

## Disqualifications in the Show Ring

**A coat color not mentioned in the breed standard may not always be a disqualification.**

*By Allan Reznik*

Q. I have a dog whose color is not mentioned in its breed standard. If I entered him in a dog show, could a judge disqualify him even though the color is not specifically cited as a DQ or even a fault in the standard?

A. Interesting question. Breed standards attempt to be succinct and so certain assumptions are made. Parent clubs assume that breeders and exhibitors will be familiar with conformation terminology and so phrases such as cow hocks, bat ears and Chippendale fronts are not defined within breed standards; exhibitors can go to books and glossaries on conformation to learn what these terms mean. Similarly, breed standards don't specify that each breed is expected to have four legs, two eyes and two ears. Parent clubs and conformation judges consider these givens.

Since breed standards describe every aspect of the ideal specimen, the description on color would be viewed in the same light. A small patch of white on the chest of an otherwise superb representative of the breed would probably be overlooked depending upon the quality of the competition. However, a totally foreign color would be hard to ignore.

A judge, not wishing to embarrass an exhibitor, might leave that dog at the end of the line and out of the ribbons, without writing up a formal disqualification. If that dog were the only one in its class, the judge would probably withhold the ribbon or give it a second-place ribbon, so that the dog could not compete any further that day for points toward a championship.