

# *National Kennel Club*

## *American Bulldog Breed Standard*

updated 1/2019

Historically the American Bulldog was bred to be a “farm utility dog” that was used for farm work. They were also very much a part of the family, and were instrumental in personal and property protection as well.

### **General Appearance:**

The American Bulldog is a well-balanced, short-coated, muscular and athletic animal. American Bulldogs display great strength, endurance, and agility. Males are characteristically larger, heavier boned and more masculine than the females.

### **Temperament:**

American Bulldogs should be alert, outgoing and confident. Aloofness with strangers is acceptable. Some assertiveness toward other dogs is not considered a fault, however; dogs may be dismissed at the judge’s discretion for disrupting their class.

**Faults:** Overly aggressive or excessively shy. All dogs must be physically examined by the judge, any dog refusing to allow physical inspection by either shying away or becoming vicious may be disqualified depending on the severity.

### **Disqualifications**

Extreme viciousness or shyness:

**Shyness** - A dog shall be judged fundamentally shy if, refusing to stand for examination, it shrinks away from the judge; if it fears an approach from the rear; if it shies at sudden and unusual noises to a marked degree. Note: Puppies should not be faulted severely here. With maturity and socialization confidence should increase.

**Viciousness** - A dog that attacks, or attempts to attack either the judge or its handler unprovoked, is definitely vicious. An aggressive or belligerent attitude towards other dogs shall not be deemed vicious.

### **Size:**

**Standard Type:** Ideal standard males should measure between 23 to 27 inches at the withers and weigh from 75 to 115 pounds. Females; 21 to 25 inches, 60 to 85 pounds.

**Bully Type:** Ideal bully males should measure between 23 to 27 inches at the withers and weigh 80 to 125 pounds. Females; 22-26 inches 60 to 105 pounds.

**Note:** The overall proportion of the dog is of utmost importance when evaluating weight.

### **Head:**

The head should be broad, flat on top squared appearance with a well-defined stop. It should also be medium in length with pronounced muscular cheeks.

**Standard Type:** A box or wedge shape is preferred.

**Bully Type:** A larger rounder shape is ideal.

### **Muzzle:**

The muzzle should be broad with wide-open nostrils. The muzzle should be wider at the base and taper to the nose. The lips should be full with black pigmentation; some pink allowed. The chin is well defined and must not overlap the upper lip nor covered it.

**Standard Type:** Muzzle should be medium in length 2 to 4 inches. It should also be 35% to 45% of the overall length of the head.

**Bully Type:** Muzzle should be broad 2 to 3 inches in length and should be 25% to 35% of the overall length of head.

**Faults:** Pendulous Lips, Narrow muzzle, and Full continuous black mask.

**Note:** The muzzle should be in proportion to head size & type.

### **Nose:**

Preferred nose color is Black.

**Cosmetic Faults:** Any nose color other than black. Red, brown, pink, dudley, or grizzle colors will occur but are considered cosmetic faults.

### **Dentition (Bite):**

Teeth should be medium to large and should not be visible when mouth is closed. Lips are moderately thick; black pigment lining the lips is preferred; with some pink allowed.

**Standard Type:** A tight undershot (reverse scissors) preferred. Undershot up to ½ inch acceptable, plus or minus 1/8 inch is acceptable with no visible teeth.

**Bully Type:** ¼ - ½ inch “Undershot” depending on size of dog and shape of skull. Plus or minus 1/8 inch is acceptable with no visible teeth.

**Faults:** Small teeth or uneven incisors.

**Disqualification (both types):** Parrot mouth or closed mouth with visible teeth.

**Bully Type Serious Fault:** Even, level, scissor bite, overshot, or wry mouth.

**Standard Type Serious Fault:** Undershot over ¾ inch, overshot, or wry mouth.

Note: American Bulldogs are a working breed and should not be penalized for broken or missing teeth.

### **Eyes:**

Almond-shaped to round, medium-sized.

**Color:** Brown eye color is preferred.

The haw should not be visible. Black pigment is preferred; all other colors of pigmentation are considered cosmetic faults.

**Cosmetic Faults:** Any eye color other than brown, both eyes that do not match in color, pink eye rims, or excessive haw visible.

**Serious faults:** Crossed or non-symmetrical eyes.

### **Ears:**

The ears should be set high on the head, medium in size may be drop, semi-prick, or rose.

**Faults:** Cropped ears. Hound Ears.

### **Neck:**

Slightly arched, very muscular, and of moderate length, tapering from shoulders to head.

**Bully Type:** Neck is almost equal to the head in size.

**Faults:** neck too short and thick; thin or weak neck.

### **Body:**

Wide, deep chest; fairly compact, straight and well balanced. The chest should not be narrow or excessively wide, nor should the elbows be angled out or pulled in. The back should be broad and moderately short, showing great strength.

**Structural Faults:** The back should not be narrow, excessively long or swayed.

**Note:** The degree of fault will depend on how it affects the dogs “working” ability and movement.

### **Forequarters:**

The chest should be deep and moderately wide giving the appearance of power and athletic ability. The front, overall, should be straight and well balanced. The chest should not be narrow or excessively wide.

**Structural Faults:** Upright or loaded shoulders; elbows turned outward or tied-in; down at the pasterns; front legs bowed; wrists knuckled over; toeing in or out.

### **Hindquarters:**

Broad, well-muscled with muscles tapering well to the leg to manifest speed and strength, but not quite as large as at the shoulders. There should not be an excess or lack of angulation in the rear legs.

**Serious Structural Faults:** Narrow or weak hindquarters, weak pasterns, cow hocks, open hocks, or bowed legs.

### **Legs:**

The legs should be strong and straight with moderate to heavy bone. Front legs should not set too close together or too far apart. Pasterns should be strong, straight and upright. The rear legs should be moderately angulated and parallel.

**Serious Faults:** Excessively Bow-Legged in the front, weak pasterns, cow hocks, open hocks, bowed legs in the rear.

**Feet:**

The feet are round, medium in size; toes are well arched, and tight.

**Faults:** Splayed feet or crooked toes.

**Tail:**

Strong at the root tapering to the hocks, in a relaxed position, the tail can be carried back when excited. A "pump handle" tail is preferred but any tail carried from upright, when the dog is excited, to relaxed between the hocks is acceptable. The tail should not end in a complete circle.

**Faults:** Tail curled over the back; corkscrew tail, kinked or crooked tail.

**Note:** Natural tails preferred, docked tails acceptable but will be considered a cosmetic fault.

**Gait:**

The gait should be "balanced and smooth", showing great speed, agility and power. The dog should not travel excessively wide, and as speed increases the feet move toward the centerline of the body to maintain balance. The top line remains firm and level, parallel to the line of motion.

**Structural Faults:** Legs not moving on the same plane; legs over reaching; legs crossing over in front or rear; front or rear legs moving too close or touching; pacing; paddling; side winding.

**Note:** The Bully type gait will have a slight degree of less reach, flexibility, and spring than that of a Standard Type.

**Coat:**

Short and smooth.

**Serious Fault:** Long and fuzzy coats.

**Color:**

Solid white, or any color pattern including black, red, brown, fawn and all shades of brindle. For the Johnson/Bully type only Blue Brindle; Pied are acceptable colors.

**Serious Faults:** Tri Color Pattern(2 colors patched on a solid color such a white black & tan but not limited to these colors).

**Color Disqualification:** Merle, Any Blue Color in Scott/Standard type or Solid Blue in Johnson/Bully type.

**Disqualifications:**

Any dog that has been spayed or neutered.

Male dogs that do not have 2 visible testicles.

Blindness or deafness.

**Cosmetic Faults:** A cosmetic fault is one of a minor nature. A fault not specified as cosmetic has to do with structure as it relates to a working dog.

**Structural Faults:** These faults pertain to the dog's actual structure and fundamental movement. These faults are weighted as to how they hinder the dogs' ability to work.

**Note:** Features that are disqualified or faulted in the show ring, are in no way is meant to disqualify the dog from "working events", or to take away any credit the dog might have as a "working dog".

**Females in heat are not to be shown in the conformation classes and are not allowed in the proximity thereof.**