



American Bouvier des Flandres Club
<http://www.bouvier.org/top20-conformation.html>

Top Twenty Rules and Eligibility – Conformation Invitational

The Top 20 Committee

The Top 20 Committee will be composed of one (1) Chairperson and a minimum of two (2) Committee members to include a Statistician for the tabulation of AKC breed award ranking. The Top 20 Chairperson will be approved and appointed by the ABdFC Board of Directors. The Top 20 Chairperson will select all Committee members.

Purpose of the Top 20 Competition

To encourage the exhibition of Bouvier des Flandres in Conformation classes and to promote an educational experience for judges, exhibitors, breeders, and fanciers. This event will provide special recognition to those dogs 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 annually in conjunction with the National Specialty and remain diligent in the mission to include and recognize individual levels of outstanding achievement.

Statistics and Eligibility

Category 1 - Conformation Top 20

Bouvier des Flandres qualifying finalists will be determined based on AKC show award results. Tabulation of accrued points will be from May 1st through April 30th of the following year. Breed ranking will be tracked and recorded by the Top 20 Statistician and is based on accumulated Breed points using AKC awards ranking system.

Category 2 - National Owner-Handled Series Qualifiers

The top ten (10) NOHS ranked dogs will be invited to compete at the annual Top 20 Competition.

The qualifying dogs

Is determined based on show results compiled by the AKC awards rating system. Tabulation of accrued points will be from May 1st through April 30th of the following year, consistent with the traditional Top 20 ranking year.

A dog simultaneously qualifying in both Top 20 ranking systems shall be eligible to compete and exhibited by either an eligible owner/handler or a non-eligible handler. A NOHS-only qualifier must be presented by an eligible owner/handler in order to participate. All dogs will compete together throughout the event. There shall be no apparent designation of either NOHS-only or traditional qualification to the officiating judges.

In the event the highest score is achieved by a traditional/NOHS dual qualifier, he/she shall be declared the Top 20 winner and NOHS Top 20 winner in both categories of qualification. In the event a traditionally ranked Top 20 qualifying dog has earned the highest score, he/she is declared the Top 20 Winner and the highest scoring NOHS-only competitor shall be declared NOHS Top 20 Winner. Each winner will receive a correctly designated award rosette.

The Uniqueness of the Event

The event offers all who attend a chance to view “The Cream of the Crop.”

Participants will be evaluated by three unique judges using a scorecard of an assigned scale of points in a variety of categories which is based on salient breed-specific characteristics as they are outlined and prioritized in the Breed standard. The dog is evaluated according to how closely it conforms to the ideal in the judge’s opinion. The exhibits are observed from a positive perspective by the invited judges. The event is educational, promoting a discussion of the Breed standard while recognizing and encouraging a variety of opinions.

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, the submission of judge’s names and subsequent vote will count as one (1). Excluded from the judge selection process will be any Committee member who has any interest whatsoever (breeder, owner, co-owner) in any dog that is eligible to compete in the Top 20. (refer to Event Ineligibility section).

The Committee member may otherwise serve in any capacity deemed acceptable by the Chairperson.

Nomination of Judges

Committee Members may nominate three (3) judges in each category listed below. Committee Chairperson will ascertain nominee eligibility, prepare and send a ballot to participating Committee members. Ballots are to be marked and returned to Chairperson in a timely manner. After all votes have been counted, Chairperson will contact and secure the acceptance of the winning nominees and ballots may then be destroyed. In the event of a judge's refusal/unavailability, the second highest scoring judge will be invited. The winners in each category will be revealed only to Committee members.

Selected judges' names will be kept strictly **confidential** until the day of the event. The judges will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement regarding the Top 20 judging assignment. Should a judge violate this agreement, he/she will be disqualified, and the Top 20 Chairperson will invite the nominee receiving the next highest number of votes.

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

A. Handler. A past or present professional handler having credibility in the breed and a minimum of 10 years as a professional.

B. Breeder. An established Bouvier des Flandres breeder for a minimum of ten (10) years, having bred or co-bred at least five (5) AKC Champions of record who may or may not be an AKC-approved judge.

C. Multi-Breed AKC Approved Judge. An AKC judge approved for Bouvier des Flandres and at least 4 other breeds within any other AKC recognized Group.

- A steward to assist each judge will be selected by the Top 20 committee.
- Judges will be advised that verbal interaction with the steward is limited solely to questions of procedure.

Event Ineligibility (Per category)

Category 1 –

Top Twenty Qualifiers: A previous Top 20 winner ranked in the current Top 20 Breed award standings shall be ineligible to compete in Category 1 in future Top Twenty events. According to the AKC breed award ratings, the 21st ranked dog will be invited to participate. Upon payment of entry fee the dog may be showcased in the event catalog and receive a Top 20 qualifier's rosette.

Category 2 –

NOHS Top Twenty Qualifiers: A previous NOHS winner ranked in the Top Ten ratings shall be ineligible to compete in Category 2 in future Top Twenty events.

- In the event of a dual qualified dog which has accrued the highest number of points within the respective category and declared the category winner at that event, will be considered ineligible to compete within the corresponding category at future Top Twenty events.

A dual qualified dog which has accrued the highest number of points in both categories and declared the over-all winner shall be ineligible to compete in either category at future Top Twenty events.

- In the circumstance of a deceased Top 20/NOHS Top 10 qualifier, the #21 (Category 1) or #11 (Category 2) ranked finalist will be included for invitation to the event. Catalog page and Top 20 qualifier's rosette may be purchased in honor of the decedent.
- Qualifying dogs ranked in either NOHS or traditional Top 20 rating systems which are bred, owned, co-owned by any Committee member or determined to have an otherwise existing conflict of interest will be declared ineligible to compete. Upon payment of entry fee the qualifying dog may appear in the event catalog and receive a qualifier's rosette. The next ranked dog on either top twenty breed or NOHS ratings whichever system is applicable, shall move up and invited to participate. If a dual-qualified dog is declared ineligible, the next ranked dog on both systems shall move up.

Judging Procedure — Scoring, Evaluation, Ring Procedure

Pre-Event

All finalists and/or designated agent are required to attend a pre-event meeting to be held on the day of the Top 20 Competition in order to receive the evening's procedural instruction, draw for a Group order number and issued an individual armband number. The armband number will correspond with the dog's Top 20 catalog advertising page.

Groups will begin with one (1) and comprised of a maximum of three (3) dogs in each Group. The number of Groups will be dependent on the total number of participants.

Event

All participating finalists are to be individually evaluated by each judge, using the scale of points outlined on the score sheet.

- Score person shall have no affiliation with the Top 20 event in any capacity either as an owner, breeder, household member of a participant or any other conflict of interest deemed inappropriate by the committee. Score person may or may not be a member of ABdFC and will be selected at the discretion of the Top 20 Chairperson.

Each dog's score in all listed categories will be tabulated and totaled by the designated score person in the following manner:

1. Each dog's score in all listed categories outlined on the score sheet will be tabulated, totaled and divided by three (3) in order to determine the **Average Final Placement Score**. The score sheets will be collected at the conclusion of each Group of dogs and delivered to the score person for tabulation. At the conclusion of all participants' score sheet tabulations, the dog with the highest overall **Average Placement Score** will be declared the Top 20 winner.
2. At the completion of judging and when all score sheets have been totaled, the winner(s) will be announced at the conclusion of the Top 20 event's festivities.

3. In the event of a tie in the **Average Placement Score**, the winner will be determined using a calculation of the **Average Overall Impression Score**. If a tie remains between dogs in the **Average Overall Impression Score**, there will be two declared winners. No further “run-off” evaluation scores will be initiated or considered.
4. Overall Impression Score - The judge shall make an overall assessment of the dog with the ideal specimen in mind. This initial impression is completed prior to the examination and based on a 1 to 10-point scale range, 10 being the highest. The **Average Overall Impression Score** is calculated by averaging the three judges’ **Overall Impression Score** of each dog.
 - a) Dogs will be called in **one at a time** in Group number order, circle the ring once, stopping in front of the three judges. Dogs will free-stack, execute a quarter-turn to the right until the dog’s front, rear and sides have been observed and the judges have marked their **Overall Impression Score** on the score card.
 - b) After the judges have assigned their **Overall Impression Score**, the handler will be instructed to gait the dog down and back twice on a diagonal pattern, circle the ring perimeter twice and stop in front of the respective station – 1, 2, or 3. Judges will assign and mark their score in the gaiting category.
 - c) When all dogs within the Group have progressed to stations 1, 2, 3, judges will return to the assigned station and complete an individual hands-on examination, advancing each dog once evaluated and individually scored.
 - d) The above steps will be repeated for each grouping of dogs until all dogs have been evaluated. After the final Group has been judged and exited the ring, all competitors will re-enter individually, circle the ring once and exit.
 - e) An intermission will commence, the duration of which to be announced, while the final scoring tabulations are completed. Dogs may return to grooming area during this time.
 - f) At the conclusion of the intermission, all dogs will be called back to the ring individually and dog’s name, owners, breeders, and handler will be announced. Each handler will gait his/her dog to the center of the ring, accept their rosette from the three judges and make a half circle to the end of the ring until all dogs have been recognized.
 - g) The announcement of the winner(s) and rosette presentation will be made when all participants have received their rosette.

Additional Information and Guidelines

Notification and Invitation for Top 20 Participation

The hard copy invitation for each Top 20 qualifier will be mailed to the Primary Owner of record. The mailing will be consistent with AKC's listed top twenty Bouvier des Flandres in breed ranking within the Top 20 event's eligibility timeline. (See Statistics and Eligibility)

Notification/invitation via email will be sent to the AKC's primary owner of record of the qualifying dog. The Top 20 invitation will contain an RSVP letter and instructions for catalog page advertisement. These are **Time Sensitive** documents that must be accurately completed and returned on or before the stated deadline. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the omission of the dog's name, photograph, breeders and owners page(s) in the Top 20 catalog.

Rules of Etiquette

The Top 20 Event is a semi-formal event. All attendees are encouraged to be respectful of the dress code. Evening attire is considered appropriate for the evening's event.