

**AMERICAN BOUVIER des FLANDRES CLUB
TOP TWENTY RULES AND ELIGIBILITY – CONFORMATION INVITATIONAL**

Updated June 2013

THE TOP 20 COMMITTEE:

The Top 20 Committee will be composed of the Top 20 Chairperson and Two(2) Committee members. The Top 20 Chairperson will be approved and appointed by the ABdFC Board of Directors. The Top 20 Chairperson will select the two Committee members.

PURPOSE of the Top 20 Competition:

To encourage the showing of Bouvier des Flandres in conformation classes, and to promote an educational experience for judges, exhibitors, breeders, and fanciers. This event will provide a special recognition to those Bouvier des Flandres with the most outstanding competitive records, as well as their breeders, owners, and handlers. It should also provide incentive to strive for a Bouvier des Flandres that embodies excellence in structure, intelligence, temperament, type, and soundness according to the Breed Standard. This event will be held yearly in conjunction with the National Specialty.

STATISTICS AND ELIGIBILITY:

The Top 20 Bouvier des Flandres finalists for conformation will be determined based on show results as published in issues of the AKC Awards. Tabulations are collected for shows beginning the first show in May of one year and ending with the last show of April of the next year. (Example: May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010) Monthly tabulations are compiled by an official Top 20 Statistician. The score is kept based on accumulated Breed Points* only. Standings are based on point information from the AKC and Notification from the AKC of any error for the calendar year indicated above.

* Breed Points as calculated from dogs defeated by going Best of Breed

If a Previous Top 20 winner is ranked in the current Top 20 Bouvier rankings, that dog is ineligible to compete but may be showcased for exhibition only.

In the event of the death of a Top 20 finalist, they will be recognized. And, the next ranked Bouvier, i.e., #21, will be included for invitation to the event.

A finalist will only be allowed to compete if the owner or agent attends the pre-event briefing held prior to the event (ideally, earlier in the day of the event).

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE EVENT:

The event offers all who attend a chance to view “The Cream of the Crop”. Using the Top 20 scale of points, each dog is evaluated according to how closely it conforms to the Breed Standard. This procedure is not available at any point show, and allows the spectator the opportunity to evaluate the dogs, scoring them at the same time they are being judged. The dogs are observed from a positive approach; they are NOT fault judged. The event is educational, promoting a discussion of the Breed Standard, and encourages the exchange of ideas.

THE JUDGES – ELIGIBILITY and SELECTION:

The Top 20 Committee will make the selection of judges. Excluded from judging will be any person actively serving on the Top 20 Committee and / or any person actively serving as an Officer or Board Member of the ABdFC. In the event the Top 20 Chairperson finds it necessary to have two persons from the same household serving on the Committee at the same time, their vote will count as only one in the selection of judges. Also excluded from the process of selecting judges will be any Committee member who has any interest whatsoever in any dog that is eligible to compete in the Top 20. Committee members will recuse themselves if this circumstance exists, or may be disqualified by the Chairperson.

Nomination of Judges:

Each participating Committee Member may nominate up to 5 judges for each category listed below. Names will be forwarded to the Committee Chairperson, upon call. After reviewing the nominees' eligibility, the Committee Chairperson will prepare and mail the ballot to the participating Committee members. Once voting is completed, the Committee members will return the ballots to the Chairperson who will tally the ballots. The Committee Chairperson will secure the acceptance of the winning nominees, based on their availability. Upon securing the judges, tallied ballots will be destroyed by the Top 20 Committee Chairperson. The winners in each category will be revealed only to those Committee members who must know, i.e. the Top 20 Catalog Chairperson.

Selected judges' names will be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL until the day of the event. The judges will be required to sign a document that swears them to secrecy. If a judge violates this agreement, they will be disqualified, and the Top 20 Chairperson will secure the judge that had the next highest number of votes. One steward will be selected for each judge by the Top 20 Committee Chairperson.

The Committee will select one individual judge from each of the following categories:

A. **HANDLER.** A past or present professional handler, with demonstrated credibility in the breed, and has a minimum of 10 years as a professional handler.

B. **BREEDER.** An established Bouvier des Flandres breeder who has been breeding for a minimum of 10 years, having bred or co-bred at least 5 Champions of Record as published in the AKC Awards and who may or may not be an AKC approved judge for Bouviers.

C. **MULTI-BREED AKC APPROVED JUDGE.** An AKC approved judge that is approved to judge Bouviers and at least 4 other breeds in any Group.

JUDGING PROCEDURE – SCORING, EVALUATION, RING PROCEDURE:

Each participating Bouvier des Flandres is individually evaluated by each judge, using the scale of points outlined on the attached score sheet.

Score sheets and each dog's total score are tabulated by the Top 20 Committee or a Top 20 Committee member in the following manner:

1. The scores for each dog from each of the three judges score sheets are tabulated, added together, then divided by three to determine the 'Average Final Placement Score'. The dog with the highest Average Placement Score will be declared the winner.

2. Immediately following the completion of judging, the judges' score sheets will be tabulated by

the Committee with the winner being announced at the discretion of the Top 20 Committee, within the following time frame – immediately following the Event, at the Awards Banquet, or following the Best of Breed Competition.

3. In the event of a tie in the Average Placement Scores, the winner will be determined using a calculation of the 'Average Overall Impression Score'. If a tie exists between two dogs in the Average Overall Impression Score, there will be two winners.

a. Overall Impression Score. The Judges' first impression of a dog upon entering the ring, prior to the examination, and is based on a 1-10 scale with 10 being the highest score. The judge must look at the dog as a whole and place the dog on his/her scale. The score of a perfect 10 would indicate that the dog is in perfect harmony with the judge's picture of the ideal Bouvier. The Average Overall Impression Score is calculated by averaging the three judges Overall Impression Score of each dog.

b. Dogs will be called in one at a time by armband number, circle the ring once and stop in front of the three judges. Dogs will free stack and then quarter turn to the right three times. The Judges will assign their Overall Impression Score.

c. After the judges have assigned their Overall Impression Score, the handler will be asked to move their dog down and back on the diagonal twice, and then asked to circle the ring completely two times, stopping in front of their assigned station – 1, 2, or 3. Judges will assign their score for gait and movement.

d. Steps a, b, c are repeated for each dog in that grouping of three.

e. With 3 dogs at their respective stations, the judges now begin the individual examination of each dog, rotating until each dog has been evaluated by each judge.

f. The above steps will be repeated for each grouping of three bouviers until all dogs competing have been evaluated. After the last grouping of dogs have been judged and exited the ring, all of the Top 20 competitors and dogs will re-enter the ring, one at a time, making one full circle,

and then making a final exit.

g. Handlers will be permitted at this time to rest the dogs backstage for approximately 15 minutes.

h. Handlers and dogs will be called back into the ring individually (name of the dog, owners, breeders, and handler will be announced). They will come to the middle of the ring to accept their rosette, make a half circle of the ring, and end up in a line at the designated end of the ring.

i. The presentation to the winner may be made at this time.

4. While in the ring, a judge's conversation with their stewards must be confined to questions of procedure.

5. The Top 20 Committee Chairperson, a designated Top 20 Committee Member, an ABdFC Club Officer, or ABdFC Board Member will present the winner with the Winner's Award / Ribbon.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

NOTIFICATION and INVITATION for TOP 20 PARTICIPATION:

The hard copy invitations for each Top 20 qualifier will be mailed to the Primary Owner of record. The mailing will be in a time line that is consistent with the release of the AKC standings for the ABdFC Top 20 competition approved calendar year of eligibility. (See Eligibility section above)

Emails will be sent to the primary owner of record (as recognized by the AKC) of the Top 20 qualifiers containing the Top 20 RSVP sheet and Instructions for Advertising in the Top 20 Catalog. These are TIME SENSITIVE documents that must be completed accurately, and

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returned on or before the stated deadline. The owner's failure to meet these deadlines will result in only the dog's name and listed owners appearing in the Top 20 catalog.

RULES OF ETIQUETTE:

The Top 20 Event is Semi-Formal attire for all attendees – spectators, judges, and participants. Men in business suits or Tuxedo and women in Cocktail / Evening clothes are considered appropriate attire for the evening.