

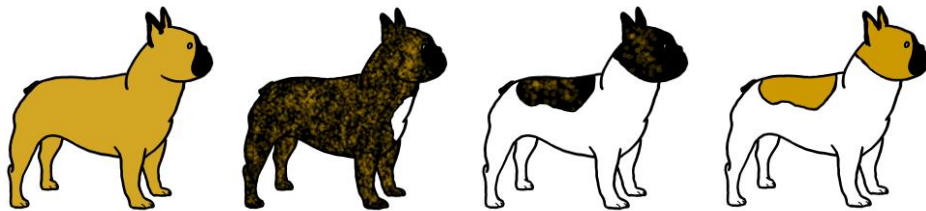
French Bulldog

(Bouledogue Français)

Coat colours according to the FCI breed standard

Standard FCI N° 101

17.04.2015



Admissible Colours
Faults and Disqualifications

Jakko BROERSMA
Raerd (NL), February 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The colour definition for the French Bulldog has been changed several times since the first FCI breed standard was written in the early 1880's. Next to that it differs on several aspects from breed standards of other kennel clubs around the world like for instance the American Kennel Club or the English Kennel Club. Although the different standards are basically equal regarding the coat colour– the French Bulldog usually is described as fawn, brindled or pied – several details in the definitions, faults and disqualifications ensure a diversity of interpretations among the FCI, AKC, KC and other kennel clubs. The FCI breed standard for the French Bulldog was revised on several areas in 2014 and was published on April 17th in French and English. Also the colour definition was revised extensively this time. Starting point of this essay is the original French FCI standard (FCI N° 101). This because to my surprise there are some small translation errors in the official English version.

Whenever we talk about the French Bulldog's 'colour' we usually mean the colour of its coat. It is important to state that because the breed standard also describes some other areas of colour, namely; the colour of the eyes, the eye rims, the nose, the lips and the nails. Next to that the starting point is that we relate to 'accepted' colours when talk about coat colour. This because there are numerous other colours besides the accepted colours and the breed standard only refers to two types of coat colour; (accepted-) colours and disqualifying colours. In contrary to breed standards of some other breeds, the French Bulldog's breed standard does not have any 'undesirable' colours. There is one preference and several faults but those relate to varieties within the accepted colours. So; a French Bulldog's coat colour is either accepted or disqualifying, that is very clear.

The coat colour is mentioned at several places in the breed standard. First of all there is the overall colour description which is clarified in a few paragraphs. These paragraphs consist of all acceptable colours for the French Bulldog and is mentioned under 'COAT'. Next to that the coat colour is mentioned under 'FAULTS' and 'DISQUALIFYING FAULTS'

Next to the coat colours, the colours of the eyes, the eye rims, the nose, the lips and the nails are defined. You'll find this under; 'HEAD', 'COAT', 'FAULTS', 'SEVERE FAULTS' and 'DISQUALIFYING FAULTS'. In some cases I will discuss those. I will not discuss the colour of the eyes and nails.

In this essay the text in the gray boxes is the text as I have translated it from the original French breed standard which you can find here: [FCI N° 101 FR](#). This is NOT the exact text from the official English FCI translation which you will find here: [FCI N° 101 ENG](#). This because of the translation errors I mentioned before. In Appendix I you'll find the differences between the original translations and the translations used in this essay.

2. ADMISSABLE COLOURS:

First of all the standard defines the colour in a general way ¹⁾:

- ***Colour: fawn, brindled or not, with or without white spotting.***

And then divides the acceptable colours in a few groups:

First 'brindle' and 'fawn':

- **Coat without white spotting:**
 - **Brindle:** *Fawn coat moderately characterized by transversal dark brindling creating a 'tiger-marked' effect, strongly brindled coats must not cover out the fawn ground colour. A black mask may be present. Limited white spotting is admissible.*
 - **Fawn:** *Solid coat, from light fawn to dark fawn, sometimes presenting a paler colouring of the inclined parts, with or without a black mask, although masked subjects are preferred. Sometimes accompanied by limited white spotting.*

Second; 'pied' and 'fawn en white':

- **Coat with white spotting:**
 - **Brindled with moderate or predominant white spotting:** *So-called 'pied', the spotting being ideally distributed over the entire subject. Some blotches on the skin are admissible.*
 - **Fawn with moderate or predominant white spotting:** *So-called 'fawn and white', the spotting being ideally distributed over the entire dog. Some blotches of the skin are tolerated.*

And additionally:

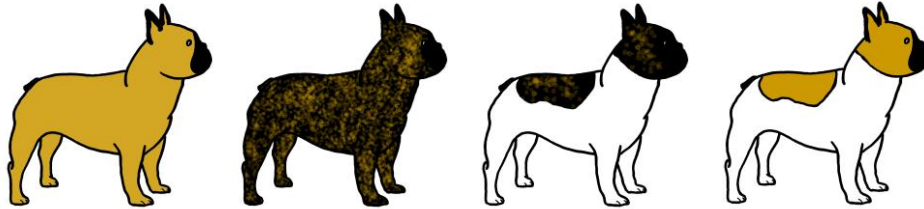
- *The nose is always black, in all coat colours, never brown or blue. The all-white subjects (in which the white spotting is complete) - provided the edge of eyelids and nose are black - are admitted but not bred for, because of a risk of deafness.*

¹⁾ See Appendix I for differences in translations between this and the original English version of the French breed standard.

From the forgoing text, the admissible colours are as follows:

2.a COLOUR

***Fawn, brindled or not, with or without white spotting
(general definition)***



2.b BRINDLE

Brindle with black mask:



Brindle without black mask:

(this is not always visible on the darker dogs)



Brindle with limited white spotting:

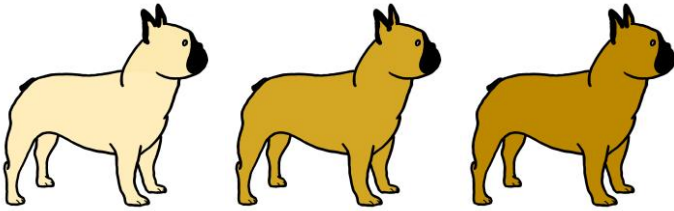
(can be seen in all variations of the brindle coat, with or without black mask)

For instance; white on the chest, the neck or the middle of the head.

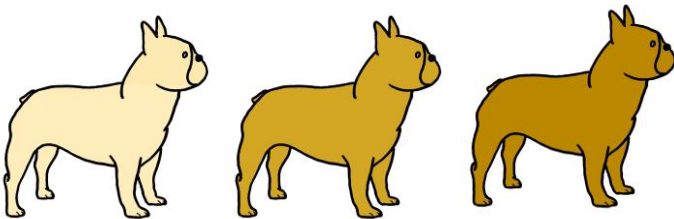


2.c FAWN

Fawn, from light to dark, with black mask (preferred):

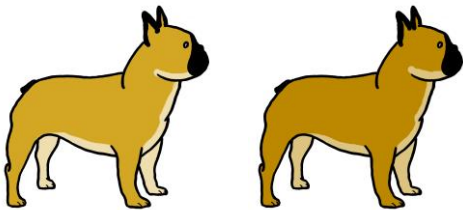


Fawn, from light to dark, without black mask):



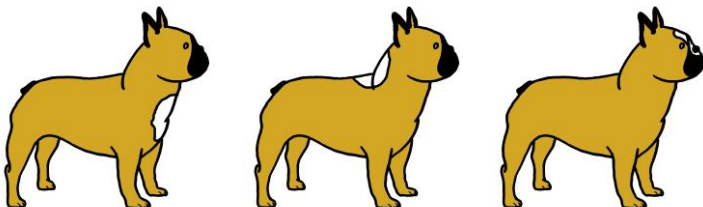
Sometimes presenting a paler colouring of the inclined parts:

(Not always visible on the lighter dogs and can be seen in all variations of the fawn coat, with or without black mask)



Fawn with limited white spotting:

(can be seen in all variations of the fawn coat, with or without black mask)



2.d BRINDLED WITH MODERATE OR PREDOMINANT WHITE SPOTTING

Pied:

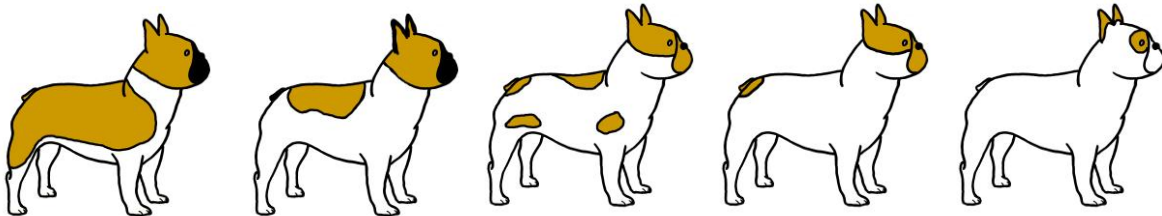
(all previous mentioned variations of brindle can be seen, with or without black mask)



2.e FAWN WITH MODERATE OR PREDOMINANT WHITE SPOTTING

Fawn en White:

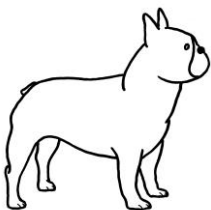
(all previous mentioned variations of fawn can be seen, with or without black mask)



Additional:

All white:

The all-white subjects (in which the white spotting is complete) - provided the edge of eyelids and nose are black - are admitted.



3. FAULTS:

All specifically named errors which relate to colour. NOTE: These are NOT disqualifying or eliminating faults.

- **Faults:**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

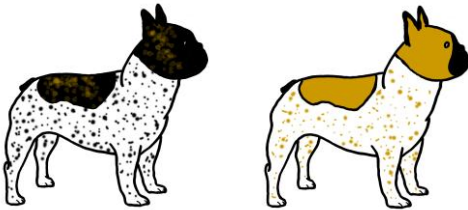
- *Strongly speckled pied coat*
- *Strongly speckled fawn and white coat*
- *In fawn coats, strong dorsal band extending along the spine*
- *White socks ('balzane') in brindles and fawns*
- *Light coloured nails*

I will not go into white coloured nails in this essay.

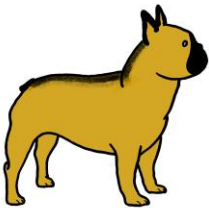
FAULTS:

Strongly speckled pied- and fawn and white coat:

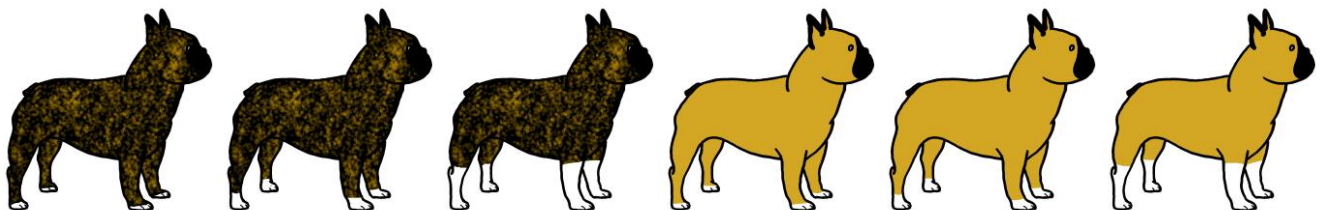
(it is the coat which is speckled, this does not refer to the skin)



In fawn coats, strong dorsal band extending along the spine:



White socks ('balzane') in brindles and fawns:



4. DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

Finally the standard defines the disqualifications regarding colour as follows:

- **Disqualifying faults [regarding colour]:**

Coat colour not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard, especially black, black with fawn markings and all dilutions of black with or without white spotting.

Disqualifying faults:

Coat colour not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard,

This leaves little room for discussion. Only fawn, brindle, pied and also fawn and white – with a few small variations like limited white spotting, with or without a black mask and all white - are admissible. I will further go into this later.

Still, the standard defines some disqualifying colours in particular:

.... especially; black, black with fawn markings [black & tan]....

NOTE: *very young dogs can appear to be totally black. However; later on in life they usually will develop a brindled pattern.*



Black



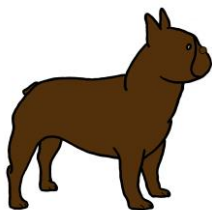
*Black with Fawn markings
Black & Tan*

.... and all dilutions of black

(in which the colour of the nose corresponds with the colour of the coat and therefore other than black)



Blue, Mouse gray

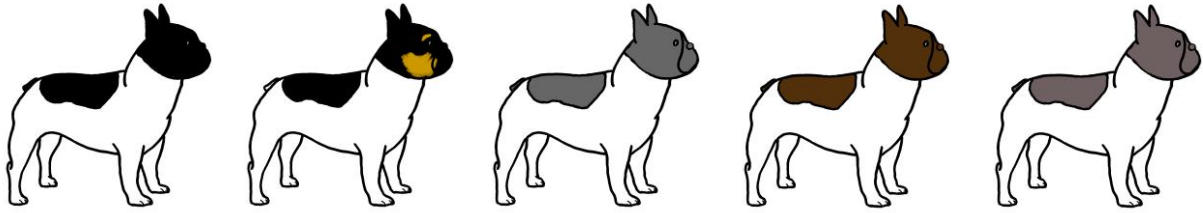


Brown, Liver, Choco



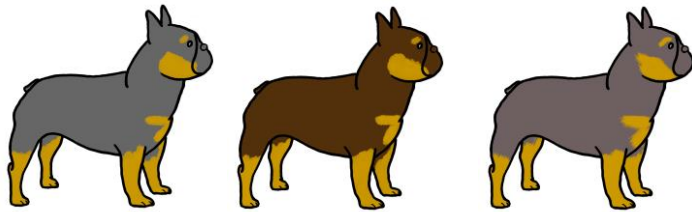
Lilac, Silver

.... with or without white spotting.

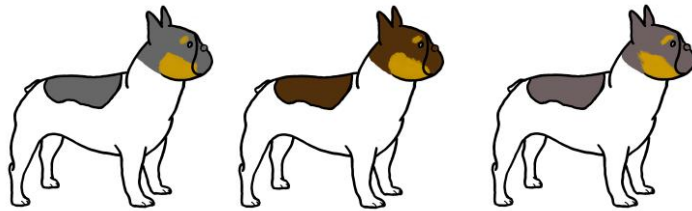


(Black & White, Black & Tan & White, Blue & White, Brown & White, Lilac & White)

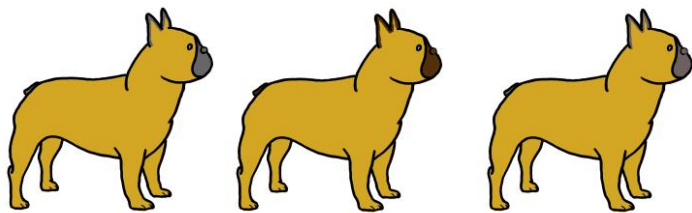
4.a Variations on disqualifying faults;



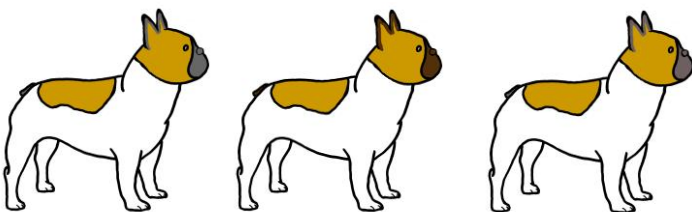
- Blue & Tan Brown & Tan Lilac & Tan



- Fawn and White with Blue mask, Fawn and White with Brown mask, Fawn and White with Lilac mask



- Fawn with Blue mask, Fawn with Brown mask, Fawn with Lilac mask



- Blue & Tan and White, Brown & Tan and White, Lilac & Tan and White

NOTE:

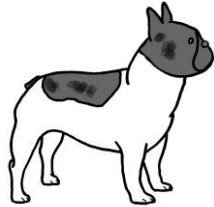
The last 6 variations can also be seen without mask, in that case only the nose is blue, brown or lilac [also see 6.a]. These variations in particular are very hard to identify.

4.b Merle - also a dilution of black

Merle is an uneven dilution of black pigment, and therefore a disqualifying fault as well. Merle can be seen in most coat colours (except in red and variations of red), so there are too many possible variations with merle to discuss here. And next to that; one must strongly doubt the fact if the Merle dogs are pure-bred. Just a few examples:



Blue Merle



Blue Merle Pied



Choco Merle

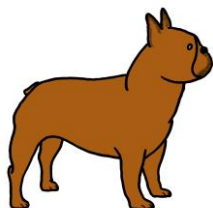
5. ADDITIONAL NON-ADMISSIBLE COAT COLOURS

To return to the definition:

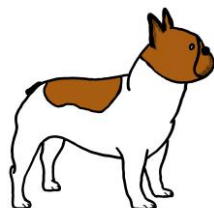
‘Coat colour not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard’

Among others, this includes colours which are (genetically-) different from fawn. Two colours which fit the definition ‘Coat colour not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard’ but are not specifically mentioned are ‘red’ and ‘cream’. Cream is the lighter variation of red, whether or not influenced by underlying genetics. Red and cream can also be seen in combination with white, i.e. ‘red and white’ or ‘cream and white’. Both red and cream are subject to a lot of discussion because they can easily be confused with either dark- or light fawn without mask. Sometimes the very light creams can be confused with white.

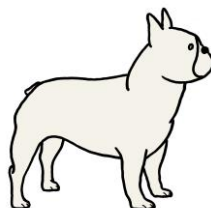
5.a Red and Cream:



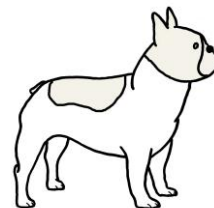
Red



Red and White



Cream

Cream and White
‘Honey Pied’

Important features of red and cream;

- Black markings around the nose and lips. However; this is skin colour instead of coat colour.
- No black mask
- No lighter colour of the inclined parts of the body
- Merle is not visible in these colours.

5.b Explanation Regarding Red and Cream:

Why are ‘red’ and ‘cream’ not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard?

Without getting into any difficult details regarding specific genetics; I will try to explain why red and cream are disqualifying faults. According to the standard the dogs should be fawn, brindled or not, with or without white spotting. The word ‘fawn’ is crucial here. The red coat (and cream, as it is a dilution of red) may sometimes look like fawn, that is definitely not the case. Genetically the red and cream coats are totally different from fawn and next to that; it does not allow any black pigment in the hairs (although black pigment in the skin is mostly present). A red (or cream) dog therefore never has a black mask. And if black markings are present around the nose and lips and sometimes the ears; those are markings in the skin, not the hairs. Furthermore; a red coat will usually not have any lighter colour of the inclined parts of the body. Because black pigment in the hairs is not possible in red and cream, some typical features of the fawn coat are absent. Next to the absence of a black mask, there is no black tail, no dorsal band along the spine and no black ears. Small but important differences.

It is important to note that it is sometimes not possible to objectively discriminate between a fawn, red or cream coat. However; it does not alter the fact that red and cream are not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard and therefore are disqualifying faults.

6. OTHER DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

Next to the disqualifying faults for coat colours, the standard also defines a disqualifying colour for the nose - which has a direct link to the colour of the coat.

- **Disqualifying faults [regarding colour]:**
Colour of nose other than black

6.a Colour of the nose other than black:

In many cases the colour of the nose has a direct relation to the colour of the coat. All dilutions of black influence the colour of the nose, in which the colour is in accordance with the colour of the coat. This is the case in blue, brown, lilac and merle. Therefore, dogs with these disqualifying coat colours have yet another disqualifying feature; the colour of their nose. Regarding colour variations which are defined by ‘disqualifying fault’ and which are hard to identify; the colour of the nose can be decisive. However; this is NOT the case in black, red and cream dogs. They usually have a normal black nose.

NOTE: excessive depigmentation of the nose – in which the nose is partly white – is not a disqualifying fault. In the breed standard this is defined as a ‘severe fault’, together with excessive depigmentation of the lips and the edges of the eye lids.

APPENDIX I

DIFFERENCES IN TRANSLATIONS:

While studying this new standard I quickly noticed some ‘strange’ words in the original English version. The first one I noticed was ‘Coat with colouring’ for generally defining the brindle and fawn coat colour. So, I compared the French and English versions and was surprised to find some translation errors. These are the differences in translation in the paragraphs I used in this essay (some are trivial, others are truly important);

Original French: Robes sans panachures

Original English: Coat **with** colouring

I translated this to: Coat **without** white spotting

- *With or without spotting (or colouring); that’s a BIG difference.*

Original French: Bringé avec panachure blanche moyenne ou envahissante

Original English: Brindled with moderate or **important** white spotting

I translated this to: Brindled with moderate or **predominant** white spotting

- *Just a small difference, predominant is more common to use.*

Original French: (à panachure totalement envahissante)

Original English: -

I translated this to: (in which the white spotting in complete)

- *In the original English phrase this is completely left out [...].*

Original French: Robe caille fortement mouchetée

Original English: Strongly flecked with **black brindle with white** coat

I translated this to: Strongly **speckled pied** coat

- *Black brindle with white is an incorrect translation for ‘caille’, this should be ‘pied’. And next to that; ‘black brindle’ is confusing in relation to ‘black’, as ‘black’ is a disqualifying fault.*

Original French: Robe fauve et blanc fortement truitée.

Original English: Fawn and white coat strongly **red speckled**

I translated this to: Strongly **speckled** fawn and white coat

- *The word ‘red’ is added in the English translation. Adding this is incorrect and confusing in relation to the colours with what is prescribed in the standard. ‘Red’ is NOT one of them.*

Original French: Pour la robe fauve, raie de mulot très prononcée se prolongeant sur le dos

Original English: In fawn coats, deep black trace extending along the spine

I translated this to: In fawn coats, strong dorsal band extending along the spine

- *Just a small difference; ‘strong dorsal band’ is more common to use.*

Original French: Balzane (chaussette blanche) chez le bringé et le fauve

Original English: White stockings in brindles and fawns

I translated this to: White socks ('blazane') in brindles and fawns

- *The word 'Balzane' is left out in the original English translation and 'chaussette' is incorrectly translated to 'stockings'. Mentioning 'Balzane' is a crucial, it's a word used to describe white on the feet and legs in the broadest sense. From just white toes and/or feet to white socks all the way extending to white stockings. The word 'Balzane' finds its origins in horses; where is used to describe white on the lower legs.*

Original French: Robe non conforme à celles décrites dans le standard, notamment le noir, ...

Original English: **Colour** not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard, **namely** black, ...

I translated this to: **Coat colour** not in accordance with what is prescribed in the standard, **especially** black, ...

- *The differences here lie in the words; 'colour' and 'namely' in the original English translation. By leaving out the word 'coat', the interpretation could be that it is not the coat colour which is defined here but some other feature (nails, eyes etc). And by using 'namely' instead of 'especially' it is suggested that there are no other disqualifying colours then 'black, black with fawn markings (black and tan) and all dilutions of black with or without white spotting', whilst the French word 'notamment' leaves this option open and therefore should be translated by 'especially'. Small but important differences I think.*