

Modern Game Bantams

The premier consideration in Moderns is, of course, type — a Game Bantam without type or shape is certainly not a true Game Bantam. By type I mean general carriage, etc., which should be tall and racy, with head and tail carried at a nice angle, a long lean head (termed "snaky") that is narrow and gracefully curved, with bright red face: in Black-reds, Pyles, Duckwings, prominent bright red eye; Brown-reds and Birchens, deep black.

The neck should be long and slender with close fitting hackle, which tends to bring out the shoulders to much greater advantage. The shoulder butts should stand out squarely and the wings be short and nicely curved, just meeting at the stern, fine and small at the tail roots, the tail fine and small, whipped closely together, two main sickle feathers to be as fine as possible.

Thighs should be well set apart, as this affects greatly the Game-like look of the movements of the fowl; shanks long, round, straight and fine, clear and smooth, the feet and toes straight and sound, the hind toe carried straight out exactly opposite the middle toe. For the back toe to be carried sideways is a serious defect, as to breed from a Bantam faulty or duckfooted means that the majority of the progeny will have the same fault.

A well-trained Modern is always on his toes reaching for the top of his coop, and one that cannot stretch up and follow the judge's stick is useless. Hardness of feather is desirable in all colors; that is often the result of feeding, but careful breeding is the best manner to attain this object.

Double-mating is the most expensive method of breeding, providing as it does only exhibition cockerels from one mating and pullets from the other. In the cockerel mating the females are only good for breeding and from the pullet mating only the cockerels are useful for breeders.

These particular specimens are invariably difficult to sell to the ordinary breeder because he does not appreciate their value; 80 per cent of purchasers desire only show stock and they certainly do not stop to consider the breeding possibilities of such specimens at all.

Whether one intends to single or doublemate, be sure to line-breed, for that is one of the most important factors in establishing a real line of any breed. In singlemating always select the most vigorous fowls as near as possible to the standard requirements.

In selecting the breeding pens success or failure will depend upon individual skill. Much depends on the male, especially color and size. I prefer the male to be very small and neat in body, with shoulders carried very prominently,

It is of no use mating together Bantams that possess the same faults. For instance, if the male is

inclined to be long in back, the females must be extra short; or if the females fail in reach , then the male must be exceptionally good in this respect.

A female that is very tall, with a good front, and is, as many of the very tall specimens are, too long in body, must be mated to a very short-backed male, even if he should be a bit short of limb.

In breeding and hatching I always pedigree my stock by marking all eggs laid with the pen number, visiting the nests very frequently to mark the chicks as they hatch. If they should hatch during the night or when I am away from home I put any eggs not hatched under other broody hens and when hatched I mark them and return to their own mother, and then enter them in my pedigree book for future reference when mating time comes around again.

I find the best time to hatch Modern Game bantam chicks is during the month of May, but even if some are hatched as late as July it will repay the breeder for his trouble in rearing them as they will be small and will be the ones that are in the prize money the following year. Those hatched in the early months of the year grow too large.

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