



Dear AKC judges:

We thank you for your interest in our breed, whether already approved, provisional or planning to apply to judge Bouvier des Flandres.

The American Bouvier des Flandres Club wants you to be aware of the club's current position concerning tails. Our breed is traditionally docked, and we do not have plans to change our standard.

Our parent club approved breed standard clearly states *"Tail is to be docked, leaving 2 or 3 vertebrae. It must be set high and align normally with the spinal column. Preferably carried upright in motion. Dogs born tailless should not be penalized."* The standard also states in the General Appearance section: *"Any deviation from this is to be penalized to the extent of the deviation."* This leaves the degree of the fault entirely at the judge's discretion as the ABdFC has not addressed the severity of tail faults and our Standard has no disqualifications.

At the April 2011 meeting of the AKC Board of Directors, the Board approved unanimously the policy amendment that judges are required to examine and gait all dogs regardless of the presence of faults/deviations within the standard and their severity. The policy amendment specifically provides that when a dog enters the ring with an undocked tail in a breed where the breed standard provides traditionally for a docked tail, the judge must examine and gait the dog individually. After examining and gaiking the dog with the undocked tail, the judge is free to pass judgment on the dog, (emphasis added) including giving the dog an award, not giving the dog an award, withholding an award, or excusing the dog for reasons of merit or not complying with a breed standard. The judge is to consider the totality of the attributes and deviations of standard for each entry prior to passing judgment (emphasis added) upon the entries.

In conclusion, AKC Policy requires you must judge an un-docked dog and then determine how to place/award based on the overall quality of that dog to include your determination of the extent of the un-docked tail's deviation from standard collectively with all other deviations and/or defined faults present in the dog.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and, as always, members of the Judges Education Committee would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely:

ABdFC Board and ABdFC JE Committee