

JUDGING UPDATES ON THE

PUMI

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Having shown and bred several popular breeds over the last 40+ years, I tend to have some expectations about the level of expertise that judges will have in those breeds. It's a whole new experience with a new (to AKC) breed where the judges quite often know less than the exhibitors.

Prior to July 1, 2016 when the Pumi entered the Herding Group, the Hungarian Pumi Club of America had provided 21 judging seminars in every part of the country over the previous six years. Over 150 people attended these seminars and we're very grateful that judges were interested enough to take the time and expense of attending. However, of those 150 people, only 47 (one third) of them are now approved to judge the Pumi. Any judge who judged the Herding Group was automatically granted the Pumi after passing an open-book test on the breed standard. There are now about 225 AKC judges who are eligible to judge the Pumi, only 47 of whom (20%) have ever attended a seminar on the breed. We have been told by judges in the ring that they've never seen a live Pumi before, or have never actually had their hands on one.

In order to best prioritize the dogs in the ring, the judge needs a broad background of having judged many dogs of that breed, and of course, with any rare breed that's nearly impossible. The Hungarian Pumi Club of America has extensive judges education materials on their website at <http://pumiclub.org/about-the-pumi/judges-education/> and we're hoping that judges do look for and review that information before judging them.

In addition, we completed development of the Pumi course in the AKC Canine College. When we last checked, only 12 people had taken and passed the course. Remember that for those judges who are already approved for the breed, it only costs \$20. Call Judging Ops to get the discount.

Following are some of the things that I think judges may be missing.

PRIORITIES

One of the new learning methods we added in the last couple of years was a prioritized list of breed essentials which was printed in the AKC judges newsletter, and can also be found at the above link. It's also been incorporated into our PowerPoint presentation and the AKC Canine College. I've added one (#5) to our most recent PowerPoint because judges seem to be missing that.

- Ears 1/3 tipped
- Curly locks of hair
- Square
- Circular tail
- Depth of body is less than 50% of the height
- Withers form the highest point of the body
- Light-bodied and well-muscled
- Moderate reach and drive
- Light-footed, ready for action

The first two items are most important, and I've included number 8 below because some judges are prioritizing Pumi using the criteria of which has the most reach and drive.

EARS TWO-THIRDS ERECT

This is the hallmark of the breed. In contrast to similar ears on the Sheltie and Collie, the ears must tip towards the sides.

CURLY LOCKS OF HAIR

This may be one of the most misunderstood aspects of the breed, but is very clear in the standard. They must have curly locks of hair that go clear down to the skin. This breed must never be blown dry which removes the curly locks of hair. No dog should be put to winners or breed without this characteristic coat. Puppies will sometimes have softer hair, but it must always have the curly locks on the body and the legs.

MODERATE REACH AND DRIVE

The Pumi needs to be able to turn on a dime and is very agile. Their angulation is moderate, as is their reach and drive.

Judges should prioritize on breed type, and moderate reach and drive is a part of that breed type. The dog on the right also does not have withers forming the highest point on the body (#6).

QUESTIONS FROM JUDGES

NOSE COLOR

Almost every white Pumi's nose will fade to some degree (i.e. snow nose), but some of these never regain color in the summer. They also tend to fade in and out with hormonal changes (e.g. being in heat). We did not make a non-black nose a disqualification in this breed because of the fear that snow noses could get disqualified by judges.



Ears two-thirds erect



Curly Locks of Hair



Correct



Incorrect

Moderate Reach and Drive



Nose color



Puppies



Adults



This is opposed to a patterned black and tan (called "phantom" in the Poodle)



The only acceptable color nose is black (or a black faded out), and even snow noses have black pigment around the rim of the nose. Because snow noses are so common in the breed, please do not heavily penalize these snow noses or you will force exhibitors to start coloring them. What you must do when judging is give extra credit to a white dog who does have good nose pigment.

While white Pumik will usually have faded noses, the fawn Pumik do not seem to have that trouble. So if you are going to give extra credit to a white Pumi whose nose is not faded, make sure it's not a fawn that has turned almost white (they have that fading gene, too). You can tell a white from a fawn because the fawn will have black hairs in the coat, usually on the ears and tail, but it could be all over the body.

The best thing to remember is to penalize the faded nose on a white dog to the extent of the deviation, recognizing that it's hard to find a white with full nose pigment. We would all prefer that they be solid black, but at this point in our breed's development, it's very rare.

COLOR SHADINGS VS PATTERNING (DQ)

Because the Pumi has a fading gene like the silver Poodle or the Kerry Blue Terrier, they are born black and fade as they mature, but different parts of their body will fade at different rates and they rarely will be the same color all over their body. The Pumi tends to fade on the face and legs first. It is important to know this because the Pumi has a disqualification for "any multiple-color pattern or patches" such as the black & tan pattern. Below are examples of black Pumik that are fading or have faded to gray.

For a grey or silver grey Pumi, if their skin is injured, the hair will come back in black, and as the hair shaft gets longer will again fade to gray. This is not a patch of a different color, but only indicates that there's been an injury of some kind.

While the Kerry Blue Terrier has a similar (or the same) fading gene, a judge told one of our exhibitors that the color of the Pumi is called "blue". That is not correct for this breed—it is "gray" or "silver gray". A Great Dane can also be "blue" (with the D gene for "dilution") and that is an entirely different gene affecting not only the coat, but the nose and pigment color. Color designations can be breed-specific unless talking about the genetic description.



BRINDLE

We have discovered that the Pumi also has a gene for brindle. This is considered a color pattern and is a disqualification. A brindle will have both black/gray and fawn coloring (see photo).

TOPLINE

The FCI standard does not address the topline specifically, and so the AKC standard doesn't either. The only reference is "Withers pronounced and forming the highest point of the body", but in reality the back itself is level with a very slight curve at the loin, ending in a high tailset. When standing and especially moving, the withers should remain at a higher level than the backline. Many of the dogs being rewarded do not have high withers.

The Pumi is groomed with a slope in the topline from the withers to the root of tail. That is the style that has been given us from Europe. The judge must feel the topline when going over the dog, finding the high withers and level backline, but expect the silhouette when viewing the outline from a distance to have a sloping topline (note the moving silhouettes above).

TABLE VS RAMP

Both judges and exhibitors have questioned the club's decision to have the Pumi judged on the table. At the time that decision was made, the ramp was not really an option. In Europe, both the floor and the table are used at the judge's discretion. The club decided to have the Pumi a table breed for two reasons, 1) the Puli, its first cousin,

is examined on the table, and 2) the Pumi is reserved with strangers and doesn't like a stranger coming down at them for an examination, where they are just fine with strangers while on a table. At some point in the future, we may re-examine the option to have the breed on the ramp.

COMMENTS FROM EXHIBITORS

I asked Pumi exhibitors on Facebook what they would like to judges to know from their experience at showing in the regular classes since July 1, 2016. Below are some of their comments:

- If judges would just learn the standard, I would be happy!
- There are too many dogs with short legs.
- Shades of gray or shades of fawn on a dog are acceptable.
- The bite and sides of the mouth should be checked.
- Emphasize proper coat preparation and correct gait.
- A puppy's coat is soft to touch.
- A judge may think a Pumi is oversized but is actually is perfect height according to Standard. Please measure if in doubt!

Be sure to go back and read the breed standard that applies to these comments.

Some new exhibitors were concerned about the judge checking their standard in the ring, but they were assured that we would prefer the judges do this to make sure they've correctly remembered what's in the standard.

IN SUMMARY

It's been an interesting experience being the Judges Education Chair for a new breed. With inexperienced judges and inexperienced exhibitors, incorrect information and priorities abound. But it will get better as the judges see more and more Pumi being shown and get a feel for this great breed.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris is the Judges Education Chair for the Hungarian Pumi Club of America in addition to being its Vice President. She's had Pumi for 20 years, importing a number of dogs from Hungary and the Scandinavian countries. She and her husband, Tom, have accumulated 6 World Winner titles, 2 European Winner titles, BOS at the Hungarian Pumi Klub Show with a homebred, FCI Working Certificate (Herding), and AKC herding titles, in addition to nose work and obedience. Since the breed was recognized July 2016, there have been 25 AKC champion Pumi bred and/or owned by them, including the Best of Breed winner at the first AKC National Specialty. Chris judges the Terrier and Non-Sporting Groups and about half the Sporting Group. She was the first adjunct judge for the Pumi. ■