

## What Happened to the Bred-by-Exhibitor class?

### **Quality breeders exhibit quality dogs in the Bred-by-Exhibitor class.**

*Richard G. ("Rick") Beauchamp*

The Bred-by-Exhibitor class is the lifeline of purebred dogs. This is the class that showcases what the breeders of the day are doing in respect to their chosen breed's future. It is a class in which the breeder is given the opportunity to do a bit of public bragging – a "look what I've done!" opportunity.

When I was still breeding and showing dogs (particularly in the early days when I was trying to make my mark as a breeder), I lived for the day that I could enter the Bred-by class with a dog I was really proud of. In fact, back in those days the Bred-by class at specialties was always one of the largest and most competitive of the entire show.

In my mind (and I must say the minds of those I competed with), winning the Bred-by class was not just a feather in my cap, it was the whole war bonnet! Not only was I smart enough to own a really good dog, I had enough breed savvy to make one in the whelping box.

With all this available to the breeder, there is ample reason for a judge to expect the best. But is this expectation rewarded? If we are to believe what a good many judges (including myself) say, the Bred-by-Exhibitor class is as often a disappointment to judge as it is a pleasure. This appears to be so even at large specialties or the breed national. This can be especially disappointing when the same breeder will reappear in the Open class with another dog and, if lucky enough to win that class as well, will stay on the Open winner and hand off the Bred-by winner to the co-breeder to show in the Winners class.

On the other hand, a regular complaint from the breeder-exhibitor is that it is extremely difficult to go Winners from the Bred-by class regardless of how good his dog might be. Obviously, there's some sort of disconnect between judges and breeder-exhibitors when it comes to this very important class.

In all honesty I must say that when I judge, I am not looking to put up the Bred-by dog for Winners, but neither am I looking to put up a dog from any particular class. I'm looking to put up the best dog competing. Once I verify that the proper dog is present in each class, I am totally unaware of which dog came from what class. Well, there is probably an exception to that – the 6-9 Puppy is usually obvious as the little guy at the end of the line trying to figure out what is going on. Even so, many a minor puppy has left my ring with points, sometimes even majors. At any rate, I'm looking for the best of all those competing for Winners.

I think I can safely speak for all judges when I challenge the accusation that a judge would intentionally refuse to acknowledge the best dog in a lineup because of the class it was entered in. Most of us who judge are hoping and praying for one good enough to award championship points to. To find it and then arbitrarily ignore that dog for any reason seems to me an absolute contradiction of what the judge's primary responsibility and goal is. I seriously doubt it happens as often as what some breeder-exhibitors might imagine.

Perhaps a judge might miss the good one – it can and does happen because no judge is absolutely infallible. It is also not beyond the realm of possibility for a judge to fail to see some important virtues of a dog because of faulty handling or grooming – there is only so much that can be left to the judge's imagination! But an out-and-out dismissal of the best from consideration because of its class is highly unlikely.

Is it possible that some breeder-exhibitors overestimate the quality of the dog they have entered in Bred-by? Even if the dog is top notch, that doesn't preclude the possibility that a dog of equal quality or higher quality might be present in another class. We all love our own, and it sometimes can lead to kennel blindness.

The quality Bred-by dog's chances of winning from that class are just as good as they might be from any other class. The operative word here is quality. I don't think any judge should have to make concessions because of class in order to put up a dog. (Allowing a puppy to be immature is not a concession; the entry is as it should be for its class.)

An important part of success in the show ring is objectivity, and it applies no less to those who show in the Bred-by class than it does to any other. This objectivity must be applied to evaluating one's own dog and to judges under whom one intends to show the dog. To expect all judges to see dogs in exactly the same light and to have the same preferences



and dislikes is naive. As much as some exhibitors might not want to think so, judges are human, and they all have idiosyncrasies. The astute exhibitor expends as much effort in knowing what those foibles might be as he does in preparing the dog he is showing for the ring.

When the handler of my winner says, "Finished today, and all from the Bred-by-Exhibitor class," they've earned my admiration and respect for two reasons: they've bred an obviously outstanding dog, and they've opted to do so from the all-too-often neglected, but most-important class offered at dog shows.

Let's face it: if it weren't for our breeders, there would be no reason for any of us to be at dog shows in the first place! Quality dogs don't come out of thin air – they are the result of intelligent and longtime planning.

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