

AZAWAKH

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2020

ORIGIN

Northern borders of Mali and Niger; the slopes of the Azawakh valley.
(Patronage: France).

UTILISATION

Sighthound that hunts for game (gazelle, hares, ostriches) and fights off predators (hyenas, jackals, lions). This dog is an important companion for the family life of the nomads and shares their camp life.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

It is an African Sighthound descending from the types pictured in the wall paintings of the Central Sahara that date back thousands of years. The ever-increasing aridity of the Sahara caused the Tuareg, Dahoussahaq, and Peul shepherd-hunters to migrate with their dogs to the more hospitable lands of the Sahel: in areas suitable for farming and hunting along the dry valley of the Azawakh. Belonging to the culture of peoples who domesticated and shaped it, it is known as "Oska" in the Tuareg language. European enthusiasts discovered the breed with admiration and selected dogs, with the help of the breeders who owned the first lines, and exported them to Europe around 1968.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Particularly slim and elegant, the Azawakh Sighthound gives a general impression of great slenderness. Its bone structure and muscles show through thin and dry skin. It is a slender dog whose body fits into a rectangle with a vertical long side.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Height at the withers / scapulo-ischial [fed. point of shoulder to point of buttock] length: 10 : 9 (a ratio slightly lower in females is allowed)
- Height at the withers / depth of chest: 10 : 4.
- Length of head / length of muzzle: 10 : 5.
- Head length / Width of skull: 10 : 4.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Quick, attentive, distant, can be very reserved with strangers, but it can be gentle and affectionate with its family and people whom it is willing to accept.

HEAD

Long, fine, lean, and chiselled, rather narrow, without excess.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Almost flat, rather long, its width should be significantly less than half the length of the head. The line of skull and the bridge of the muzzle are sometimes slightly divergent.

Superciliary arches: Superciliary arches and the frontal furrow are slightly marked. The external occipital protuberance is clearly pronounced.

Stop: Very slightly marked.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black or dark brown colour is obligatory; the nostrils are well-opened.

Muzzle: Long, straight, tapered without exaggeration towards the end.

Lips: Thin lips tightly fitting, colour is black or dark brown, no hanging lips.

Cheeks: Flat.

Jaws and teeth: Jaws are long and strong; scissor bite. Complete set of teeth.

Eyes:

Almond eyes, rather large, slightly oblique palpebral opening [*ed. the upper and lower eyelids, which make up the shape of the eye*], colour is dark, sometimes amber, never blue. Eye-rims well-black or dark brown pigmented.

Ears:

Set quite high. They are fine, always drooping and flat, broad-based, lie flat against the cheeks, never rose-eared. The shape is that of a triangle with a rounded tip. The base of the ear pricks up when the Sighthound is attentive.

NECK

Neck springing cleanly from the shoulders, long, fine, and muscular, with upper end slightly arched. The skin is fine and does not form a dewlap.

BODY

Topline: Straight, approximately horizontal or slightly rising from the withers towards the point of the hips. Hips clearly protruding and placed at the same height or higher than the height of the withers.

Withers: Distinctively prominent.

Loin: Short and dry.

Croup: Oblique (ideally 45°).

Chest: Deep, well let down almost to the elbows, sternal region gently narrowing. Forechest fairly narrow.

Ribs: Long, slightly visible, gently and evenly sprung.

Underline and belly: The sternal arch [*ed. curve of chest*] is pronounced. The underline rises smoothly into the belly which is tucked-up very high.

TAIL

Set low, long, thin, lean, and tapered. Covered with the same type of hair as the body, it often has a white pencil hair on the end. The tail hangs with the tip slightly raised, but it can rise above the horizontal when the dog is excited.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Long, thin, vertical. Perfect stand.

Shoulder: Long shoulder blade, with dry muscles and only slightly oblique, viewed in profile.

Upper arm: The scapulo-humeral angle is very open (about 130°).

Metacarpus (pastern): Slightly oblique.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Long and lean legs; viewed from behind, perfectly parallel.

Upper thigh: Long with dry, protruding muscles. Coxo-femoral angle [*ed. hip joint*] is very open (about 130°).

Stifle (knee): Femoro-tibial angle is very open (about 145°).

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Tarsus and metatarsus lean, without dewclaws.

FEET

Forefeet: Rounded, with slender digits, tight, and well-arched. The pads are pigmented.

Hind feet: Rounded, toes well-arched, pads pigmented.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Always very supple and with high action when walking and trotting. The gallop is springy. The Azawakh gives an impression of lightness, even elasticity. The movement is an essential characteristic of the breed.

SKIN

Thin and tight-fitting.

COAT

Hair short, fine, and down to none on the belly.

COLOUR

- Fawn, with or without brindle, with white patching limited to the extremities.
- All shades are admitted, clear sand to dark fawn (mahogany).
- Brindle stripes should be black, excluding any other shade. The muzzle can present a black mask.
- **White patching:**
 - The blaze is very inconstant.
 - On the forechest, white may be present as white patches, more or less extensively, confined to the base of the neck. Yet, a narrow white stripe is permitted on the forepart of the neck, on the forechest and on the lower part of the chest.
 - The bib should not extend past the point of the shoulder or go up on each side of the neck. A small white spot on the nape of the neck, of reduced size, is tolerated.
 - As a continuation of the forechest, white spots can appear below the chest, but must not, in any case, go up the ribs.
 - Each of the four limbs has a white stocking, at least as a trace on the feet. On a subject having excellent morphology, the lack of white on one limb is allowed.
 - The white marks on the forequarters, often irregular, should not extend beyond the elbows, or encroach on the shoulders.
 - The white marks on the hindquarters, often more regular and less invasive, should not go up to the thigh. White marks appearing on the inner side of the thigh, however, should not be considered a fault.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 64cm – 74cm (approx. 25" – 29").

Females: 60cm – 70cm (approx. 23½" – 27½").

A margin of 2cm (under 1") above and below the standard is tolerated.

Weight:

Males: 20kg – 25kg.

Females: 15kg – 20kg.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

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, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Severe faults:

- Head heavy, lacking elegance.
- Tail thick and hairy, very curled tail.
- Body too long.
- Level bite

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Lack of type.
- Overly small chest and extreme general thinness.
- Underbite or overbite.
- Nose, eyelids, and lips other than black or dark brown.
- Light eyes or blue eyes.
- Rose ears.
- Hips lower than the withers.
- Non-accidental anatomical deformation (e.g. asymmetrical junction of the ribs at the sternum).
- Presence of dewclaws or traces of removal of dewclaws on hind legs.
- Wire or semi-long coat.
- Non-standard coat colours (invasive white, white collar, brindle other than black). Beware of diluted colours such as blue, lilac.
- Every dog that shows traces of a surgical intervention meant to correct or repair an aesthetical or morphological fault will be excluded.
- Size deviating more than 3cm (approx. 1") from the standard.

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FCI Standard No 307: AZAWAKH

FCI Classification: Group 10 – Sighthounds

Section 3. Short-haired Sighthounds.

Without Working Trial