

## Color and the Brittany... from the American Brittany Club

Fall 2003 – AKC Judges Newsletter

In the majority of breed standards the desired color and markings are spelled out in the standard. In a few cases color is called immaterial. Either way, color and markings are definitely key breed characteristics equal in importance with size, proportions and other breed delineating characteristics.

Breeds were developed by different people in different parts of the world for different functions. Some wanted one shape and size and some another. Some wanted one color and some another. These differences can, in part, be explained by the wide variety of functions and climate; still personal preference certainly played a large part in the development of each breed. And while for the most part color does not affect performance, it definitely contributes to the look of the breed.

As judges it behooves us to know, understand and respect the standard of each breed that we undertake to adjudicate.

The Brittany standard calls for a lightly built, square bird dog between 17 1/2 and 20 1/2 inches in liver and white or orange and white. This then makes color one of the essential Brittany characteristics.

According to the standard-liver or orange are equally acceptable- clear or roan are equally acceptable. In either of these color combinations the standard calls for particolor or piebald patterns, but makes no mention of where these markings must be.

The other allowable (although not preferred) color is tri-color and here the standard not only spells out the color as a liver and white dog with classic orange markings, but it also very clearly lists these classic markings as “on eyebrows, muzzle and cheeks, inside the ears and under the tail; with freckles on lower legs.”

Thus while a Brittany may be, according to the standard, a tri-color, he may NOT be a three color dog—that is a dog with three colors indiscriminately scattered over its body.

While black is the only disqualification listed this does not mean that the Brittany may be gray, green, purple, or any other color of the spectrum. After all when a standard lists a specific color but does not disqualify each and every color this does not give the judge the right to choose any color he likes that is not specifically listed as a disqualification.

So with the Brittany the colors listed in the standard are the only allowed colors and where markings are specifically listed then those are the only allowed markings. Thus a judge must excuse from the conformation ring any three color Brittany marking his/her book “excused color or markings not allowed by the breed standard.”

Standards are there for the protection of a breed and if a judge feels that he/she cannot follow a particular standard perhaps he/she should not judge that breed.

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