

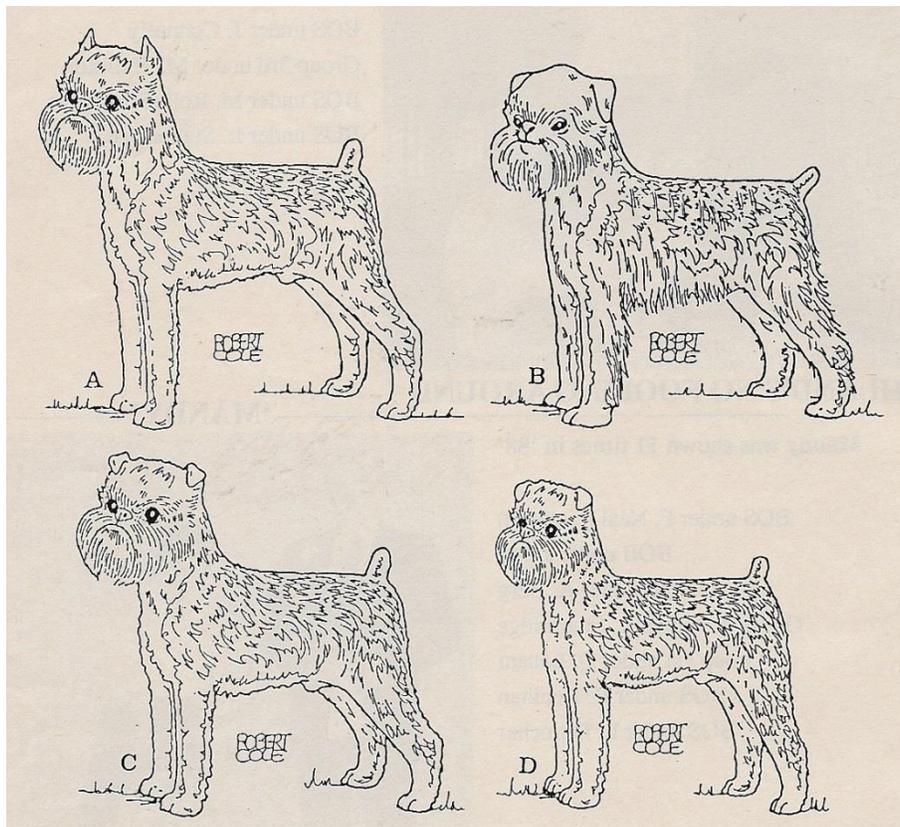
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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Brussels Griffon

Without letting a possible preference for cropped or natural ears influence your selection for first place, decide which two of these Brussels Griffons are the better pair, and then which one of these two more closely represents typical.



FIVE DISQUALIFICATIONS

None of these four examples has a disqualifying dudley or butterfly nose (I did not make the noses black on the drawings because I wanted to clearly indicate the degree of layback and open nostrils), nor a white spot or blaze anywhere on the coat. Tongues do not hang (an indication of a wry mouth), nor are any of these examples overshot.

FIRST AND SECOND

The better pair (Dog A and Dog C) represent a preference for two different types of Brussels Griffon. I have given one the acceptable high-set cropped ear and the other the equally acceptable high-set small, semi-erect, natural ear without thought to which has which. Both of these Bichon types weigh 10 lb., have similar

heads, coats and required degree of soundness. The main difference lies in the direction towards a compact type or a smaller, more elegant, type ... which do you prefer?

COATS

There are, in the breed, two distinct varieties of coat – rough and smooth (the latter not illustrated). The rough coat should be wiry and dense, free from curl, the harder and the more wiry the better. No reference is made to the undercoat but, as the new 1986 British Standard states “preferably with undercoat,” I am assuming the same applies world-wide.

On no account should a Brussels Griffon rough coat feel woolly, and there should be no silky hair anywhere. Nor should the coat be long as to give a shaggy appearance, but should be distinctly different from the smooth coat. The head should be covered with wiry hair, slightly longer around the eyes, nose, cheeks and chin, thus forming a fringe.

The smooth coat (not illustrated) is short and tight. It is similar to that of the Boston Terrier or Bulldog, without a trace of wire.

COLOUR

In the rough-coated type, coat is: 1. Reddish-brown, with a little black at the whiskers and chin allowable; 2. Black and reddish-brown mixed, usually with black mask and whiskers; 3. Black with uniform reddish-brown markings usually appearing under the chin, on the legs, over the eyebrows, around the edges of the ears and around the vent; or 4. solid black. Any white hairs in either the rough or smooth coat are a serious fault. A white spot or blaze anywhere on the coat is a disqualification. Frost sometimes found on the muzzle of mature blacks is natural and should not be penalized.

The colours of the smooth-coated type are the same for the rough in all parts of the world except the United States. If you exhibit or judge Griffons in the states you should be aware that, under AKC rules, a solid black coat in the smooth is to be disqualified. Why? One suggestion is that the breed club's position has been that a black Pug has possibly been used as a cross in the distant past.

Red rough is by far the most popular colour and coat, followed by red rough mixed with black (actually a sable), usually arrived at by mixing colours. Valerie Brideau-Boyce, breeder, writes that a clear red should win if all things were equal.

FIRST PLACE

My preference is based on the standard's words, “sturdy, with a thick set, short body” and “forelegs of medium length ... set moderately wide apart.” Dog A exhibits all of these requirements – medium length of leg meaning the same length as the depth of the body.

I have given this compact Brussels what I consider to be a neck of ‘medium length’, a body that is broad, and elbows held close and level with a deep chest. The stifles are bent, hocks are well let down, feet are small and thick with black pads and toenails. The tail is docked short and emerges at right angles to level topline.

The large head is rounded on top but in no way domed on top, and wide between the small, semi-erect ears. The hair on the skull is rather coarse. The nose is black. The mouth is slightly undershot, teeth even; there is a compliment of six incisors in line, top and bottom. The neat lips are edged with black, the chin is prominent, the under jaw is large with upward sweep, showing neither teeth nor tongue.

SECOND PLACE

Less compact than my first place winner, Dog C weighs the same, has many of the same virtues, is perhaps more elegant, but is less sturdy. ‘Less sturdy’ refers to weight of bone and breadth of body. More elegance is due to the longer neck, longer legs and longer body. I haven't lightened the head but, in comparison, it appears smaller.

THIRD PLACE

Small size should not handicap a good Brussels. Canada has two sizes, large and small – the small up to 12 lb for bitches, 11 lb for dogs. The Standard advises, “Type and quality are of greater importance than weight, and a smaller dog that is sturdy and well proportioned should not be penalized.”

But does this small example possess type, is he sturdy, and is he well proportioned? No, he is not. In addition, he has two head problems, as well as lacking angulation front and rear. Even though he is smaller, in proportion to his body size his head is too small, departing from both type and quality. Secondly, his head is too narrow. This narrowness positions the eyes too close, narrows the jaw and, sometimes, instead of six incisors there are only four.

The legs stand a little too close together, the body lacks sufficient Brussels breadth. The steep shoulders create an abrupt break at low withers, making the body appear longer than it actually is, as well as moving the front legs too far forward on the body. In the rear, the hind legs lack angulation at both stifle and hock.

LAST PLACE

This dog has seven faults; five are head faults. First, the skull must be large and round but not domed as this one is. It is the forehead that is to be domed, adding to the deep stop not present here. In addition, this stop is not deep because the nose is not tipped back deeply between the eyes and, whereas the chin must be undershot with an upwards sweep, this dog has, instead, a scissors bite.

The oval, oblique eyes also destroy the correct Brussels expression. The eyes should be large, round, black-rimmed, very dark, clear and alert. This dog's eyes are not round and, along with being slanted, the head is not the desired width.

The ears are large and lie almost flat to the sides of the head rather than being small and semi-erect, and are set rather high on the head.

The docked tail is not “set and held high”. In actual fact, the tail should emerge at right angles from this dog's level topline. It doesn't; the sacrum (not the pelvis) is at fault.

The rough coat should be harsh, dense, wiry, free from curl, preferably with undercoat (the Standard does not mention curl or undercoat). Part of this dog's coat is silky, part is woolly. I suggest to those who groom with clippers to instead use finger and thumb or a stripping comb.s