



GROUP III: WORKING DOGS

BOXER

RECOGNIZED: 1934

Effective: January 2004

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

ORIGIN & PURPOSE

The Boxer was developed in Germany as a medium-sized security dog. The breed is valued as a spirited pet and guardian of home and family. Developed to serve the multiple purposes of guard, working and escort dog, he must combine elegance with substance and ample power, not alone for beauty, but to ensure the speed, dexterity and jumping ability essential to arduous hiking, riding expedition, police or military duty.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Boxer is 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 movements should denote energy. The gait is firm yet elastic (springy), the stride free and ground covering, the carriage proud and noble. Only a body whose individual parts are built to withstand the most strenuous efforts, assembled as a complete and 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 overall 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. **Faults:** Head not typical, plump bulldoggy appearance, light bone, lack of balance, bad condition, lack of noble bearing.

TEMPERAMENT

These are of paramount importance in the Boxer. Instinctively a “hearing” guard dog, his bearing is alert, dignified and self-assured, even at rest. His behaviour should exhibit constrained animation. 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 and tenacity if threatened. However, he responds promptly to friendly overtures when honestly rendered. His intelligence, loyal affection and tractability to discipline make him a highly desirable companion. **Faults:** Lack of dignity and alertness, shyness, cowardice, treachery and viciousness (belligerency toward other dogs should not be considered viciousness).

SIZE

Height at the withers: Dogs, 57.25 to 63.5 cm (22.5 to 25 in); bitches, 53.25 to 59.75 cm (21 to 23.5 in)
Dogs should not go under the minimum, nor bitches over the maximum.

COAT

Short, shiny, lying smooth and tight to the body.

COLOUR

Fawn and brindle. Fawn in various shades from light tan to stag red or mahogany, the deeper colours preferred. The brindle coat in the Boxer is of two opposite types. The first of these includes those dogs having clearly defined dark stripes on a fawn background. The second type has what is best termed reversed brindling. Here the effect is of a very dark background with lighter-coloured fawn stripes or streaks showing through. White markings in fawn and brindle dogs are not to be rejected; in fact, they are often very attractive, but must be limited to one-third of the ground colour and are not desirable on the back of the torso proper. On the face, white may replace a part or all of the otherwise essential black mask. However, these white markings should be of such distribution as to enhance and not detract from the true Boxer expression.

HEAD

The beauty of the head depends upon the harmonious proportion between the muzzle to the skull. The **muzzle** should always appear powerful, never small in its relationship to the skull. The head should be clean, not showing deep wrinkles. Folds will normally appear upon the forehead when the ears are erect, and they are always indicated from the lower edge of the stop running downward on both sides of the muzzle. The dark **mask** is confined to the muzzle and is in distinct contrast to the colour of the head. Any extension of the mask to the skull, other than dark shading around the eyes, creates a somber undesirable expression. When white replaces any of the black mask, the path or any upward extension should be between the eyes. The muzzle is powerfully developed in length, width and depth. It is not pointed, narrow, short or shallow. Its shape is influenced first through the formation of both jawbones, second through the placement of the teeth, and third through the texture of the lips.

The Boxer is normally undershot. Therefore, the lower **jaw** protrudes beyond the upper, curving slightly upward. The upper jaw is broad where attached to the skull and maintains this breadth except for a very slight tapering to the front. The incisor teeth of the lower jaw are in a straight line, the canines preferably up front in the same line to give the jaw the greatest possible width. The line of incisors in the upper jaw is slightly convex toward the front. The upper corner incisors should fit snugly back of the lower canine teeth on each side, reflecting the symmetry essential to the creation of a sound, non-slip bite.

The **lips** complete the formation of the muzzle and they should meet evenly. The upper lip is thick and padded, filling out the frontal space formed by the projection of the lower jaw. It rests on the edge of the lower lip, and laterally is supported by the fangs (canines) of the lower jaw. Therefore, these fangs must stand far apart and be of good length so that the front surface of the muzzle shall become broad and squarish, and when viewed from the side, form an obtuse angle with the topline of the muzzle. Over-protrusion of the overlip or underlip is undesirable. The chin should be perceptible when viewed from the side as well as from the front without being over-rependous (rising above the bite line) as in the Bulldog. The Boxer must not show his teeth or his tongue when his mouth is closed. Excessive flews are not desirable. The top of the **skull** is slightly arched, not rotund, or flat or noticeably broad, and the occiput must not be too pronounced. The forehead forms a distinct **stop** with the topline of the muzzle, which must not be forced back into the forehead like that of a Bulldog. It should not slant down (down-faced), nor should it be dished, although the tip of the nose should lie somewhat higher than the foot of the muzzle. The forehead shows just a slight furrow between the eyes. The cheeks, though covering powerful masseter muscles, compatible with the strong set of teeth, should be relatively flat and not bulge, maintaining the clean lines of the skull. They taper into the muzzle in a slight, graceful curve.

The **ears** are set at the highest points of the sides of the skull, cut rather long without too broad a shell, and are carried erect. The Boxer's natural ears are defined as: moderate in size (small rather than large), thin to the touch, set on wide apart at the highest points of the sides of the skull and lying flat and close to the cheek when in repose. When the dog is alert, the ears should fall forward with a definite crease.

The dark brown **eyes**, not too small, protruding or deep-set and encircled by dark hair, should impart an alert, intelligent expression. Their mood-mirroring quality combined with the mobile skin furrowing of the forehead gives the Boxer head its unique degree of expressiveness.

The **nose** is broad and black, very slightly turned up; the nostrils broad with the nasolabial line running between them down through the upper lip, which must not be split.

Faults: Lack of nobility and expression, sombre face, unserviceable bite. Pinscher or Bulldog head, sloping topline of muzzle, muzzle too light for skull, too pointed a bite (snipey). Teeth or tongue showing with mouth closed, drivelling, split upper lip. Poor ear carriage, light ("Bird of Prey") eyes. Wry mouth; that is, when the upper and lower jaws are not in parallel straight lines.

NECK

Round, of ample length, not too short; strong and muscular and clean throughout, without dewlap, with a distinctly marked nape and an elegant arch running down to the back. **Faults:** Dewlap.

FOREQUARTERS

The **brisket** is deep, reaching down to the elbows; the depth of the body at the lowest point of the brisket equals half the height of the dog at the withers. The **ribs**, extending far to the rear, are well arched but not barrel-shaped. **Chest** of fair width, and forechest well defined, being easily visible from the side. The **loins** are short and muscular; the lower stomach line, lightly tucked up, blends into a graceful curve to the rear. The **shoulders** are long and sloping, close-lying, and not excessively covered with muscle. The **upper arm** is long, closely approaching a right angle to the shoulder blade. The **forelegs**, viewed from the front, are straight, stand parallel to each other, and have strong, firmly joined bones. The elbows should not press too closely to the chest wall or stand off visibly from it. The forearm is straight, long and firmly muscled. The pastern joint is clearly defined but not distended. The **pastern** is strong and distinct, slightly slanting, but standing almost perpendicular to the ground. The dewclaws may be removed as a safety precaution. **Feet** should be compact, turning neither in nor out, with tightly arched toes (cat-feet) and tough pads. **Faults:** Chest too broad, too shallow or too deep in front, loose or over muscled shoulders, chest hanging between shoulders, tied-in or bowed out elbows, turned feet, hare feet, hollow flanks, hanging stomach.

BODY

In profile, the build is of square proportions in that a horizontal line from the front of the forechest to the rear projection of the upper thigh should equal a vertical line dropped from the top of the withers to the ground. **Back:** The withers should be clearly defined as the highest point of the back; the whole back short, straight and muscular with a firm topline. **Faults:** Roach back, sway back, thin lean back, long narrow loins, weak union with the croup.

HINDQUARTERS

Strongly muscled with angulation in balance with that of forequarters. The **thighs** broad and curved, the breech musculature hard and strongly developed. **Croup** slightly sloped, flat, and broad. **Tail** attachment high, rather than low. Tail clipped, carried upward. Pelvis long and, in bitches especially, broad. **Upper** and **lower thigh** long, leg well angulated with a clearly defined, well let down hock joint. In standing position, the leg below the hock joint (metatarsus) should be practically perpendicular to the ground with a slight rearward slope permissible. Viewed from behind, the hind legs should be straight with the hock joints, leaning neither in nor out. The metatarsus should be short, clean and strong supported by powerful rear pads. The **rear toes** just a little longer than the front toes, but similar in all other respects. Dewclaws, if any, may be removed. **Faults:** Too rounded, too narrow, or falling off croup; low-set tail, higher in back than in front; steep, stiff or too slightly angulated hindquarters, light thighs, cow hocks, bowed and crooked legs, over-angulated hock joint (sickle hocks), long metatarsus (high hocks), hare feet, hindquarters too far under or too far behind.

TAIL

Tail attachment high, rather than low. The tail is of normal length or docked, carried upward.

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 should not flare 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 remain straight, although not necessarily perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, a Boxer’s breech 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, pounding, paddling, or flailing out of front legs, rolling or waddling gait, tottering hock joints, crossing over or interference; front or rear, lack of smoothness.

FAULTS

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed’s traditional purpose.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

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