



## **OFFICIAL STANDARD FOR THE BOXER.**

**Approved by AKC February 5<sup>th</sup> 1999**

### **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

The *ideal* Boxer is a medium-sized, square built dog of good substance with short back, strong limbs and short, tight-fitting coat. His well developed muscles are clean, hard and appear smooth under taut skin. His movements denote energy. The gait is firm yet elastic, the stride free and ground-covering the carriage proud. Developed to serve as guard, working and companion dog, he combines strength with elegance and style. His expression is alert and temperament steadfast and tractable.

The chiseled head imparts to the Boxer a unique individual stamp. It must be in correct proportion to the body. The broad, blunt, muzzle is the distinctive feature, and great value is placed upon its being of proper form and balance with the skull.

In judging the Boxer, first consideration is given to general appearance to which attractive color and arresting style may contribute. Next is overall balance with special attention devoted to the head, after which the individual body components are examined for their correct construction, and efficiency of gait evaluated.

### **SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE**

**Height** – Adult males 22 1/2 to 25 inches; females 21 to 23 1/2 inches at the withers. Preferably, males should not be under the minimum nor females over the maximum; however, proper balance and quality in the individual should be of primary importance since there is no size disqualification.

**Proportion** – The body in profile is of square proportion in that a horizontal line from the front of the fore-chest to the rear projection of the upper thigh should equal the length of a vertical line dropped from the top of the withers to the ground.

**Substance** – Sturdy with balanced musculature. Males larger boned than their female counterparts.

### **HEAD**

The beauty of the head depends upon harmonious proportion of muzzle to skull. The blunt muzzle is 1/3rd the length of the head from the occiput to the tip of the nose, and 2/3rds the width of the skull. The head should be clean, not showing deep wrinkles (wet). Wrinkles typically appear upon the forehead when ears are erect, and folds are always present from the lower edge of the stop running downward on both sides of the muzzle.

**Expression** – Intelligent and alert.

**Eyes** – Dark brown in color, not too small, too protruding or too deep-set. Their mood-mirroring character combined with the wrinkling of the forehead, gives the Boxer head its unique quality of expressiveness.

**Ears** –Set at the highest points of the sides of the skull are cropped, cut rather long and tapering, raised when alert.

**Skull** – The top of the skull is slightly arched, not rounded, flat nor noticeably broad, with the occiput not overly pronounced. The forehead shows a slight indentation between the eyes and shows a distinct stop with the topline of the muzzle. The cheeks should be relatively flat and not bulge (cheekiness), maintaining the clean lines of the skull, and should taper into the muzzle in a slight, graceful curve.

**Muzzle** – The muzzle, proportionately developed in length, width and depth, has a shape influenced first through the formation of both jaw-bones, second through the placement of the teeth, and third through the texture of the lips. The top of the muzzle should not slant down

(downfaced), nor should it be concave (dishfaced); however, the tip of the nose should lie slightly higher than the root of the muzzle.

The nose should be broad and black.

The upper jaw is broad where attached to the skull and maintains this breadth except for a very slight tapering to the front. The lips, which complete the formation of the muzzle, should meet evenly in the front. The upper lip is thick and padded, filling out the frontal space created by the projection of the lower jaw, and laterally is supported by the canines of the lower jaw. Therefore, these canines must stand far apart and be of good length so that the front surface of the muzzle is broad and squarish and, when viewed from the side, shows moderate layback. The chin should be perceptible from the side as well as from the front.

**Bite** – The Boxer 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 incisors is slightly convex with the corner upper incisors fitting snugly in back of the lower canine teeth on each side.

**Faults** – Skull too broad. Cheekiness. Wrinkling too deep (wet) or lacking (dry). Excessive flews. Muzzle too light for skull. Too pointed a bite **snipy** (snipey), too undershot, teeth or tongue showing when mouth closed. Eyes noticeably lighter than ground color of coat.

### **NECK, TOPLINE, BODY**

**Neck** – Round, of ample length, muscular and clean without excessive hanging skin (dewlap). The neck has a distinctly marked nape with an elegant arch blending smoothly into the withers.

**Topline** – Smooth, firm and slightly sloping.

**Body** – The chest is of fair width, and the forechest well defined and visible from the side. The brisket is deep, reaching down to the elbows; the depth of the body at the lowest point of the brisket equals half of the height of the dog at the withers. The ribs, extending far to the rear, are well arched but not barrel shaped.

The back is short, straight and muscular. The lower stomach is lightly tucked up, blending into a graceful curve to the rear. The croup is slightly sloped, flat and broad. Tail is set high, docked and carried upward. Pelvis long and in females especially broad.

**Faults** – Short heavy neck. Chest too broad, too narrow or hanging between shoulders. Lack of forechest. Hanging stomach. Slab-sided rib cage. Long or narrow loin, weak union with croup. Falling off of croup. Higher in rear than in front.

### **FOREQUARTERS**

The shoulders are long and sloping. Close-lying, and not excessively covered with muscle (loaded). The upper arm is long, approaching a right angle to the shoulder blade. The elbows should not press too closely to the chest wall nor stand off visibly from it.

The forelegs are long, straight and firmly muscled and when viewed from the front, stand parallel to each other. The pastern is strong and distinct, slightly slanting, but standing almost perpendicular to the ground. The dewclaws may be removed. Feet should be compact, turning neither in nor out, with well arched toes.

**Faults** – Loose or loaded shoulders. Tied in or bowed out elbows.

### **HINDQUARTERS**

The hindquarters are strongly muscled with angulation in balance with that of forequarters.

The thighs are broad and curved, the breech musculature hard and strongly developed. Upper and lower thigh long. Leg well angulated at the stifle with clearly defined, well “let down” hock joint. Viewed from behind, the hind legs should be straight with hock joints leaning neither in nor out. From the side, the leg below the hock (metatarsus) should be almost perpendicular to the ground, with a slight slope to the rear permissible. The metatarsus should be short, clean and strong. The Boxer has no rear dewclaws.

**Faults** – Steep or over-angulated hindquarters. Light thighs or over-developed hams. Over-angulated (sickle) hocks. Hindquarters too far under or too far behind.

#### **COAT**

Short, shiny, lying smooth and tight to body.

#### **COLOR**

The colors are fawn and brindle. Fawn shades vary from light tan to mahogany. The brindle varies from sparse, but clearly defined black stripes on a fawn background, to such a heavy concentration of black striping that the essential fawn background barely, although clearly, shows through (which may create the appearance of “reverse brindling”).

White markings should be of such distribution as to enhance the dog’s appearance, but may not exceed one-third of the entire coat. They are not desirable on the flanks or on the back of the torso proper. On the face, white may replace part of the otherwise essential black mask and may extend in an upward path between the eyes, but it must not be excessive, so as to detract from the true Boxer expression.

**Faults** – Unattractive or misplaced white markings.

#### **GAIT**

Viewed from the side, proper front and rear angulation is manifested in a smoothly efficient, level-backed, ground covering stride with powerful drive emanating from a freely operating rear. Although the front legs do not contribute impelling power, adequate “reach” should be evident to prevent interference, overlap or “sidewinding” (crabbing). Viewed from the front, the shoulders should remain trim and the elbows not flare (flair) out. The legs are parallel until gaiting narrows the track in proportion to increasing speed, then the legs come in under the body but should never cross. The line from the shoulders down through the leg should remain straight although not necessarily perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, a Boxer’s rump should not roll. The hind feet should “dig in” and track relatively true with the front. Again, as speed increases, the normally broad rear track will become narrower.

**Faults** – Stilted or inefficient gait. Lack of smoothness.

#### **CHARACTER AND TEMPERAMENT**

These are of paramount importance in the Boxer. Instinctively a “hearing” guard dog his bearing is alert, dignified and self-assured. In the show ring, his behavior should exhibit constrained animation. With family and friends, his temperament is fundamentally playful, yet patient and stoical with children. Deliberate and wary with strangers, he will exhibit curiosity but, most importantly, fearless courage if threatened. However, he responds promptly to friendly overtures honestly rendered. His intelligence, loyal affection and tractability to discipline make him a highly desirable companion.

**Faults** – Lack of dignity and alertness. Shyness.

#### **DISQUALIFICATIONS**

Boxers that are any color than fawn or brindle. Boxers with a total of white markings, exceeding one-third of the entire coat.

*The foregoing description is that of the ideal Boxer. Any deviation from the above described dog must be penalised to the extent of the deviation.*

AKC Approval Feb 5, 1999. From the 1999 American Boxer Club 1999 Specialty Catalogue.

Changes from 1989 Boxer Standard are in red.

Emended spelling in blue.