Remember that many bitch owners aren't members of ABC, or its member Clubs, and are unwilling to subscribe to ABC's rules.

It is true that only the bitch's owner registers the litter. Against popular belief, the stud dog's owner simply attests to the mating. Although many studs' owners will not sign the paper until the pups are born, they are wrong.

You should know that, without a disclaimer for white puppies, AKC can, and will, compel you to complete your section of the litter application unless you care to lose our AKC privileges. Are you? It goes along with their mandate of registering the get of pure-bred dogs.

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

**Bitch owners.** What about your bitch who produces these rejects? What can you do? [What's wrong with the white Boxer?](#) Now it hurts. This is no academic case; this is a living, sturdy white puppy. We have no longer a fiat against placing them, although we may not sell nor register them. We may keep them. I choose to kill them, by intra-cardiac injection. Have your veterinarian do it, if you're unable. Perhaps the term euthanise or put to sleep will sit better with you. Please don't let them smother in their sacs; that's needless cruelty.

*To those who would give away white puppies, I say, "Look ahead, what value will be placed on a free puppy? See the pets on our highways! They were cu-u-ute puppies such a little time ago. Think again, before your babies join them. Some people cope with this dilemma by taking payment and donating it to the Boxer Charitable foundation or by taking payment & refunding it after proof that the Boxer is neutered. I find both choices inadequate.*

*I respect those whose reverence for life prohibits them from taking it, but cannot follow Schweitzer all that way, and I'm able to kill them at birth, rather than being compelled to give them away- this being the only way that I can keep my promises, as an ABC member. If I could sell them, with limited registration, then I'd change. But, until that happens, I believe that mine is an honourable course.*

We live in a flawed world and our goals are difficult - a flashy Boxer, yet, no more than one-third white. We have laid a serious problem upon ourselves and it's a part of being a BBC member.

The American Kennel Club has finally removed the designation, white, from the puppy registration slips and that helps, but, mismarks (white Boxers) are still being registered by those unbound by ABC rules.

What does the future offer. Since July 1989, AKC has offered limited registration, which inhibits dogs so registered from being bred, as their get is unregistrable. These dogs' registrations can only be changed to full registration by application to AKC, by their breeders. Yet, ABC will not let this method be used to solve our difficulties. Time, or more compassionate minds, may help us.

Thank you for allowing me to give this program, for your encouragement and for your courtesy. I hope that I've been able to shed more light than heat upon the white Boxer.