

Borzoï

TEETH MISSING LINK?

Are missing a tooth a problem in Borzoï? First no, second maybe, but not yes. The standard was changed in 1972 to include the following "Missing teeth should be penalized." It does not say a fault. Borzoï jaws are extremely long. Because of this, the spaces between the premolars can make it look like there should be a tooth to fill the gap. Four premolars on the bottom, three on the top. When the club changed the standard, there were dogs at the time with missing teeth. To make the breeders consider the ramifications of missing teeth, the club voted to amend the standard. The breed is used to catch and hold prey. To do that you need molars. While judging in countries where missing teeth is not mentioned in the standard (I have asked the clubs if they would mind if I checked for full



As a breed developed to catch and hold prey, the Borzoï's jaws are "long, powerful, and deep," according to the breed standard. With the very long jaw, spaces between the premolars can make it look like there should be a tooth to fill the gap.

dentition), I have found the frequency of missing teeth to be no different. (What is interesting is that *extra* teeth are not mentioned in the standard, and there have been Borzoï with extra teeth.)

Many breeder-judges agree that a missing a tooth or two is not a major issue, but missing more would affect the function of the dog. The decision on how much a missing a tooth or two is weighed in the evaluation process is

a personal one. The importance of teeth verses other virtues comes down to form and function, as any other point of the breed standard.

Not mentioned in the standard is size of teeth, which is all a part of function. The bigger the better, both for holding prey and placement in the jawbones. Small teeth with small roots can lead to those teeth being knocked out or worn down with age. Large,

strong teeth are a virtue. On bite, scissors and even are correct, as mentioned in detail in the illustrated standard. Overshot or undershot are both incorrect. The side inclusions are also very important with the lower canine lining up in front of the upper with space in between so they do not interfere. Canines that point straight up where they interfere with the ability of the dog to close his jaw or end up making a hole in the gumline are incorrect. The shape of the head can also be overdone, where too much fill or incorrect plains can cause the jaws to have too much space on the sides, which affects function. Somewhat like a zipper, they need to line up both on the top and bottom, to result in a strong jaw and teeth to hold prey.

The missing link in function with regard to teeth is really not just the count but placement, size, and the job this breed was designed to do. I can actually say that in my judging experience, I have not had two dogs of equal qualities where a decision came down to a missing tooth. We should all hope that the quality of the breed improves so much that we can make missing teeth a deciding factor over other points of form and function.

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