



photo by Watcharaphol Watanasomboon



photo by Sarawut Angkunanuwat

THE IDEAL SHOW BETTA

The ideal show Betta is in excellent health as shown by its faultless condition and vigorous deportment. The body and fins are unblemished. There are no body scars, spots, and missing or misshapen scales. Fin rays are straight or smoothly curved. Fins are held rigidly erect and gills are fully flared. Movement is continuous and aggressive with violent response to any intruder.

The ideal show Betta presents nearly mirror-image symmetry above and below an imaginary mid-lateral line. This Betta is well proportioned with respect to fins and body size. The body is smoothly tapered toward the caudal peduncle. The dorsal fin approaches the anal fin in shape, width, and size. There is a 180-degree spread between first and last caudal rays. The outer margin of the dorsal, caudal and anal fins trace a continuous circular contour with no gaps between fins. Fins are broad and overlap at the edges. Secondary and tertiary divisions occur at even intervals along the lengths of fin rays.

The ideal show Betta exhibits brilliant coloration of uniform density. In solid color classes there are no off-color washes in the fins and no blotching or speckling of unwanted colors on the body. Patterned types have dark and bright colors in shades that produce the highest contrast. The overall appearance of color on this Betta is one of vivid, sparkling beauty.

GENERAL STANDARDS

These standards cover the traits that Bettas share in common. The General Standards are judging guidelines that emphasize health and development of the physical traits of the Betta.

The Judging Areas

In this section are the details of the General Standards judging areas of Dimension, Condition, Deportment, and Finnage.

The Components

Each Rating Area may have listed sub-areas to be evaluated called the Components.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1) DIMENSION 2) CONDITION 3) DEPARTMENT

- a) Size
 - 1) Body
 - 2) Fins
 - 3) Overall
- b) Symmetry
- c) Proportion
- d) Shape
 - 1) Body
 - 2) Fins
 - 3) Overall

For reference, a diagrammed photo of general Betta anatomy is provided, since these standards use some terms for parts of a betta with which judges must become familiar.

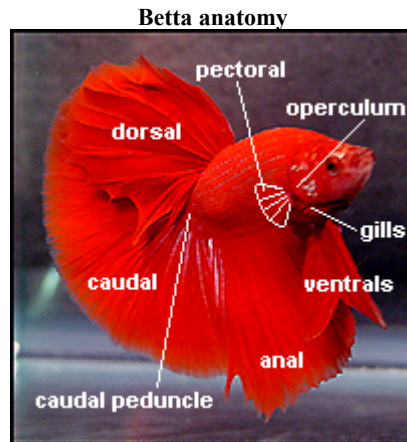


photo by Jim Sonnier

FINNAGE CHARACTERISTICS

(Size; Symmetry; Proportion; Shape)

Dorsal Caudal Anal Ventrals & Pectorals

DIMENSION

BODY SIZE

Body size of males must be at least one and a half inches (1.5”) long. Body size of Females

must be at least one and a quarter inches (1.25") long. (See Wild Types descriptions for size requirements in those species **and Plakats**.) Betta splendens that do not conform to these minimum **body** sizes must be disqualified. Body size should be the last consideration when judging for the best fish in a class. All other things being equal (same number of faults deduction points), the larger fish should win.

FIN SIZES

The following fin sizes apply to male Betta splendens classes. Although the following describe fin length, judges and exhibitors must keep in mind that fins judging emphasis **must** be on their breadth and volume.

Dorsal Fin

Should be at least one-half the length of the body, measured from the base of the center fin ray to the outer tip of the same ray.

Caudal Fin

Should be at least one half of the length of the body as measured from the caudal peduncle to the center of the outer edge - NOT to the edge of the greatest extension.

Anal Fin

Should be at least one half of the length of the body measured from the base of the center fin ray to the outer tip of the center fin ray.

Ventral Fin

Length should be close to the length of the anal fin.

Pectoral Fin

Pectoral size is difficult to evaluate, especially if they are transparent. However, in general large full pectorals are desired.

SYMMETRY

The ideal Betta should be balanced with both body and fins defining smooth and continuous contours. The body should be nearly symmetrical above and below an imaginary mid-lateral line, excepting the region forward of the anal fin where body organs are housed. The silhouette of the three non-paired fins should be as close to a circle as possible with the outer margins of these fins tracing a continuous circular outline without gaps. In doubletail Bettas, the Judge should expect to see, as a norm, a higher degree of symmetry than shown by the singletail Bettas. The unpaired fins should display mirror-image symmetry above and below an imaginary mid-lateral line. This is due to the doubletail's broader dorsal fin that can approach the breadth, volume and shape of the anal fin.

PROPORTION

A beautifully proportioned Betta is superior to one that is merely large. It is important that the fins and the body be in proportion to each other. If the fins are very large the body should be also. A disproportionately large (or small) unpaired fin detracts from the symmetry and overall beauty of the fish.

BODY SHAPE

The body should be a modified spindle shape that is somewhat heavier in the area of the ventral fins. It should taper cleanly toward the head and caudal fin with the tail junction, or peduncle, being thinner from side to side. It should be three to four times as long as it is "deep," top to bottom. The overall form of a Betta is very important. The body and its form in particular have a significant impact on the overall appearance of the Betta. The body must complement the fin structure, not overwhelm it. Example; a fat husky body with little finnage is a serious fault. Doubletail Bettas may have a deeper--top to bottom--body than singletailed Bettas. The thicker body is acceptable, as long as it contributes to the support of the larger finnage of doubletails. (Form Variations, Plakats, and Wild Type entries will differ.)

FIN SHAPE

Dorsal Fin

Singletail Dorsal

A variety of shapes are acceptable – semi-circle, quarter circle, rectangular - as long as breadth and volume are displayed. Triangular shape is unacceptable. As with the other fins, width and fullness are important, with maximum fin area a goal. Ideally, the dorsal fin will overlap the caudal fin and appear blended with it, though not physically fused. The first rays (closer to the head) must be comparable in length to the other rays and should in no case be "stubby."

Doubletail Dorsal

The base of the dorsal fin of a doubletail Betta is expected to be considerably broader than that found in the singletail. The doubletail dorsal is, ideally, the mirror image of the anal fin in keeping with the concept of symmetry.

Caudal Fin

In singletail bettas, the ideal shape is a semi-circle that spreads to a perfect 180 degrees. Due to proper selection of breeders, fin ray branching, care, conditioning, and fin spread this is an elusive ideal to breed for and maintain. Because of this, some classes will sometimes not have

specimens with this ideal caudal among them. In such classes, with all other things equal, the most symmetrical types having the widest spread and those with the least faults as described in the general fault guide and the special standards will have the best chance of placing. Caudal fins that slightly exceed 180° spread are **neither favored nor faulted**, over fish displaying 180° spread.

All caudals, including doubletail Bettas, should have rays evenly distributed above and below the centerline of the fish. Proportionate volume is ideal as opposed to length. **Note:** for the Doubletail Caudal - the volume in the upper and lower caudal should be equal and equally distributed above and below the centerline. The two caudals may overlap but should be separated all the way to the caudal peduncle. A half circle is ideal for the overall shape of the two caudal fins.

Anal Fin

Shape to be roughly rectangular. The ideal shape of the anal fin is an isosceles trapezoid with the shorter side at the base of the fin at the body. In other words, the outer edge of the fin should be broader than the base. Front and back edges should not converge to a point forming a triangle. Volume and fullness are desired. Ideally, the anal fin overlaps, but does not fuse with, the caudal. Triangular shape in the anal fin is a form fault as is excessively long (1.5 to 2 times the width) anal fin. The anal fin should not extend beyond the bottom edge of the caudal fin.)

Ventral Fins

Shaped somewhat like a knife blade with the cutting edge to the rear. The front edge is slightly convex. Tips are pointed. Fins should be of equal length and not crossed. They must match each other. These fins should not be excessively short, nor long and thin. Fullness is desirable. Female ventral fins generally appear shorter in proportion to the body.

Pectoral Fin

Pectoral fins are the most important in swimming, maintaining balance in the water, and rapid aggressive motion. Broad and long are preferred.

OVERALL SHAPE

Overall ideal appearance of a quality Betta splendens (single tail or double tail) is a full circle with no open spaces between the three primary fins.

Doubletail male Betta



photo by Wasan Sattayapun

DOUBLETAIL BETTAS

Doubletail Bettas are expected to differ in several ways from the singletail:

- 1--Possess two distinct "tails" or caudal lobes instead of one, with a complete separation to the base of the caudal peduncle.
- 2--Possess a wider caudal peduncle to support the double lobes.
- 3--Possess a larger dorsal fin, nearly the size of the anal fin.
- 4--Their bodies are usually more "chunky" and often a bit shorter.
- 5 - Bends in the caudal peduncle are expressed to a varying degree in almost all doubletail bettas. These are more easily noticed when viewing the fish from above. Easily seen bends should be faulted; if the bend is not excessive when viewed from above, the fish should not be penalized.

FEMALE BETTAS

Female Bettas of all types are of the same general form as their male counterparts, but with shorter fins and broader bodies. IBC encourages the maintenance of the distinctive female and male forms. Female Bettas vary considerably from males in several ways and should always appear "female."

- 1--Females are generally expected to be somewhat smaller overall. They are usually more rounded in the belly area than males.
- 2--Female fins are not expected to reach the same size or proportion of the male finnage. Female bettas should have broad voluminous fins, but not possess male finnage length.
- 3--Females are expected to show an egg spot.
- 4--Females may be less aggressive in their deportment.

female with too much male finnage



photo by Wasan Sattayapun

“Combtail” effect on anal & dorsal edges



photo by Wray Tsusaki & Jack Lewin

CONDITION

GENERAL CONDITION

“CONDITION” considers the health of the Betta and the degree of body/fin “damage” that contribute to the overall appearance of a Betta. The fish should appear to be well nourished, vigorous, and with healthy fin and body tissue. Age can cause a reduced quality condition, such as excessive body size and curled fin rays.

Body

Perfect in appearance is the key. ANY nicks in the flesh, missing scales, protruding scales or other defects of the body material are to be faulted.

Fins

Though there are two sets of paired fins -- pectorals and ventrals -- and three unpaired fins - - dorsal, caudal, and anal -- certain aspects of development apply to all of the fins. Fin rays should be straight or slightly bent until they branch and grow parallel or fan out smoothly as they get farther from the base of the fin. Rays may extend beyond the webbing tissue -- called protruded or extended rays. If a fish exhibits extended rays, all fins should show extended rays, evenly spaced. Web tissue is to be full, strong, and undamaged. Margins should be smooth and unbroken except for fish showing extended rays. Fins should be carried erect with rays and webbing spread uniformly and fully. Pinholes, uneven edges that indicate former damage, splits in fins and “blown fins” are all indicators of the condition of the fish, the care the fish has been given and stress exposure. These are all faults ranging from minor to disqualification.

Above illustration shows example of protruded or extended rays. This type of fin development should not count against the condition of the fish. Fringed is also known as combtail. Hyper-extended rays with less webbing than usual are known as crowntail and have their own standard.

DEPORTMENT

Good deportment, often thought of as flaring, is an important trait for Betta splendens because, not only does it indicate vigor, it also allows other features, such as color, to be shown off to advantage. Though of a relatively small value, poor deportment can have disastrous consequences for the other components of evaluation. Poor deportment often gives the impression that the Betta “doesn’t feel well”, or is frightened. Obviously the fish must be studied as a whole when considering deportment. Each body/fin part plays a role.

Caution: Wild type Bettas have considerably different deportment -- see descriptions. Other Betta species than splendens, particularly mouthbrooders, are frequently very nervous in bowls and consequently rarely flare. However, all fish regardless of species should appear alert with unclamped fins.

GENERAL FAULTS

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

1. Undersized **body** (male 1.5" body length, female 1.25" body length).
2. Swimming difficulty (due to excess finnage or swim bladder disorder).
3. Class error (fish entered in wrong class).
 - A. Non-splendens type not labeled.
 - B. Color or form variation not labeled.
 - C. Wrong sex for class.

- D. Wrong species for class.
- E. Hybrids in non-splendens class.
- 4. "Egg spot" on male, or no "egg spot" on female.
- 5. Female with excessive (male) finnage.
- 6. Malformed body (especially in double tails).
- 7. Missing external anatomical part, such as an eye, gill cover, or fin.
- 8. Any sign of disease or illness.
- 9. Blindness (especially in Opaques and Albinos).
- 10. Egg bound (severely distended abdomen).
- 11. Shy or fearful behavior – does not rise from bowl bottom.

HEAD FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

1. Disfigurement of the lips (slight fault).
2. Small bump, small groove, or other slight deformity (minor fault).
3. Large bump, large groove, or other large deformity (major fault).
4. Head tilted (usually upward) out of alignment with body (severe fault).

BODY FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

1. Body stout or slightly fat (slight fault).
2. Doubletail body too short or stout (slight fault).
3. Body moderately too small for finnage (minor fault).
4. Body does not show ideal shape – minor anomaly. (minor fault).
5. Body is "fat" or "skinny" (major fault).
6. Gill covers protrude outward when closed (major fault).
7. Body shows slight swayback or humpback (major fault).
8. Doubletail caudal peduncle bump or bend very noticeable (major fault).
9. Body shows excessive swayback or humpback (severe fault).

FINNAGE FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

General – all fins

1. Projected rays on all fins, but some not even (minor fault).
2. One curled fin ray (minor fault).
3. Projected rays only on some fins (minor fault).
4. Outline of non-paired fins presents an oval rather than a circular shape. (minor fault) – does NOT apply to Plakats or females.
5. Gaps between the three unpaired fins - no overlapping (major fault).
6. Fins are too small for body (major fault).
7. Curled fin rays - more than one (major fault).
8. Fins not similar - some broad, some narrow (major fault).
9. Outline of non-paired fins presents a considerably non-symmetrical shape, such as a square, rectangular, or irregular shape. (major fault)

Ventral fins

1. Crossed ventrals (slight fault).
2. Thin ventrals (slight fault).
3. Extra long ventrals - except in Plakats (slight fault).
4. Noticeably short ventrals (minor fault).
5. Curled ventral(s) (minor fault).
6. Stubby ventrals (major fault).

Dorsal fin

1. A few short rays on front of dorsal, not matched on anal (slight fault).
2. Dorsal somewhat small in relation to anal and caudal (minor fault).
3. Singletail dorsal slightly narrow (minor fault).
4. Doubletail dorsal slightly more narrow than the anal (minor fault).
5. Doubletail dorsal has a few short rays at the front edge, not matched on anal (minor fault).
6. Singletail dorsal noticeably narrow (major fault).
7. Doubletail dorsal much more narrow than the anal (major fault).

8. Dorsal very small in relation to anal and caudal (major fault).

Anal fin

1. Long anal fin drops below bottom edge of caudal (minor fault)
2. A few front rays curled forward (minor fault).
3. Excessive rounding at front and bottom of anal fin approaching a “quarter circle” (major fault).
4. Front rays have severe forward curling at front (major fault).
5. Triangular shaped (severe fault).

Caudal (tail) fin

1. Caudal edges straight but slightly rounded at the corners (slight fault).
2. Doubletail lobes are full, but separation not quite complete – separation still greater than 3/4 (slight fault).
3. Caudal asymmetrical - droops slightly below midline (minor fault).
4. Doubletail lobes slight mismatch (minor fault).
5. First caudal edge rays short (minor fault).
6. Caudal slightly small - not proportional to dorsal and anal (minor fault).
7. Caudal edges not straight, slightly curved back away from head (minor fault).
8. Less than secondary branching (4 tips from primary ray) in females, or tertiary branching (8 tips from primary ray) in males (minor fault).
9. Less than 180 degrees between caudal edge rays, but more than 165 degrees (minor fault).
10. Doubletail caudal lobes separation between 1/2 and 3/4 (minor fault).
11. Caudal asymmetrical - droops 75% or more below midline (major fault).
12. Caudal very small - not proportional to dorsal and anal (major fault).
13. Doubletail lobes considerable mismatch in volume or shape (major fault).
14. Doubletail caudal lobes matched, but narrow (major fault).
15. Less than primary branching (2 tips from primary ray) in females, or secondary branching (4 tips from primary ray) in males (major fault).
16. Doubletail caudal lobes separation 1/2 or less (major fault).
17. Less than 165 degrees between caudal edge rays, but more than 150 degrees (major fault).
18. Doubletail caudal lobes mismatched and narrow (severe fault).
19. Non-symmetrical caudal type (severe fault).
20. Less than 150 degrees between caudal edge rays (severe fault).

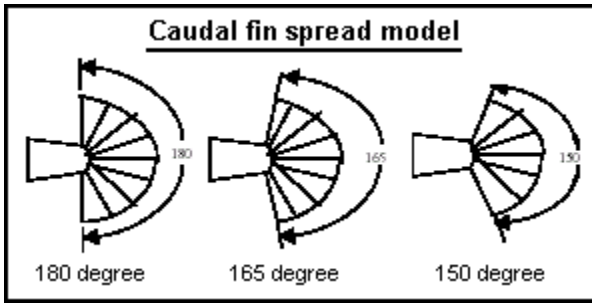
CONDITION FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

1. Single small defect on any fin - pinhole or bent ray (slight fault).
2. Body has some misaligned scales (minor fault).
3. Single moderate defect on any fin (minor fault).
4. Slightly frayed fin tip (minor fault).
5. Body scarred or missing scales (major fault).
6. Multiple small defects or single extensive defect (major fault).
7. Multiple moderate defects (severe fault).
8. Broken rays on any fin (severe fault).

DEPARTMENT FAULTS – ALL CLASSES

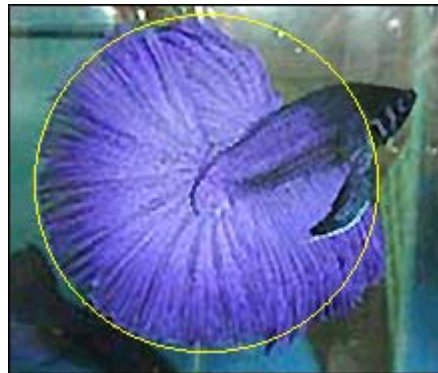
1. Constant full display (Betta splendens), but exhibits only aggressive (not violent) response to intruder (slight fault).
2. Fins erect, but gills only occasionally flared, and exhibits only motion toward intruder (minor fault).
3. Fins occasionally erect, gills rarely flared, and not very responsive to intruder (major fault).
4. No display and unresponsive to intruder (severe fault).

JUDGING AIDS



For General, Finnacle, or Color/Special Traits, deduct points as noted for the following:

- Slight Faults..... 3 points**
- Minor Faults..... 5 points**
- Major Faults..... 9 points**
- Severe Faults..... 17 points**
- Disqualifying Faults.....Disqualify**



Outline of non-paired fins shows a nearly circular shape