



Boston Terrier Breed Standard

Recognized by the AMA in 2024

Background: The Boston Terrier did not arrive on the shores of the United States by boat. It didn't arrive by air or any other means of transportation. In short, it was bred in the United States. The Boston Terrier is truly an American breed, being a down-sized version of the Bull-and-Terrier types that were so popular. Breeds thought to have had an influence in the development of the Boston Terrier include the American Pit Bull Terrier, Boxer, English Bull Terrier, French Bulldog and English Bulldog. In the early days of the breed they were often referred to by various names, including Round-headed Bull and Terriers, American Bull Terriers and Bullet Heads. In 1891, the Boston Terrier Club of America was organized and being a Boston bred dog the name was changed from the Round Heads, to the Boston Terrier.

General Appearance:

The Boston Terrier is a lively, smooth coated, short-headed, compactly built, short-tailed, well balanced dog, brindle, seal or black in color and evenly marked with white. The head is in proportion to the size of the dog and the expression indicates a high degree of intelligence. The Boston is a sturdy dog and must not appear to be either spindly or coarse. Bone and muscle must be in proportion, as well as an enhancement, to the dog's weight and structure. The length of leg must balance with the length of body to give the Boston its striking, square appearance. The strong limbs are neatly turned. The tail is short. The dog conveys an impression of determination, strength and activity, with style of a high order; carriage easy and graceful.

Disposition: The Boston Terrier is a friendly and lively dog. The breed has an excellent disposition and a high degree of intelligence, which makes the Boston Terrier an incomparable companion.

Disqualifications: viciousness or extreme shyness

Size: Weight is not to exceed 25 pounds. The length of leg must balance with the length of body to give the Boston Terrier its striking square appearance. The Boston Terrier is a sturdy dog and must not appear to be either spindly or coarse. The bone and muscle must be in proportion as well as an enhancement to the dog's weight and structure. Influence of Sex. In a comparison of specimens of each sex, the only evident difference is a slight refinement in the bitch's conformation.

Fault: Blocky or chunky in appearance.

Head: The skull is square, flat on top, free from wrinkles, cheeks flat, brow abrupt and the stop well defined. The ideal Boston Terrier expression is alert and kind, indicating a high degree of intelligence. This is a most important characteristic of the breed.

Eyes: The eyes are wide apart, large and round and dark in color. The eyes are set square in the skull and the outside corners are on a line with the cheeks as viewed from the front.

Faults: Eyes showing too much white or haw.
Disqualifications: Eyes blue in color or any trace of blue.

Muzzle/Bite: The muzzle is short, wide and deep, and in proportion to the skull. It is shorter in length than in width and depth, not to exceed in length approximately one-third of the length of the skull; and is free from wrinkles. The jaw is broad. The chops are of good depth, but not pendulous, completely covering the teeth when the mouth is closed.

Fault: Wry mouth. Any showing of the tongue or teeth when the mouth is closed.

Nose: Black and wide, with a well defined line between the nostrils.

Fault: Pinched or wide nostrils.

Disqualify: Dudley nose.

Ears: The small ears may be left natural or cropped to conform to the shape of the head. They are carried erectly and situated as near to the corners of the skull as possible.

Fault: Ear size out of proportion to the size of the head.

Neck: Neck length must display an image of balance to the total dog. The neck is slightly arched, carrying the head gracefully, and setting neatly into the shoulders.

Forequarters: The sloping shoulders are well laid back, allowing for the Boston's stylish movement. **FORELEGS** - The forelegs are set moderately apart and on a line with the upper tip of the shoulder blades. The forelegs are straight in bone. The elbows stand neither in nor out. The pasterns are short and strong. Faults: Legs lacking in substance

Body: The body is rather short and well knit. The back is just short enough to square the body. The topline is level. The rump curves slightly to the set-on of the tail. The chest is deep, with good width. The well-sprung ribs are carried well back to the short, strong loins. The flank is very slightly cut-up. Faults: Roach back. Sway back. Slab-sided.

Hindquarters: The thighs are strong and well muscled. The stifles are bent and set true. The hock joint is well defined. The hocks are well let down and turn neither in nor out.

Feet: The feet are small, round and compact, turned neither in nor out, with well arched toes and short nails.

Fault: Splay feet

Tail: The short, fine, tapering tail is set on low and must not be carried above the horizontal. It may be straight or screw. The preferred tail does not exceed, in length more than one-quarter the distance from the set-on to the hock.

Faults: Gaily carried tail

Disqualifications: docked tail, no tail

Coat: The short, smooth coat is bright, and fine in texture.

Color: The only acceptable colors are Brindle, Seal, or Black, with white markings. The desired markings are a white muzzle band; an even white blaze between the eyes and over the head; a white collar and white on part or whole of the forelegs and hind legs below the hocks.

Movement: The gait of the Boston is that of a sure-footed, straight gaited dog. The forelegs and hind legs move straight ahead in line with perfect rhythm, each step indicating grace and power.

Faults: Rolling. Paddling. Weaving. Hackney gait.

-Disqualifications:

-Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism

-Viciousness or extreme shyness

-Eyes that are two different colors

-Crossed eyes

-Divergent strabismus (wall-eyed)

-Eyes blue in color or any trace of blue.

-Dudley nose

-Unilateral or bilateral deafness

-Docked tail, no tail

-Solid seal, black or brindle without the required white markings

Fault Degrees:

A cosmetic fault is one of a minor nature. In a show or other evaluation, the dog is to be penalized in direct proportion to the degree of the fault. Any fault, which is extreme, should be considered a serious fault and should be penalized appropriately.