

Showing Great Danes

Owner asks why her blue Great Dane hasn't been winning the shows he's entered in.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I have a blue Great Dane that my breeder assured me was show quality yet I have exhibited him in 15 shows and he has never taken Winners Dog. He also has natural ears since I do not approve of cropping. Is he losing because of his color or his ears?

A. Great Danes entries are large in most parts of the country and it's true that fawns, brindles and harlequins tend to be more plentiful than the blues, blacks and mantles. Often, the minority colors need to be a little better to hold their own. However, dogs of these colors have taken top wins at Dane specialties and all-breed shows over the years under judges who focus on breed type and soundness.

With most show Danes having cropped ears, natural ears also impart a different look but again, we are seeing more uncropped Danes in the ring today than ever before.

How are your handling skills? Showing a giant breed requires athleticism and coordination. If your dog is in top condition and ready to be shown, you may want to turn him over to a professional handler for a few shows. If he does well with the handler, then it may not be his ears or his color that are holding him back. If he does no better with the handler, ask the handler and a few experienced Dane breeder-exhibitors to give you their assessment of the dog.

If you live in an area where the Dane competition is particularly fierce, enter a few shows outside your region. It may be a calmer, more pleasant environment in which to show.

Also, keep your eyes open for breeder-judges who tend to be less concerned about color and ears than many all-breed judges.