

Spaying, Neutering, and Conformation

Dog shows were designed to evaluate breeding stock so breeders can improve the quality of their dogs.

By Allan Reznik

Q. Why can't a dog be fixed and show in conformation? From my own research, I found that they can't be fixed because it will ruin the bloodline, but isn't that the owners choice if they want to breed or not?

I think the AKC and other organizations would promote fixing our dogs to stop the overpopulation of unwanted dogs, including purebreds.

A. Dog shows were originally designed to be a proving ground for breeding stock. Using the breed standard as their guide, breeders attempt to improve the quality of their dogs with each generation, and it is in the conformation ring that breeders seek the knowledgeable opinion of judges. If a particular dog consistently loses in the conformation ring, despite being well handled and well groomed, it probably lacks the breed type and quality needed in a breeding program.

Since dog shows are all about evaluating breeding stock, there seems little purpose in exhibiting a spayed or neutered dog that cannot go on to produce dogs better than itself.

Spayed bitches and neutered males are permitted to be shown in several "unofficial" conformation classes, including Veterans (dogs seven years of age and older), but they cannot compete for points toward a championship title. Outside of conformation, spayed and neutered animals may compete in obedience, agility, field trials, and all other AKC performance disciplines.