



An excerpt from

## ***An Eye For a Dog.*** ***Illustrated Guide to Judging Purebred Dogs***

by Robert W. Cole, Dogwise Publishing. 800-776-2665, [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com)  
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### **YOU BE THE JUDGE**

Do you have “an eye for a dog?” According to old timers, if you have this “eye” you could be placed in a ring with a large class of a breed you had never seen before and not only come up with the best four dogs in order of merit, but also be able to declare in detail how each of the others depart from basic canine balance. Your eye for a dog is enhanced by experience and with this boo you will get lots of experience judging many different breeds and taking many different aspects of dog conformation into consideration.

This visual method of assessing dogs is presented in the form of illustrations and illustrated judging scenarios along with explanatory text. Based on such judging considerations as balance, proportions, type, structure, and movement each exercise includes information about the original function of the dog, the breed standard and evolution of the breed over time. In each example you are invited to place classes of various breeds of dogs in order of merit after learning something about the subject with each graphic presentation. As the author, I will contribute an opinion as to the order of merit of each class, but in the end the final decision is that of the reader. Go ahead! Disagree with me, challenge me, and above all enjoy yourself!

### **CHAPTER THIRTEEN** **HEAD FEATURES**

We are now going to focus on a variety of head features relating to expression and breed type while elaborating on the bones and muscles of the head. The examples I have selected are intended to provide an appreciation of the scope that is involved in a judge’s assessment of heads. Depending on breed, assessment takes into account the size and shape of the skull; ratio of muzzle length to length of skull; width of skull and depth and breadth of muzzle; and if the skull and muzzle are on parallel planes. Then there is the texture of coat, the amount there should be, color, and color markings. Consideration of how high the ears should set-on is important as well as their size and shape. The size, shape, and color of the nose, are checked making sure that the nostrils are open.

The color and degree of pigment around eyes, lips and inside mouth may need checking followed by an appreciation of the strength of the underjaw, the kind of bite, and number of teeth. Also, the size, shape, color and position of the eyes are important considerations.

R.H. Smythe in *Dog Structure and Movement* reminds us that there are four basic types of heads: the Brachycephalic (short) head as exemplified by the Pekingese; the Mesocephalic head as exemplified by the Bullmastiff; the Dolichocephalic (long) as exemplified by the Borzoi; and the fourth and most common head, the Monocephalic, which many dog breeds share with the wolf having a 3:2 skull to muzzle ratio. DR. H.J. Hewson-Fruend in the March 1996 issue of the *Canine Journal* (Australia) counted 45 recognizable different heads going beyond the commonly recognized four head sizes, three muzzle-to-skull ratios, and five ear sets by pointing out there are numerous other features which have to be taken into account.

**Robert Cole** Was a noted international conformation judge, illustrator and author of dozens of articles on purebred dogs. His earlier achievements included illustrating the classic *Dog Locomotion and Gait Analysis* by Curtis Brown, writing and illustrating *The Basenji Stacked and Moving* and authoring the *You Be the Judge* series of breed-specific judging booklets. Bob was a regular columnist for *Dogs in Canada*, *Dog News*, *Dog World* (UK), *Ilio & Popski* as well as dog magazines in Australia and New Zealand. Bob lived in Canada with Louise, his wife of 50 years, Bull Terriers and Basenjis.

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