

My What Big Teeth You Have! : Judging the Anatolian Shepherd Dog's bite

The Anatolian Shepherd Dog is an unpretentious breed. Judging the bite is simple and straightforward, just like the dog itself, and yet it seems to throw a lot of judges who put more effort into it than is required.

From the AKC standard for the breed regarding teeth - "Scissors bite preferred, level bite acceptable. Broken teeth are not to be faulted. Overshot, undershot or wry bite are disqualifications." And from the standard regarding temperament - "Highly territorial, he is a natural guard. Reserve around strangers and off its territory is acceptable. Responsiveness with animation is not characteristic of the breed. Overhandling would be discouraged."

There is **no** requirement for complete dentition in the standard, and so there is no need to count teeth in the ring. I understand that many judges come from breeds where complete dentition is required, so they are already in the habit of counting teeth, but please, respect the ASD standard and only check the front bite, as required by the standard, when judging this breed.

When you approach an Anatolian in the ring, approach from the side rather than head on, and give the handler a. Let the handler show you the bite - this will generally go better than you attempting to check the bite yourself. Since you aren't counting teeth or looking for occlusion on the sides, this should be quick and straightforward. There are few things worse to the Anatolian's mind than having a complete stranger walk up and start putting their hands into his face and mouth.

Approach the dogs calmly and without fear. Greet the handler in a calm, quiet tone of voice to let the dog know that you mean no harm to either party. Remember, this is a breed that views the world from the vantage of a guardian

Please remember that the Anatolian Shepherd Dog is still a working breed, in spite of it having been in the show ring for fifteen years. Many, if not most, of the dogs that you encounter in the ring will be working dogs when they are not being shown. We are fortunate as a breed that most breeders are seeking to keep working temperament intact - this means that they are not looking for an outgoing, friendly, tail-wagging dog that welcomes the approach of all they meet.

Please also remember that because we do not require anything other than the front bite to be checked, the vast majority of the dogs that you encounter in the ring will not have been trained to show the entire mouth like some of the other Working breeds that have a requirement for full dentition.