

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From Dogs in Canada, September 1991

THE BOSTON TERRIER

How Important Is Colour To You?

The Boston Terrier Club of America has clarified white markings and colour in the revised 1990 American Kennel Club standard. Certain white markings that were termed "ideal" are now "required", while others are "desired". Brindle is no longer preferred outright over black, and a new colour called seal has been added. As the United States is the country of origin for this Non Sporting breed, their recent clarification of these and other points provides additional appreciation of how the Boston Terrier should be judged.

We are advised in the introductory AKC paragraph that white markings are a particularly distinctive feature and should be given particular consideration. However, points allotted for white markings have been reduced 50 per cent.

I can quote the revised American standard in regard to white markings, I can quote the Canadian standard, I can quote breeders, and I can give my opinion – however, the final selection of first, second, third and fourth place in the Open Female class rests with you.

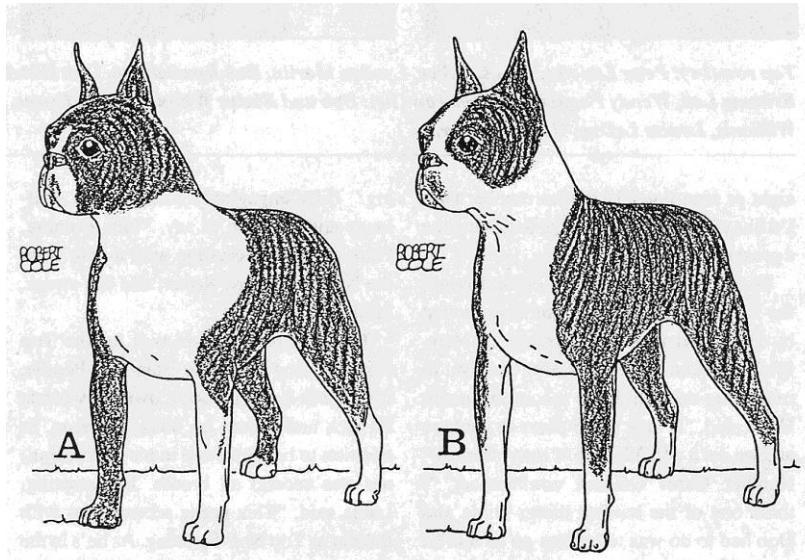
TYPICAL

The best three of these six Canadian bitches happen to weigh 19 pounds. Weight can be divided by class – i.e., under 15 pounds; 15 pounds and under 20 pounds; 20 pounds and not exceeding 25 pounds. The typical Boston is sturdy, with bone and muscle in proportion to weight structure.

Her head is in proportion to her body, and her expression indicates a high degree of intelligence. Her skull is square, flat on top and free from wrinkles. Her cheeks are flat, her brow is abrupt and her top is well defined. Her large, dark, round eyes are wide apart and set square in the skull; the outside corners of the eyes are in line with the cheeks when viewed face on.

In profile, her muzzle is free of heavy wrinkle and shorter in length than width or depth; about one third the length of the skull. The wide, black nose has a well-defined line between the nostrils. Her slightly undershot bite (which can be pincer) squares her broad muzzle. Her small, erect ears can be either cropped or natural.

Leg length and neck length are in balance with body length (the revised AKC standard does not specify ideal leg or neck length). The back is just short enough to square the body. The topline is level, and the rump



curves slightly to the low set on, short, fine and tapering tail (which can be straight or screw). Good angulation is present front and rear. The chest is deep, with good width. The feet are small and compact.

WHITE MARKINGS

"Required" AKC (and some "desired") markings were previously "ideal" markings. Required markings include a white muzzle band, a white blaze between the eyes, and a white forechest. (In Canada, required and desired combine as ideal).

Desired AKC markings include an even white blaze between the eyes and over the head, a white collar, a white forechest, and white on part of the forelegs and hind legs below the hocks. (This AKC distinction defines priorities).

COLOUR

Brunette with white markings and black and white markings and seal with white markings have been added. Defined, seal colour appears black, except it has a red cast when viewed in the sun or bright light. Brunette continues to be the preferred colour, but now only if all other qualities are equal. In Canada, black is only "permissible", and the CKC standard does not yet include seal. All six Boston Terriers in the class are brindle with white markings. I do not believe, if the best of these examples were black or seal, that colour would alter my decision.

Solid black (actually solid black with white markings), as in Canada, continues to be a disqualification, but the AKC definition has been expanded to include the words "solid without required white markings". (Canada should do the same.) Solid brindle and solid seal without white markings are now included in this disqualification. Grey or liver colours, with or without white markings, continue to disqualify. (In Canada, black and tan also disqualifies.)

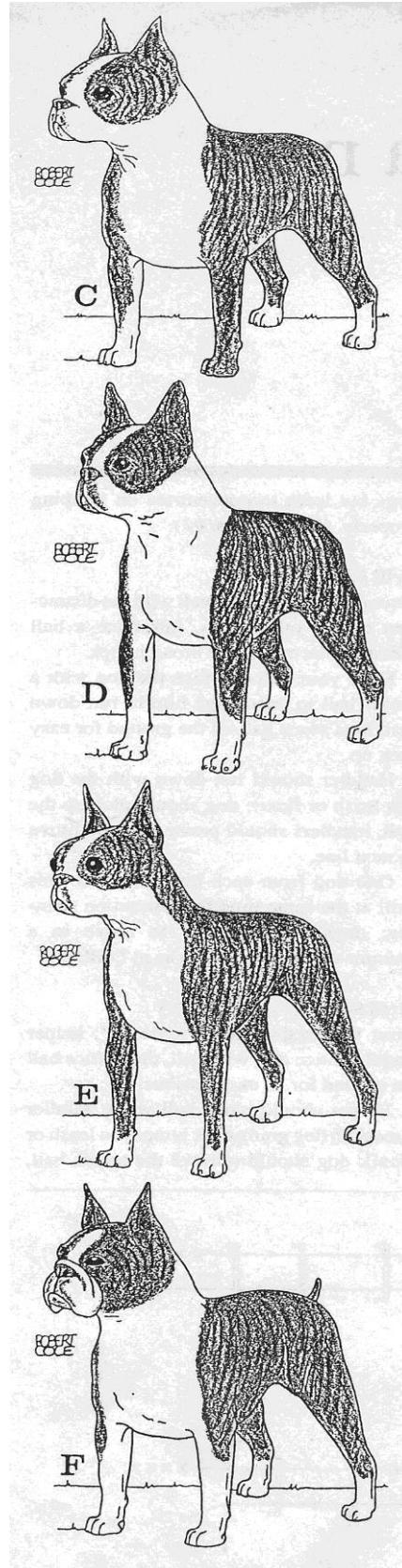
FIRST PLACE

Three examples deserve close competitive consideration for first place. All three have typical heads. Two are nicely marked, and represent two different types. Which type do you prefer?

If you chose taller, slighter boned, nicely marked, longer bodied but proportionally correct Bitch B for first place, then equally marked intermediate Bitch D is your second place choice. Tall Bitch B is not my choice. Intermediate-type Bitch D is my choice for first place.

SECOND PLACE

If, like myself, you selected Bitch D for first place, then colour markings take on a special competitive significance in breeding on second place. Based solely on beautiful colour markings, taller, lighter boned Bitch B would win over intermediate type, poorly marked Bitch A. However, white colour markings are only one factor. To introduce required white markings as an important decision factor, I intentionally minimized Bitch A's required white blaze and muzzle, I extended brindle over the whole head and one leg, and I allowed white on the chest to spill over onto the shoulder. Other than colour markings, Bitch A is identical to Bitch D. I prefer poorly



marked (but with required white markings) Bitch A for second place over long legged, terrier type Bitch B.

THIRD PLACE

Bitch B is the same weight as my first place and second place winners. She is, however, taller, longer and finer boned, but not to an unacceptable degree. Her head is identical to the winner, but appears smaller on her taller body. Her body has the same breadth and depth as the winner; her legs are longer. Her neck has been kept the same length as the winner because a long Boston neck is most uncharacteristic.

FOURTH PLACE

This goes to heavy, short legged but sound Bitch C. She is ‘bully’ where Bitch B tends toward ‘terrier’. Ethel Braunstein in the book, *The Complete Boston Terrier*, states: “From the time the breed was first recognized, the question has raged among fanciers and judges as to whether the correct type tended toward the Bulldog or toward the Terrier. It is now beginning to resolve itself, and the most acceptable type is an intermediate one, tending somewhat more to the Terrier than to the bulldog.”

Bitch C’s head departs from typical. Her muzzle is too long and her underjaw too narrow. This long departure greatly changes appearance and expression. This change would be lessened if the long muzzle had depth and breadth.

BITCH E

Faulty Bitch E appears spindly, a weakness stressed in the standard. The Boston should be sturdy. She also has an uncharacteristic domed skull, narrow muzzle, too large and prominent an eye, and a greater amount of dewlap than is accepted on Bostons.

BITCH F

Chunky and bulldoggy, this example’s eyes are too small and are the wrong shape. Heavy wrinkle over the muzzle is faulty. Her turned up lower jaw combines with Bulldog layback. Her head is coarse and common.

Her roached back represents a serious fault. The tail is high set rather than low set, and is carried above, rather than below, the horizontal.

BOSTON DISQUALIFICATIONS

A solid brindle (no white markings) would be disqualified in the United States, but not in Canada – the same is true for blue eyes or any trace of blue. A docked tail is a stated disqualification in the AKC standard, but not mentioned (though still a disqualification) in the CKC standard. A dudley nose (flesh coloured) would disqualify in both countries.

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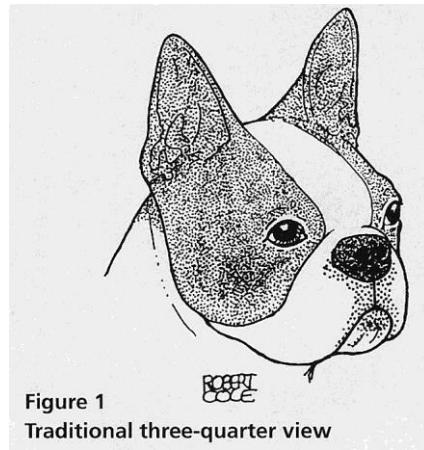


Figure 1
Traditional three-quarter view

Based on the CKC 1957 breed standard

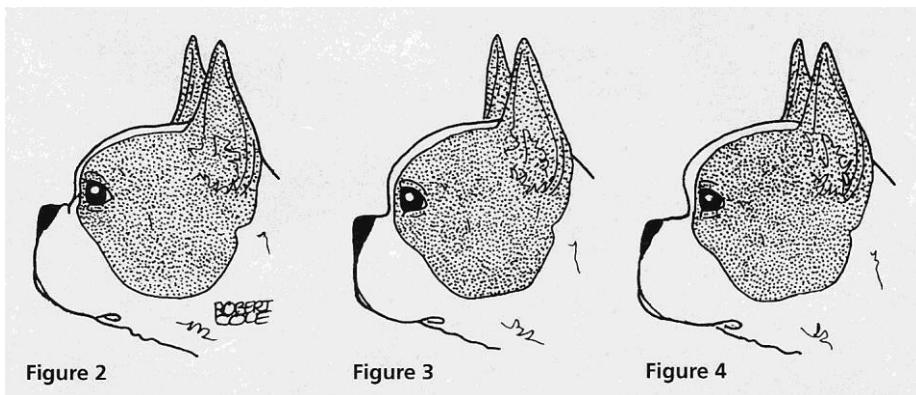
THE HEAD

Place Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4, in order. First place has a fault spelled out in the standard. Second place conforms most closely to the standard. Third place has two, not three, head faults.

The standard asks that first place Figure 2's muzzle be free of wrinkle. However, you seldom find a Boston Terrier muzzle devoid of wrinkle. In fact, you'll encounter experienced fanciers who will comment, "Does it really say that in the standard?" The main concern of the standard is a heavy, ropelike fold of skin over the muzzle. I have given first place a real world light, broken wrinkle.

Second place Figure 3 has a correct pincer bite sufficient to square the muzzle, but this doesn't always happen without a reverse scissors bite (compare with revers scissors bite of Figure 2).

Third place Figure 4 has a faulty rounded skull and domed forehead. If her muzzle is as wide as it is long (not more than one third length of skull), then it is not too long.



WHICH EYES ARE CORRECT?

On which one of these four heads, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7 or Figure 8, are the eyes correctly positioned? Boston eyes should be set wide apart, large, round and dark. A small eye or an overly large eye should be easy to spot, so the concentration here is on correct eye position. Correct eye position has a direct influence on expression viewed from the front, as exemplified by these four heads.

All four face on heads are identical except for the placement of the eyes. The standard advises, "eyes are set square in skull". The standard fails to advise as to what level. Anyone familiar with the eye placement on the Bulldog, an ancestor of the Boston, is aware that a horizontal line drawn through the four corners of the eyes rests upon the top of the nose. The eyes of Figure 6 are positioned in this manner. Is Figure 6 the correct head?

On page 107 of *The Complete Boston Terrier*, Ethel Braunstein advises, "The stop must be deep enough for the large eyes to set into the top skull above the muzzle..." Figure 5, Figure 7 and Figure 8 conform to this advice. So now you are down to these three different eye positions and the focus is centered on the distance the eyes are apart. The standard says simply "wide apart".

But how wide apart? The Boston Terrier standard has for a long time included the words, "the outside corners of the eyes are on line with the cheeks (side of face) as viewed from the front." Does this help you decide between Figure 5, Figure 7 and Figure 8? Those of us outside the breed, who remember that the Bulldog standard advises that "eyes wide apart but outer corners within the outline of the cheeks," may well wonder what the Boston standard's reference to "eyes on line with the cheeks" means?

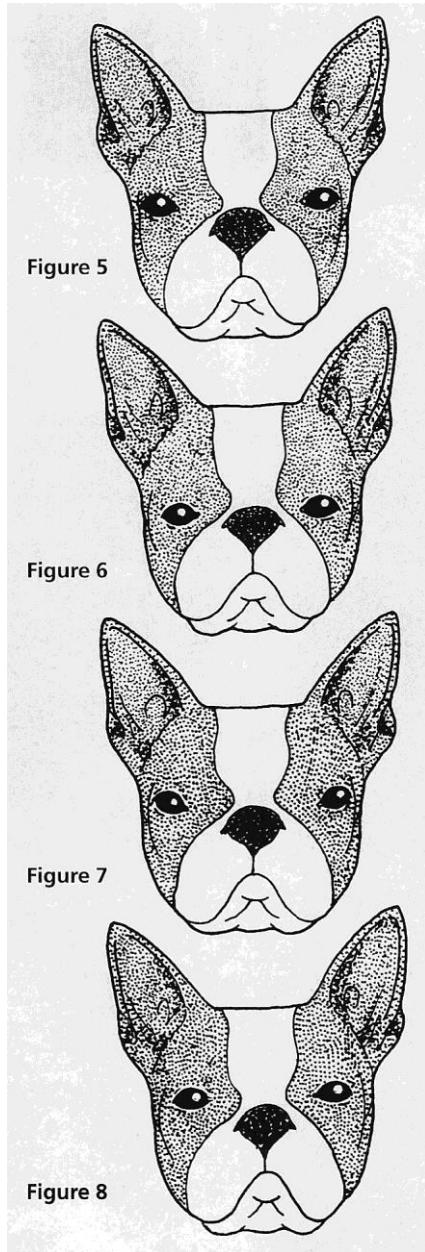
The Boston Terrier standard describes the skull as "square". Now we know it cannot be perfectly square. However, viewed from the front, the "on a line with cheeks" eyes on Figure 5 conform to the wording even though they do appear wide in the extreme.

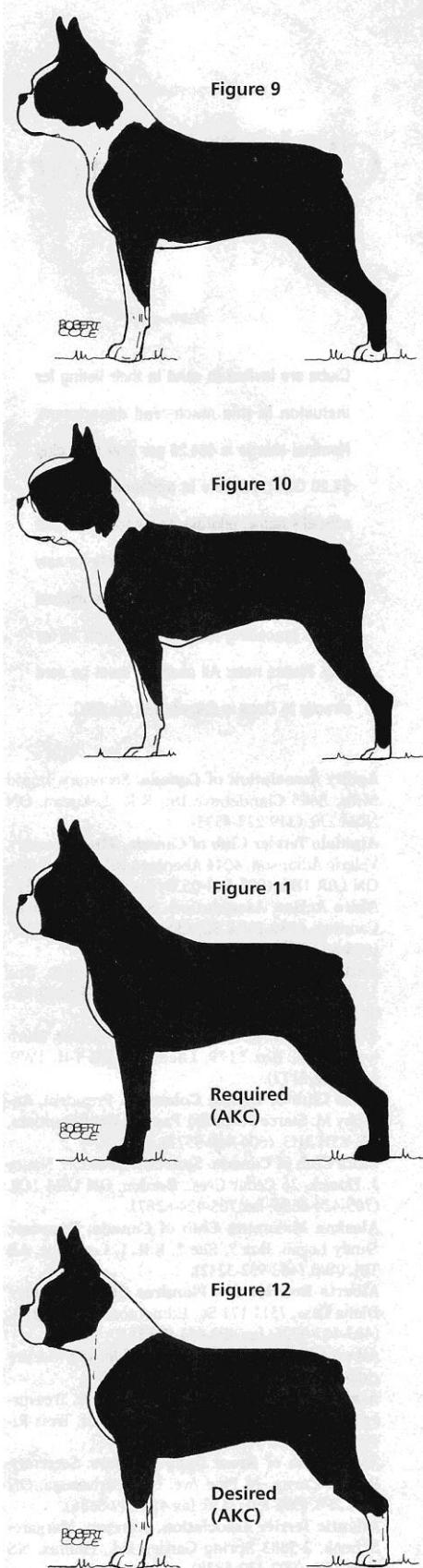
The corners of Figure 7's eyes are the maximum distance apart. However, they are set at an angle more on the side of the head, and the corners are on line with the cheeks because the cheeks converge toward the front. Is this eye position correct? If it is, then E.J. Rousuck is correct on page 57 of *The Boston Terrier*, when he quotes a woman who described the correct position of a Boston's eye as looking "as if they were just ready to fall off the sides of the head."

We could leave it there and call Figure 7 correct except for a comment by Ethel Braunstein in *The Complete Boston Terrier*, where, when she describes the stop as sufficiently abrupt, she adds, "for the eyes to face forward and not around the sides of the head."

MY OPINION

Like writers and artists before me I could have avoided depicting the Boston's head face on and stayed with the traditional three-quarter view. But that's no fun. I'd rather be wrong and be corrected than fudge on a question. In my opinion, Figure 8 comes closest to correct in the real world, and if you stood in front but off a little to the left or right, the corner of an eye would be on line with a cheek.





THE BODY

Which bitch, Figure 9 or Figure 10, best represents typical? Both are Canadian champions. I have captured them in profile, which is not the traditional three-quarter angle Boston Terrier exhibitors prefer. However, it is the angle at which their outlines are assessed in the show ring.

From this angle, it is evident that Figure 9 is the better representation of typical. Their heads are quite different but I selected these two mainly because of their respective body outlines. Figure 9 exemplifies many Boston virtues; Figure 10 draws attention to certain faults.

Figure 9 has what I believe to be a correct "fair" length of neck. This neck has the required slight arch and settles neatly into well laid back sloping shoulders. The standard goes on to describe the "forelegs as straight in bone with short strong pasterns and set on a line with the point of the shoulders." Good, but some important forequarter parts have been neglected.

There is also a degree of forechest; the elbow should be level with the deepest part of the brisket; there should also be an upper arm of sufficient length and angle as to position the elbow rearward on the body; the foreleg should, in my opinion, be the same length as the body is deep; and the front pastern should slope slightly.

Figure 10 in the flesh has to have greater appeal than she does here in simple outline. Her too large, round rather than flat head tends in size toward masculine. However, it is the parts behind the head that make for an interesting comparison.

Her neck is good and her shoulders are fair but follow her pigeon breast down to the elbow. The bottom of the chest is raised above the elbow and there is, I am sure, a hole between the front legs; the curve of the undercarriage has an abrupt break; tuck up is pronounced; the loin is long; the withers change from a strange step-down to the roached topline; the bone is spindly; and the feet are poor. Amazingly, aside from the roach, she moved well, coming, going and in profile.

COLOUR AND MARKINGS

The CKC Boston Terrier standard was written by the Americans in 1957 and borrowed by us shortly thereafter. The AKC revised this standard in 1990 particularly in the confusing area of colour and colour markings. If Canada adopted the revised AKC wording, we could greatly improve on our many well marked, poorly constructed excuses for Boston Terriers. This is not to say Canada doesn't produce some of the best, but because of the CKC standard's strong preference for brindle and certain ideal markings, good structure appears to be an afterthought.

Adoption of the AKC division of "required" and "desired" white markings would make it easier to award soundness over certain white markings, which would then be considered desirable but not absolutely necessary. To this end, I have also provided two

colour marking drawings of a sound Boston plus mention of a new colour.

AKC colours now are brindle with white markings, black with white markings and seal (new colour) with white markings. The “seal” colour appears black except that it has a red cast when viewed in the sun or bright light.

Figure 11 illustrates the required markings, which include white muzzle band, white blaze between the eyes and white forechest. Figure 12 illustrates the desired white markings; even white blaze between the eyes and over the head, white collar; white forechest, and white on part of the forelegs and hind legs below the hocks.

Now that you have read the description for each, transfer Figure 11's required markings to seal colour Figure 9, and judge her against ideally marked brindle Figure 10. If you gave Figure 10 first place over Figure 9, then white markings and brindle colour are very important to you. Now, just for fun let's take it one step further – let's say Figure 9 lacks a white blaze between her eyes.