

**Guidelines for the
French Bull Dog Club of America
Top Twenty Invitational Event
Revised April, 2017**

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PURPOSE

The French Bull Dog Club of America offers a Top Twenty Invitational to showcase excellence in French Bulldogs. This event is part of the FBDCA National Specialty and serves many purposes. It educates judges, exhibitors, breeders and fanciers. The event offers all who attend a chance to view the top dogs in competitive standing for the previous year. Using a scale of points, each dog is evaluated according to how closely it conforms to the breed standard.

The event is educational and promotes discussion of the standard and provides spectators with an opportunity to see how individual views can produce a consensus decision, which can then be compared to their own impressions. This event provides special recognition to those French Bulldogs with the most outstanding records as well as their breeders, handlers and owners. The Top Twenty Invitational provides an incentive to strive for French Bulldogs excelling in structure, movement, temperament, and conformation.

THE TOP TWENTY COMMITTEE

The Top Twenty (TT) committee is made up of FBDCA members approved by the FBDCA board. It is under the umbrella of the National Specialty Oversight Committee (NSOC) so that fund- raising efforts for national specialty show events can be monitored and coordinated. The TT committee works with NSOC so that timetables (TT event night, ribbon ordering, trophies, etc.) and the physical venue (room, food and drink, etc.) maximize both the event and the show.

Committee tasks include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. fund raising
- b. thank you cards mailed to donors
- c. invitations mailed to all those eligible to compete in the event
- d. trophies ordered
- e. ribbons and attendance awards ordered
- f. dessert planned and ordered through hotel catering service
- g. arrangements made for rental of equipment such as a spotlight and red carpeting
- h. catalog completed and send to printer
- i. bios sent to the event emcee
- j. arm bands printed
- k. people organized to ready the ring and trophy table, decorate, and clean up
- l. selection of the judges for the event, contracts signed and procedural briefings forwarded to them. Secrecy of the judges is a prerogative of the committee.

THE TOP TWENTY EVENING

The first FBDCA Top Twenty Event was at the National Specialty Show in 2004. From the beginning there has been no charge to the membership to attend the event. Also, there has been no charge for food. However, a cash bar is usually available. The TT Committee and the FBDCA Board agree that this is an occasion for the membership and should continue to be free. Therefore, for this event to flourish, it is necessary to raise funds through individual and corporate donations. If ever the funds are insufficient for the event it may be necessary to charge for the event and/or food.

RULES FOR SELECTING THE TOP TWENTY

Selecting the Dogs

During the preceding full calendar year, points are awarded equal to the number of dogs (the term dog is used to refer to either dogs or bitches with no preference given) defeated by winning Best of Breed at an AKC sanctioned All-Breed or Specialty show. These points are tallied and a list of the Top Twenty French Bulldogs for the preceding calendar year is developed, comprising the 20 highest point winners. The same process is used to develop a second list that includes the French Bulldogs who constitute the top highest point winners of the first five or six months of the current year. The top ten ranked dogs through either May 31 or June 30 will be included for the current year's Top Twenty Event.

Specifically, selection of the (30 possible) French Bulldogs eligible for the Top Twenty Invitational is based on the following: One point for each dog defeated by going Best of Breed or at any AKC All Breed Show or any Independent Specialty Show where AKC points are awarded. Tabulation of points is based on Breed point wins as published in the AKC Awards publication for the period beginning January 1st and ending December 31st and for the period of January 1st through May 31 or June 30th of the current year, dependent on the time frame of the specialty and feasibility of producing a catalog in a timely fashion.

Spayed bitches or neutered dogs that have been named among the Top Twenty French Bulldogs may compete in the event.

All dogs that are eligible to compete may do so. The previous year's Top Twenty Best of Breed winner may be an "exhibition only" entry and will receive a rosette/ribbon and attendance award. The entry fee will NOT apply. Previous Top Twenty Best of Breed winners are not eligible to compete again in the event in the interest of gracious sportsmanship.

In the event an eligible dog dies during the year, the owner may elect to enter the dog. There will NOT be an entry fee and the rosette/ribbon will be given to the owner. This will be a one time entry and although eligible the following year it may not be repeated.

Inviting Dogs and Owners

Theoretically 30 dogs may be invited to the Top Twenty. Usually, however, there are a number of dogs on both lists. Any eligible dog will receive only one invitation. The owner of a Top Twenty dog, based on the final standings, will be sent an invitation to participate. The invitation will be addressed to the dog and to the owner listed first on the dog's registration.

A response card will be supplied with the invitation and the owner must respond and pay the entry fee by the date indicated, and entries may be made on line, also. Entry fees will be determined by the Top Twenty Committee. The deadline for entries will be strictly observed, in order to produce the catalog in a timely fashion. The committee will determine that correct addresses are used and follow up to make sure they were received. It is the responsibility of the owner to enter by the deadline.

Owner/Co-owner Requirements

- All owners and co-owners of the finalists must be in good standing with the AKC and the FBDCA if a member of FBDCA, at the time the invitations are extended and at the time of the event. Dogs owned or co-owned by the Top Twenty Chairperson or members of his/her family may show at this event. Committee members or the Chairperson who have qualifying dogs may not nominate or vote on any of the 3 judges. Committee members that wish to handle their own dog in lieu of using a handler, for the event must vacate their position on the committee for that year.
- All participants agree to abide by any and all rules as they may become effective through adoption by the Top Twenty Committee or the National Specialty Oversight Committee as they concern the finalists' participation in the event. Failure to do so may revoke the privilege of future participation, regardless of eligibility.
- A finalist will only be allowed to compete if the owner or agent attends the briefing held at least one half hour prior to the event for the purpose of receiving armband numbers and the explanation of procedures.

Other Considerations

- Each dog that competes in the Top Twenty Invitational will receive a rosette, WITH the entrant's name, the date and place of the event and the name FBDCA Top Twenty Invitational imprinted. The FBDCA Logo will be imprinted on the rosette button. The rosette may be any color other than that of Best of Breed
- If the entry is ever ten or below in number at the close of the entry deadline, the committee will review the advisability of canceling the event.
- NO refunds WILL BE given on entry fees unless the TT Event is canceled.

TOP TWENTY JUDGES

A panel of three (3) judges will conduct the judging of the event. Each judge will represent a different category as follows:

1. FRENCH BULLDOG BREEDER

The Breeder Judge must be an FBDCA member in good standing who has bred French Bulldogs for a minimum of twelve (12) years, and has bred or co-bred at least ten (10) conformation champions.

The person selected as Breeder Judge may not judge any dog that he or any member of his household owns, co-owns, or bred. Any dog(s) owned, co-owned or bred by the breeder judge must refrain from the competition. They may be exhibition only. It must be a prior agreement that is satisfactory to all parties. It is never the intention of the committee to discourage entries.

2. WILD CARD JUDGE

This judge may be someone who is knowledgeable about French Bulldogs, someone from another country, a handler or one qualified to judge French Bulldogs by AKC.

The Top Twenty Committee will choose the WILD CARD JUDGE. All judges will remain secret until the night of the event.

3. All-BREED JUDGE

All-breed judge: An AKC approved judge for French Bulldogs and at least three (3) other breeds.

OR.....An AKC judge approved for French Bulldogs that has owned, bred or exhibited the breed.

This judge is selected by vote of the FBDCA membership from a list composed by the TT Committee and the NSOC. The list of eligible judges will be composed of those within the geographical location so as to minimize travel expenses. If there is a scarcity of approved judges in the region, a judge may be selected by the committee and/or NSOC.

NOTE: Once a judge has judged the Top Twenty, five years must pass before that person may be considered again to judge the event.

For their participation in the TT Event, judges will receive one night's free lodging and a banquet ticket (or a pair of tickets). A commemorative gift may be given at the discretion of the TT Committee.

If a judge wishes to waive the usual fee as a contribution to this prestigious event, that generosity will be greatly appreciated.

There will be printed instructions for the judges and for the participants. There will be a briefing 30 minutes before the event for the judges and they will be sequestered from that point until they are announced for the event. Participants will be briefed on procedure and receive their armbands earlier in the day and at a time to be announced. The Committee Chairperson will select a Steward for each of the judges. These names will remain confidential until the day of the event. A steward should not discuss the scores that the judge gives any of the dogs with the owner or anyone else.

JUDGING PROCEDURE

While in the ring, judges will limit their conversation to discussing procedure with their stewards.

Each dog will be scored by each judge individually, using a Scale of Points based on the AKC Standard.

Each entrant shall be evaluated individually in his/her relationship to the breed standard, using a scale of points as stated in the event catalog. The judge's clipboard will contain a score sheet for the 3 dogs in the group. Points may be scored in whole or half points as described later in this document.

The actual judging is described in full in the section entitled "Procedure for the Evening".

The winner will be determined on the basis of the highest score. The scores of each dog (omitting the Initial Impression score), from each of the three judges, are tabulated, the dog with the highest score will be the winner.

NOTE: The Initial Impression score is not part of this tabulation. It is used to break a tie as described in the next paragraph.

In the event of a tie, it shall be broken by using the "Initial Impression" (on a scale of 1-10) marked by each judge as the determining factor. The Initial Impression score shall be given by the judge before judging any of the scoring categories for each individual dog. This initial impression score means that the dog is taken as a whole and placed on the scale of 1 to 10, with 10 meaning the dog is in perfect harmony with the judge's picture of the ideal French bulldog. The Initial Impression score is not considered part of the dog's total score. If there is still a tied score the three judges will confer and break the tie.

- The final tabulated score sheet will be given to the chair of the committee. It will not be posted or distributed

RATIONALE FOR JUDGING PROCEDURE

Whenever a judge examines an individual dog and compares him, mentally, to the judge's picture of the ideal, the judge is going through the work of judging by scoring. The scoring system adds the assigning of numerical values to the main factors of the judging, and it demands that the judge indicate where he/she penalizes for less than ideal characteristics. A judge must go on the record when scoring. Further, a judge must go on the record part-by-part and indicate the degree of deviation of each part from the ideal. The Initial Impression score must be done before actually judging the dog. In other words, for Initial Impression scoring, a dog must be viewed as a whole and placed on the scale of 1-10 with 10 meaning that the dog is in perfect harmony with the judge's picture of the ideal French Bulldog.

It must be noted that scoring is much more time consuming than the comparison judging we are accustomed to in the show ring, where dogs are judged at 25 or more dogs an hour. Scoring has another virtue. It is a strong discipline for a judge. Sometimes, a fault can seem to stand out and a judge can become sensitized to one difficulty or even one virtue. Scoring checks this to a marked degree. It reduces the idiosyncrasies of an individual judge.

PROCEDURE FOR THE EVENING

A drawing, defined as the Draw Order, will be conducted prior to the start of the Event (ringside) to determine the order in which the dogs enter the ring.

Each dog will be issued an armband number that will correspond with the even page number of that entrant in the Event catalog. The ring will be set up with three (3) judging stations. The stations will include a table covered with cloth and a stable, non-slip surface for the dogs. A separate trophy table will be set up.

There will be a PA system with a moderator. The moderator shall announce the dog in the ring as being the entrant on page number ____ in the catalog. S/he shall instruct the handler as to where to position and gait his/her dog.

At the commencement of the event, all the entrants shall be brought in one at a time and identified by name, owner, and breeder. After the introductions are complete, the Judges are brought in and introduced. When all 3 judges are center- ring, the entrants will go around together for two complete revolutions of the ring (applause) and then proceed to the holding area outside the ring. After this initial introduction, the entrants will be judged in groups of three according to the draw order and the following procedure:

1. The first dog (of the first group of three), as determined by the Draw Order, will enter the ring, move half way around the ring, then pose. After the pose, the dog will complete the circle. The judges will then mark their Initial Impressions. This procedure will be followed for the next two dogs, always maintaining Draw Order. The dogs will then be lifted to the tables.
2. After the first three dogs are tabled they will then be examined and scored completely by the three judges, each judge touching and examining each dog as he/she sees fit. Judges may ask their Steward to hold their score sheet while they physically examine each dog. The dogs will then be lifted from the tables and move to the corner for gaiting. Dogs will gait individually for the three judges as a group, in a "down and back" procedure. Any Judge may ask any dog to repeat the gait. Once the dog has gaited, they will circle the ring, and exit. Steps 1 and 2 will be repeated until all dogs have been scored.
3. When a judge has completed his/her scoring of a group, he/she shall immediately turn the score sheet over to the ring steward. The steward will check that armbands were noted and that the form is signed by the judge; and discrepancies will be resolved by returning the form to the judge for completion. This procedure will continue until all dogs are judged. The dogs are dismissed and dessert is served.
4. No score sheets shall be tabulated by the judges or stewards. The TT Committee will choose 3 people to tabulate the results. The Committee Chair may designate a Committee Member to oversee tabulation of scores. That Committee Member will ensure that scores are added correctly.
5. In the event of a tie, the tie breaking steps in the Judging Procedure section will be followed. When all is settled, the dogs are called back to the ring and presented their participation ribbon. The 4-6 dogs (dependent on entry) with the highest scores will be declared finalists (in no particular order) and will stay in the ring. The others will be dismissed and applauded. The Committee Chairman or designated Committee Member will announce the winners starting with the Awards of excellence, building up to the Best of Breed.

RECAP OF JUDGING PROCEDURE

Entrants are Grouped

1. Dogs will be divided into groups of three. If number of entrants is greater than multiples of 3 then there will be some groups of 2 dogs. Never more than 3 or less than 2.
2. Dogs will be randomly assigned to entry order into the ring. There will be a ringside drawing before the event begins.

Ring Procedure

1. Each group of 3 will enter the ring and each judge will judge each individual dog.
2. Each judge will mark a judging sheet for each group and sign it as completed.

Judging Procedure

1. Each judge is allotted 10 points per dog. A judge may assign any dog 0-10 points. Thus an individual dog could receive a range of total points from 0 (three judges assign the dog no points) to 30 (three judges assign the dog 10 points each). The score sheets will reflect choices of scoring from 1-5 points and then half points will be used. For example: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6.5, 7, 7.5, 8, 8.5, 9, 9.5, 10.
2. The scoring sheets do not list qualities, breed standards or event guidelines. One sheet will be used by each judge for each group of 3 dogs to enable quicker tallies.
3. There will be a place beside the armband number on the score sheet to record the initial impression of each dog. This will be utilized to break a tie if one should occur.
4. Judges will sign the score sheet. They will not be distributed or displayed. However, an owner may request their dog's score after the event.
5. Judges will judge to the approved AKC standard of the French Bull Dog Club of America. The standard will be available to each judge for reference.
6. After the dogs have been judged the score sheets will be collected and sent to the Tally Committee. They will be counted and if applicable ties will be resolved while dessert is being served. The highest scoring 4- 6 dogs will return to the ring in no particular order. These are the finalists.
7. The BOB and Awards of Excellence will be presented with the appropriate rosette and trophies chosen by the committee.
8. All entrants will receive the traditional rosette.
9. All three judges will remain secret until the night of the event.
10. We shall follow AKC rules for exhibition eligibility. If a dog is eligible to be shown under AKC regulations then it can be shown to all three judges.

Selection of Winners

1. There will be one Best of Breed winner. There will be up to 5 maximum winners of the Award of Excellence. There will not be a Best of Opposite Sex.
2. The Awards of Excellence will be based on the entry. An Award will be presented for every five dogs entered with a maximum of five dogs receiving the Award of Excellence. This allows more of the top twenty dogs to receive recognition for their excellence.

3. Different but appropriate rosettes will be presented to the winners of the Award of Excellence.

THE TOP TWENTY CATALOG

Catalog Requirements:

All material must be received by deadline given in invitation

Owner must supply a photo of the dog that is 5 x7 or 8 x 10 – if photo is emailed it must be a minimum of 300 dpi.

Bios are limited to the show career of the dog or its special relationship to the owner. Bios may not contain negative material or political material. The committee has complete editing authority. The length of bios may not exceed 150 words.

Owner must supply a pedigree on a standardized form that can be downloaded from the FBDCA website. This will create a pleasing presentation in the catalog.

Catalog Content:

A catalog will be printed for this event. The catalog must include, but is not limited to the following:

- The cover shall consist of the Top Twenty logo, the words TOP TWENTY INVITATIONAL, the event date and city where the event is to be held.
- A list of the final Top Twenty dogs in descending order by their AKC rankings.
- A one page spread for each entrant in the final Top Twenty standings who has paid the required entry fee. There will be no further charge to entrants for this page.
- The page shall have the name of the entrant, a brief story, owner(s), breeder(s), handler, and the dog's bio furnished by the owner (odd-numbered page).
- The page also shall have a full body photo of the entrant and a three (3) generation pedigree, including the dog's date of birth.
- Judging Procedures and score sheets
- A profile of each judge.
- A page listing the previous winners, the judges, and the year in which they won.