

Understanding Judging Consistency

Judging May Be Consistent but not credible. If consistently selecting overdone heads or too much coat, then a judge negates the breed standard.

[E. Katie Gammill](#), [TheDogPlace](#) Exhibition Editor / November 2010

Judging consistency means to hold to uniformity. Some judges may be consistent but not credible. By consistently selecting overdone heads or too much coat, a judge negates the breed standard.

Imagine a class of fifteen dogs entering the ring. Twelve are similar. Three are “different”. Those who do not fit in are excused in the cut. The other twelve are again judged. Puzzled, observers question why outstanding individuals walked.

Does being different translate as being incorrect to the standard? Why does a judge choose from the type most prevalent in the ring? Is this the path of least resistance or do they fear sticking their neck out? Picking winners from the most consistent type sends the wrong message. Perhaps judges should give a verbal critique regarding placements. Then exhibitors could follow the judge’s thought process regarding choices and his/her ability to analyze and consistently apply the breed standard.

Consistency and predictability are not prevalent in judging today. Some judges are “reliable in their choices” and some appear to just pass around wins. Consistency reveals a judge’s expertise and understanding of a breed standard. OR DOES IT? Perhaps it only reflects personal preference. It might be soundness, color, eye shape, or coat type, but if dogs are judged in pieces, what encouragement is this for breeders to breed to the standard at all?

When searching for the overall dog, “pieces” should

only be given the importance referenced in the standard. The goal is to find the dog that “fills the eye.” When “piece judging” is given more importance than symmetry, a new “type” or trend evolves. The enhancement of a fault that becomes so common place in the ring it eventually is seen as a virtue? This is interpreted by many as “If it wins, it must be correct”.

Consistency is not always a reflection of knowledge and it may not be possible in a small entry. The opportunity to judge a large entry is both challenging and rewarding. It affords the judge an opportunity to be more selective in their choices, IF they have the ability to prioritize and analyze a standard properly. What if they don’t? Some judges make “off the wall selections” reflecting no consistency at all. They may be supported for a time, but eventually, support dwindles.

A judge who appreciates soundness or a good front most likely will look for it in breeds other than his/her own. If one visits this particular judge’s kennel, this



virtue may be evident in his/her breeding stock as well. There one should see consistency in body shape, top line, and breed specific movement.

Once a judge sorts on pieces and makes cuts, chosen dogs re-enter the ring for a second evaluation. Do judges ever seem confused? Staring at a dog does not make it better. Judges who seek specific virtues often put the entire breed at risk.

“...They understand that a “different” dog may be the only correct dog in the ring.”

Judging is prioritizing according to a standard. If something isn't called out in a standard, IT DOES NOT MEAN IT IS ACCEPTABLE! Common sense reveals all dogs have one head, one tail, two ears, two eyes, and four feet, hopefully all pointing in the same direction unless otherwise specified in the standard.

What new judges seek through education is NOT opinion. They are seeking assistance in prioritizing according to the written standard. Breed club members ask what can be done to assure their judges education programs actually address their standard. Changing mentors periodically during an educational period would not be necessary IF educators taught the standard rather than personal preferences.

Property Classes confuse judges. “Having one dog represent an eye, another foot, another ear, another a skull, another proper coat and top line is like playing Sudoku with breed characteristics. Can't these virtues be seen on a single dog or bitch? How is a new judge to find a composite of all virtues combined, when the educators offer a group of dogs and call out each virtue individually on a separate animal? Judges quickly learn breeders differ in opinion as to what they feel is important to them. If the mentoring process is about what a “breeder wants”, why bother to show the new judge the standard at all?

If one sticks to the standard, it takes less dogs, means less confusion, involves less mentors, and is more encouraging to judges new to the breed.

Judging on type with little knowledge of structure leaves winners “all over the board.” This causes “fleeting fads” and generic show dogs. A selection of the best of the best requires a judge to analyze and select the dog that is a balance between “type and soundness”, NOT front and rear.

Most judges seek continuous education. Good judges carry a “template” of a breed in their head. They simply select the dog that fits into the template. These are the judges who reflect consistency. They understand that a “different” dog may be the only correct dog in the

ring. A confident judge with expertise, knowledge and courage will reward accordingly. Then ringside will see a picture of the true breed standard and perhaps be better able to identify differences in the future.

http://www.thedogplace.org/Judges/Education/Good-Judges-Speak-10094_Gammill.asp



CH Gentleman Jim (Brindle Mick x Triton Judy)
Bred by Joe Dunn, Owned by Joe Mallen
DOB 27 May, 1937

CH Lady Eve (Barney x Gypsy)
Bred by J Evans, Owned by Joe Dunn
DOB 1939



Ch. Game Laddie (Game Lad x Mad Molly)
Bred & Owned by W.A. Boylan

DOB: 2 January, 1936
Year became a Champion: 1939

Number of Challenge Certificates: 4