

## **Chapter 7A: Judging Procedures**

Bettas4all sanctioned shows are judged by Bettas4all certified judges (see **Chapter 7D**). This chapter describes which procedures to follow during benching, division of show classes and judging.

### **1. Benching**

- a. When breeders arrive at the show location, they will have to register at the benching administration desk where they will receive the tank numbers for their fish upon payment of the entry fee.
- b. A benching officer and/or a benching assistant will provide the show tanks filled with water. Please note that the fish should be displayed in bare-bottomed tanks (with no decoration and with non-colored water). If the water for the transport is stained or polluted each breeder should take great care of changing the water to clean water before adding it to the show tank.
- c. After acclimatization of your fish the benching officer and helper(s) will pre-sort your fish into the show setup. During the pre-sorting phase, the fish will be mainly sorted based on their finnage variety and gender according to the main show classes (see **Chapter 2**) although a rough pre-sorting upon colour variety can already take place (e.g. solid colored vs. AOC) (see **Chapter 4**). Please note that pre-sorting is done in order to make the division into the definitive show classes easier for the Bettas4all Judging Team when all fish are benched.
- d. Fish arriving after the benching deadline (to be determined by the hosting organization) can be refused. Please note that exceptions can be made in extreme situations in consultation with the Bettas4all judging team and the hosting organization.

### **2. Division of Show Classes**

- a. When all fish have been benched and pre-sorted, the Bettas4all Judging Team will further divide the main show classes into the definitive show classes based on the various colour and finnage variations as well as the number of fish of a certain subvariety (see **Chapter 2**).
- b. Fish have to be included in the show class in which they fit best according to the Bettas4all Judging Team and stand most chances of winning an award. During the actual judging procedure, the Bettas4all Judging Team is allowed to move an entry to another show class if the head judge approves that the reason(s) for the re-classification are valid.
- c. Show classes are only further subdivided when (1) the rules allow splitting (see **Chapter 2**) and (2) it creates a more interesting and challenging competition\*\*. For this reason the final subdivision in colour classes depends on the participants within each provisional class.

*\*\*The number of awards per show class will depend on the number of fish represented in this class (see **Chapter 5**). The philosophy behind this is the fact that with this system prizes carry more weight and actually say something, e.g. winning 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in a class where only 3 fish are entered does not have to say much, but winning a 5th prize in a class with more than 12 fish entered does!*

### **3. General Judging procedures**

- a. Although a Bettas4all Judge is allowed to judge his own entries and should be able to do this in an honest and objective way, he/she should do his/her best in order to avoid any conflict of interest. In the case of any conflict of interest, direct or indirect, the duty of a certified judge is to (1) ask a judge with no entries in that particular show class to judge that class and/or (2) step back from the judging group until his/her fish have been knocked-out from award winning positions during the judging procedure.
- b. Within the Bettas4all Judging Team discussions about the ownership of fish entered to the show should be avoided until the judging itself has finished.
- c. Judges who recognise a fish that they have seen/judged before, should not be influenced in their judgement. They should be as honest and objective as possible and treat the identified fish as any other entry in the same class by judging it on its present performance.
- d. The judgement of the Bettas4all Judging Team is based on the phenotype alone (exterior appearance and not genetic background). No consideration should be given to the (supposed) genetics of the fish entered to the show.
- e. The Bettas4all Judging Team should not hesitate to disqualify an entry based on the reasons described in the General Standard (see **Chapter 5**).
- f. Ideally, all show classes are judged in groups by a minimum of one and a maximum of three Bettas4all certified judges and a maximum of two apprentices per group (See **paragraph 3.1c**).

- g. On the day of the judging all fish have to remain carded before the judging starts and are only allowed to be uncarded by the judging team (see **paragraph 3.2b**).
- h. During the judging procedure, an area in front of the show set-up should be reserved for the Judging Team and possibly furnished with tables and judging materials.
- i. There is no time limit during the judging procedure; and, although decisions will be taken as quickly as possible, the Judging Team should be provided with all the time necessary to judge the show.
- j. The audience (including show participants) is allowed to watch the judging procedure in silence as long as they respect and not influence or disturb this process.

### **3.1 Head Judge**

- a. When the Bettas4all Judging Board composes the Judging Team a Head Judge is designed. All Bettas4all certified judges are eligible for this position, but the judging board will consider competence and experience while determining the Head Judge.
- b. The Head Judge is responsible for the outcome of the judging procedure, and his/her role is to make sure the Bettas4all Standard<sup>®</sup> is applied correctly and efficiently.
- c. Before the actual judging starts, the Head Judge prepares a scheme listing all the show classes in which the judges and apprentices are showing fish. This information, supported by practical experience, will be taken into account by the Head Judge when assigning judges to a certain judging group.
- d. Depending on the number of available judges, the Head Judge can either participate in one of the judging groups or supervise the judging process and assist where necessary.
- e. In case of doubt when the judging group(s) cannot agree on a result in a certain show class the head judge should take the final decision.
- f. The head judge should review all show classes after they have been judged by the appointed judging groups in order to approve/confirm the results. In case the head judge wants to have more information about the result of a certain class, the responsible judging group is asked to explain their decision(s) to the head judge. In case something has been overlooked or a mistake has been made, the class will be openly discussed with all judges involved. The head judge has the right to alter the outcome of judging by both changing the ranking of the fish, and/or awarding prizes to fish that were not previously classified.
- g. In case of a tie when voting for the special prizes such as (reserve) Best of Show Male and Female as well as the jury prize, head judge should take the final decision (see **paragraph 3.3**).

### **3.2 Judging show classes**

- a. At the beginning of the judging for each class, it is necessary to fill the the administrative information concerning the class using the Bettas4all Judging Form (see **Appendix I**) by writing: (i) the names of all Bettas4all Judges and apprentices; (ii) the name of the show class (finnage variety; color; gender) (iii) the tank numbers of the fish in the show class and (iv) the total number of fish in the show class.
- b. In order to judge all aspects described in the Bettas4all Standard<sup>®</sup>, fish should be allowed to present themselves in full flare. In order to stimulate show fish to flare two techniques are allowed: (1) Uncarding of show tanks allowing the fish to flare at the fish in an adjacent tank and (2) Presenting a small mirror allowing the fish to flare at its mirror-image. Fish should rest from flaring when the judging team is not focussing on them. Therefore show tanks of fish that are not under observation should be carded and no mirror should be presented.
- c. Fish with disqualification faults (see **Chapter 3**) have to be excluded from the competition. The tank number of the fish will be noted down on the Bettas4all Judging Form (see **Appendix I**) and the number of disqualified fish will be subtracted from the total number of fish in the show class. The latter might influence the number of prizes to be awarded (see **Chapter 5**).
- d. Fish are compared based on their faults following a knock-out (KO) procedure. The fish with the least (serious) faults will be determined as the winner of the class. During the KO procedure the number of fish with a chance of winning a prize (that depends on the number of fish competing in a certain show class, see **Chapter 5**) will be selected and compared with great attention.
- e. No ties are allowed! Only one fish can be placed per rank according to the award system (see **Chapter 5**). In case of ties the judging team can take advantage of the comparison form.
- f. In case a judging group cannot agree on a certain placement within a certain show class, the other judging groups should be involved in the discussion and in case the comparison form should be used. In case no agreement is reached, the head judge should make the final decision (see **paragraph 3.1**).

- g. The head judge should review all show classes after they have been judged by the appointed judging groups in order to approve/confirm the results (see **paragraph 3.1e**).

### **3.3 Determination of the Best of Show awards and Jury prize**

- a. The awards for Best of Show (BOS) and Jury prize are determined by voting. All certified Bettas4all judges are allowed to express 1 vote, apprentice or guest judges votes are worth 0.5 whereas the vote of the head judge will have a double weight (2 votes).
- b. A Bettas4all Judge if strictly required is allowed to vote for his/her own entries and should be able to do this in an honest and objective way.
- c. No ties are allowed also in BOS! Only one fish can be placed per rank according to the award system (see **Chapter 5**). In case of a tie the head judge will decide which fish will be the winner.
- d. For both male and female, the fish to be awarded with BOS should be determined first, followed by the reserve BOS (rBOS). For more information about which fish are eligible for these awards see **Chapter 5**.
- e. After the prizes for BOS and rBOS for both male and female have been awarded, the Judging Team will decide which fish will be awarded the Jury prize. For more information about which fish are eligible for these awards see **Chapter 5**.

### **4. Show certificates**

After the judging is completed, show certificates should be signed by the head judge. Additional signatures of the other certified Bettas4all Judges are optional.

### **5. Judging aids**

In order to judge the classes properly the judging team should have access to the following judging aids:

- A copy of the Bettas4all Standard®.
- Mirror
- Flashlight (LED; non-colored/white)
- A set of straws cut at at 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 6.0 cm in order to check minimal and ideal body size of males, females and giants.
- Bettas4all Judging Form I – Show classes (see **Appendix II**).
- Bettas4all Judging Form II – Special Prizes (see **Appendix III**).