

July 11, 2007

Mr. Peter Gaeta,
Director of Judging Operations,
American Kennel Club,
5580 Centerview Drive,
Raleigh, NC 27606

Dear Mr. Gaeta: RE: Judges Newsletter, Spring 2007

I am writing to you to express my displeasure about the publishing of a recent article entitled "Revisions to the AKC Dachshund Breed Standard" (Gordon et al. 2007) in the Judges Newsletter. This article was submitted by four judges who state that they represent the Dachshund Club of America, Inc. as the "Judges Education Committee" and make an effort to "simplify Dachshund colors and patterns for judges": Ann Gordon, Lisa Warren, Marci Forrester and Robert Wlodkowski (Gordon et al. 2007:10). The main issue with publishing this article is that these four judges should not have been allowed to interpret any breed standard for other judges. As a licensed American Kennel Club (AKC) and Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) judge with experience in two other countries, I have many years of experience deciding on the merits of show dogs. I am appalled that this article has been published since it undertakes to explain to other judges how to interpret and apply the recent revised AKC Dachshund Breed Standard (AKC 2007). As is the case with all breed standards, judges must read, interpret and educate themselves about the correct conformation of each breed as clearly stated in the Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges (AKC 2000:10): "You are responsible for your own interpretation of the Rules and breed standard in effect on the day of your judging assignment." In addition, the AKC (2003:33) states that "A judge's decision shall be final in all cases affecting the merits of the dogs." If judges are not allowed to make their own interpretations and form their own opinions, then the entire foundation of all breed and individual dog assessments is at risk.

Even though this article should not have been published, there are also several mistakes in the four judges' interpretations, which serve to add to confusion rather than clarification, as is the guise of their being an education committee. For example, after comparing the list of "unacceptable" pattern and color guidelines (Gordon et al. 2007) to the actual revised AKC Dachshund Breed Standard (AKC 2007:10), they are incorrect about the piebald pattern and double-dapple (double-merle) patterns being unacceptable since that is not stated in the standard. Also, Gordon et al. (2007:10) state that it is unacceptable for "any area of white anywhere on the dog other than a small area on the chest, with a larger area being permissible on the chest of a dapple". In the revised standard, the AKC (2007) actually states under the general heading Color of Hair: "A small amount of white on the chest is acceptable, but not desirable".

The third issue with publishing this article is that these four judges presume to represent the views of the Dachshund Club of America, Inc. as the "Judges Education Committee". I have been a member of this club for over 25 years and do not feel that these four judges should have been able to publish an interpretation of this breed standard for me as a judge or as a member of that club. Also, they should not presume to educate me or my learned judging colleagues about this matter, given my previous argument about required self-education. I feel it was a deliberate attempt to influence and spread misinformation that is meant to be detrimental to certain exhibitors (e.g., piebald and double dapple patterned dogs).

As Director of Judging Operations, AND the Senior Editor of the Judges newsletter, you should not have allowed this flagrant disregard of AKC rules.

A follow up apology or retraction letter/article needs to be published in the Judges Newsletter regarding this highly unusual circumstance of these four judges publishing their interpretations of a breed standard as you are creating a precedent for all other judges to publish THEIR interpretation of any of the AKC breed standards. Also, these individuals need to be reprimanded by the AKC for attempting to influence other judges on how they should do their job. I await your reply about what action will be taken on these matters.

References Cited:

American Kennel Club (AKC)
2000 Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges. Policy document provided to all AKC conformation judges.
2003 Rules Applying to Dog Shows. Amended to June 2003. Policy document provided to all AKC conformation judges.
2007 Dachshund Breed Standard: Hound Group. Electronic document, www.akc.org, accessed on July 13, 2007.

Gordon, Ann, Lisa Warren, Marci Forrester, and Robert Wlodkowski
2007 Revisions to the AKC Dachshund Breed Standard. Judges Newsletter Spring 2007:9-10.

Sincerely,

Patricia J. Taylor
Judge #35060

CC: AKC Board of Directors & Executive Officers
DJAA
ADSJ
DCA Pres. Carl Holder
Editor, The Dog Press