

# The Politics of Showing Dogs

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I visited a website the other day which stated “the majority of top-winning dogs are not owned and handled by their breeder”. To explain this, the author concluded that breeders simply do not know how to recognize quality puppies and in their ignorance, inadvertently sell their best puppies to others who then go on to win, win, win.

This statement struck me as odd and if one thinks it through, it becomes readily apparent that the inference made by the author is riddled with faulty logic. The reason why so many readers accept the entire statement as true is because half of the statement is true: the majority of top-winning dogs indeed are *not* owned or handled by their breeder. But *recognizing* quality in a puppy --or even an adult dog for that matter-- has very little to do with transforming it into a top-winning show dog. Here's why.

The recipe followed to produce most top-winning show dogs *starts* with having a good dog but does not end there. The top-winners also use a skilled and well-recognized handler and plenty of cash for entry fees, handler fees, handler bonuses, travel expenses, show photos, and campaign advertisements. If you lack one of these basic ingredients your chance of successfully campaign-ing a top-winning show dog reduces dramatically. Don't get me wrong, owner-handlers can do quite well, but an unknown or new owner-handler won't tread much ground until they have established themselves in the eyes of the judging community...and doing that takes time, lots of show exposure and a very good dog.

You see, whenever personal subjectivity plays a role in an event (i.e., judged events) you will see political influence. Politics is not just about civil government; it is part of all *group* interaction. But you know what, it is okay that the majority of top-winning dogs are not owned and handled by their breeder because it will always be the breeder who plans the litter and whelps the puppies. And it will always be the experienced breeder who is the best judge of his or her breed and the best judge of a puppy's potential.