

Insights shared by judges on judging:

Gretchen Bernardi, The Art and Science of Judging. "Judging dogs is a combination of art and science, and the really good judges (and breeders) are blessed with and understand the perfect combination of the two."

Raymond Oppenheimer: "No breed can long continue to progress if it is consistently badly judged, because sooner or later a general air of confusion will grow so that neither the experienced dog breeder nor the novice knows what to do next. It is therefore of great importance that everybody connected with shows should understand clearly what the term 'a good judge' implies so that only men and women who qualify for such a description shall be appointed to officiate on important occasions." "If the wrong animals are put up consistently, they are liable to be chosen for breeding, which is likely to have a harmful effect on the breed concerned. So, it is very important that a high level of judging be maintained, especially at important shows (the breed club and general championship shows), for unless this happens, the general standard of the dogs will almost certainly deteriorate."

Lady Wentworth, in 1950 in the English magazine *Country Life*: "A good judge must have natural aptitude as well as experience. No amount of training can replace it.."

Tom Horner, Take Them Round, Please: The Art of Judging Dogs, "Judging is both an art and a science: It is an art because the decisions with which a judge is constantly faced are very often based on considerations of an intangible nature that cannot be recognized intuitively. It is also a science because without a sound knowledge of a dog's points and anatomy, a judge cannot make a proper assessment of it whether it is standing or in motion." In acknowledging the essential gift of talent, he writes, "Knowledge, decisiveness, integrity and the rest of the necessary qualities are useless without one vital possession — 'an eye for a dog,' which is the ability that every good judge has to recognize at a glance whether a dog is right or wrong, good, bad or indifferent. A priceless gift, without which no one can make a real success of judging, it is acquired by long and painstaking study of anatomy, breed standards, high-class dogs and poor ones, breed books, photographs and so on, until it becomes an instinctive skill to weigh up the merits of a dog, almost on first sight."

Percy Roberts, Best in Show judge Westminster 1967, gave his comments on dogs and judging to *Sports Illustrated*. He made the importance of that "eye" crystal clear. Percy was interested in all animals, including cattle and horses, observing them in order to hone his skill at finding quality wherever he could, going to the racetrack, not to gamble but to observe the horses at work. He worked as a kennel man for the best breeders, and observed animals of all species and breeds at every opportunity to improve his knowledge of dogs and refine his "eye." He recalled his Welsh father, a horse dealer, telling him to "never buy a horse that doesn't impress you when he first comes out of the barn."

There is an entire book dedicated to this subject, An Eye for a Dog, Illustrated Guide to Judging Purebred Dogs, by the late Canadian writer **Robert W. Cole**. In the conclusion of the book, Mr. Cole writes, "Having an 'eye for a dog' combines both science and art. Knowledge of the science of the dog and the ability to develop an appreciation for the art involved are required for the successful judge, breeder and exhibitor. On the science side, you must know the purpose a breed serves. This provides the clues as to how the dog should be structured and move. The art involves the ability to recognize beauty, form, symmetry and style ... in other words the dog's aesthetic appeal. One category complements the other."

Raymond Oppenheimer: In the chapter on judges and judging in McGuffin & Co.: A Bull Terrier History, 1964, he describes a good judge. "He must have that flair which recognizes quality, style, symmetry and balance at a glance. This requirement is one that can never be learned unless the judge has an artistic sense, and it is the one which will always mark out the first-class judge from the second-class. If a man can see quality, style, symmetry and all-round balance, he has what it takes to make both a great dog breeder and a great judge."

Barbara Burns: Multi-breed Exhibitor, Breeder, Judge said: An eye for the dog means that when you see it move, stand, do its' job, you recognize its attributes right away. When you see it enter the ring, you recognize it. Even if the dog is on a novice handler, the attributes are still obvious. Its balance, structure, attitude and nature.

Father Heaney (BTCA President of long ago): There's nothing to this business of judging. All you have to do is put up the dog you'd like best to take home, not the dog you find least objectionable.

Tom Gannaway (Famous dog handler in the early 1900's): Approached by a lady whose exhibit had been beaten by the dog Mr. Gannaway handled, she said to him: "How could any judge in his right mind put ABC over my dog? ABC has this wrong with him, he has that wrong with him, and so on". To which Mr. Gannaway replied: "Madame, I am perfectly willing to grant that ABC is as full of faults as a sieve is full of holes, but all the same he is the greatest bullterrier that I have ever seen."

Hope Colket 1958: "Confused people are continually asking, 'Why does a dog win one day and go down the next? Must not one judge be right and one wrong? After all, they should be judging to the Standard and there is only one Standard'.

Let us pass over the obvious reasons for reversals-that is, the fact that a dog may look better and show better one day than another or the fact that the competition may be different-and let us go on to the more controversial times when the competition is more or less the same and is presented in more or less the same manner. Any adequate judge-and there really are a good number of them-sees the faults and virtues in the dogs. He knows perfectly well that the dog he put up is French-footed or that the dog he put down has a lovely backline; but he has assessed those faults and virtues differently from some other judges. He has said to himself, 'yes, that dog is French-footed, but the other is cow-hocked. The first has a lovely eye, the second a good backline. The first has more substance, the second a better tail-set. There is nothing in the Standard to tell him how to value these faults and virtues; he used his own opinion, and of course opinions vary.

There is also personal interpretation of the Standard. What is 'balanced', 'what is 'long', what is 'short'? Is the Venus de Milo better balanced than Marilyn Monroe? Which one would you put up? And can you justify your decision on some inflexible Standard? What is attractively slim to western eyes is pitifully scrawny to eastern eyes. There can be no absolute standard of beauty. The Greeks tried it, saying the height of the body should be so many times the height of the head. The Egyptians too, had rigid rules and produced masterpieces within their narrow limits. But the Greeks were not the only creators of beauty nor were the Egyptians.

Beauty cannot be reduced to mathematical proportions; although it may at times fit into them, it can also go beyond them.

So next time you see a reversal of one judge's decision made by another, don't just say, 'Well, one of them was wrong!' Try to discover what good points the winning dog has which the judge might think important enough to outweigh its faults How often have you heard someone say disgustedly, 'That dog

shouldn't have won, he has a horrible head' or 'How can a dog which knits and purls go up?' You can be sure the judge notices the horrible head but he considered movement of more importance. In the second case, he considered the head of more importance. Now, you may agree with the first that movement is most important or you may agree with the second that the head is of chief importance; but whichever you do, you cannot unequivocally state that you are right and the other wrong, or ought not to. So I urge you to try to understand the reasons for a judge's placings instead of simply condemning or lauding him."

From a 1965 article by William Colket on Raymond's statements: Surely every championship show judge must know that the head has to be long, strong and egg-shaped, that the back must be short and strong, that the front must be straight, the stifles well bent and so on. It is the failure to recognize these features by some judges and an inability in others, who can recognize them, to balance one animal's worth against another which is the problem. There are many judges who can recite the Standard off by heart but could not pick out a correct shoulder, hindquarter, body shape or movement; there are others again who could pick out these features unerringly yet would put the animals entirely in the wrong order. Not many years ago at the request of a particular judge I 'heard' him recite the virtues and failings of every animal which had appeared under him at a big show, he gave me an absolutely accurate description of each one, yet the order in which he placed them in each class bore no relationship to the all-round worth of the dogs in question. To do a good job a judge must not only know the required points but he must be able to recognize them when he sees them; finally, he must above all be able to balance the virtues and defects of each dog one against the other. I know no way in which one can teach a judge this latter quality if he does not possess it."

Mrs. H.H. Stewart 1941: "Speaking of judging, did you ever give ear to the answer of a judge when asked, 'Why didn't my Rover go higher?' Usually, the answer is something like this: 'He didn't move so good today, Madam' or 'I think he had tartar on his teeth'. Perhaps those answers are just outs. But I doubt it. Because it takes a good eye and a lot of appreciation to see a good one, and a good one can be so full of faults it really isn't funny, and still be good. To know a good bull terrier you have to live with 'em, eat 'em for breakfast, sleep with 'em, and dream 'em. How many do that?"

Mrs. H.H. Stewart, this is written about the Bully that did NOT place. "Apparently this fellow's blueprints were wrinkled!"