

JUDGING THE MINIATURE PINSCHER

By Breeder/Judge Gloria Knapp

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The King of Toys!! That is the Min Pin. Having bred over 100 Champions and being a breeder, handler and now a judge of the precious little beasts, I can say they really deserve that title. When they walk into the ring with their natural self-possession, alert and proud, they are a sight to behold. They are a natural show dog and can give you goose bumps when they glide around the ring with their free and easy hackney-like action.

The most defining physical characteristics of the Min Pin should be his general appearance, which is that of a well-balanced, sturdy, compact, short-coupled dog. These are very important words that describe the Min Pin's conformation and we should make a point to remember these words when visualizing the Min Pin. Right here I'd like to ask you a question. When was the last time you saw a Min Pin who had a compact, slightly wedge-shaped and muscular body with well-sprung ribs? Certainly not winning too often, yet that is what our standard calls for. Hmmmmmmm.

His characteristic traits are his hackney-LIKE action, fearless animation, complete self-possession and his spirited presence. Notice the capital letters on "Like." Some of us are losing sight of the total dog for flashy front movement. The standard was changed from precise hackney gait to read Hackney-like action to avoid this very thing from happening. We don't want people getting hung up on a Hackney gait. The correct movement on a Min Pin should show the front legs moving parallel, with the front leg moving straight FORWARD (not up) and in front of the body with the foot bending at the wrist. The dog drives smoothly and strong from the rear. Nothing is said about a loose rotary motion with the front legs almost hitting the chin. Neither should the front legs look like little pistons moving up and down or the straight forward and high stepping gait without a break at the pastern like the old German goose step.

Judges need to know that Min Pins should be shown freely on the ground. The table is for checking things like teeth, disqualifying faults and eye color. They should not be stacked on the ground or it defies what the standard calls for, which is fearless animation, complete self-possession and spirited presence. They should be allowed to free stack. Temperament is a very important trait. Breeders are concerned right now in the downhill swing that temperament is taking. Temperament should be bred for and judged along with all the other required traits.

Another point for judges to remember: 10" should be as good as 12 ½". If in doubt of the sizemeasure. There are enough new problems in the breed without throwing out a quality dog because it MIGHT not be the right size. If it's anywhere from 10 inches to 12 ½ inches, it's the right size.

A misconception that the average observer of the breed has is that they are as wild and crazy at home as they are in the ring. Amazingly, they are wonderful, cuddly, quiet little guys that just can't get enough loving. Personally, I would like to see the phrase "aloof with strangers" included in the standard because they really do prefer their own people and become quite territorial. Often you will find a judge who wants to make friends with them on the table. This usually only causes the dog to be suspicious of the person. They prefer for the judge to cut to the chase and get the examination over with so they can get back on the ground. They want to pick their own friends on their own time.

I really want to stress this point. PLEASE when judging the Min Pin whether in the ring as a judge or breeder....judge the complete dog. Not just movement. The gait is easy to see. It's a cop-out to pick a dog for something as obvious as a flashy moving front when we have a lot of sound moving dogs out

there with just a slight bend at the wrist that have the other qualities that the standard calls for. Toplines and tails seem to be suffering. The back should be level or slightly sloping towards the rear. The croup should be level with the topline and the tail is set high and held erect. The whole picture is what makes the Breed. No one point is more important than the other. It is a great breed, wonderful to live with and fun to show. Even with the genetic breed problems that have cropped up in the last few years, it is still a very hardy, healthy breed with less problems than most.

I can't stress enough - judge and breed for the complete standard, not just for hackney. Nothing is more exciting to see than a dog that has it all. We all love to see it so let's not lose sight of the complete dog.

(Edited by Madeline K. Miller)

