

AMERICAN BULLY

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01.03.2026.

ORIGIN

United States of America. Patronage: South Africa (Standard supplied by the Kennel Union of Southern Africa).

UTILISATION

The American Bully was primarily bred as a companion breed and developed to be a loyal, stable and affectionate family-orientated dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Developed in the late 20th century, the American Bully breed came about as a result of careful crossbreeding between bull-type breeds. The goal was to create a breed with a confident behaviour, robust construction and friendly disposition. Their distinctive head features, strong jaws, and well-defined musculature make them instantly recognisable. They represent a harmonious blend of strength, loyalty, and companionship, making them a cherished part of families and communities around the world. As the American Bully breed continues to gain popularity, it is essential to prioritise their physical and mental well-being, thereby to ensure their overall health and longevity.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Possesses a robust and powerful physique. Its body is well-proportioned and compact, displaying strength and agility. An athlete with a broad chest and defined muscles, absolute balance and the correct proportions are essential. It should show no signs of frailty or weak bones. The dog's powerful frame is complemented by a wide, strong head and a thick neck, giving them a bold and imposing appearance. The head should be well proportioned to the body, free of exaggeration, so as not to compromise breathing or obstruct normal vision. Balance and harmony of the set are critical components of the breed.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The body is close-coupled, compact and appears square from point of shoulder to point of buttocks.
- The length of the muzzle is shorter than the length of the skull, the ratio being between 1:2 and 2:3.
- The distance from the withers to the elbow is equal to the distance from the elbow to ground.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

The American Bully is recognised for its exceptional temperament and demeanour, with great devotion to their families. Despite its strong and muscular appearance, this breed is known for its friendly and affectionate nature. Aggressive behaviour towards people and extreme shyness are not characteristic of the breed and highly undesirable.

HEAD

It is unique and a striking characteristic of the breed – a combination of strength and power. The American Bully's head is large, wide, and well-defined, giving it a bold and imposing appearance. It is proportional to the body, exuding balance and symmetry.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Large, broad and deep, emphasising the robustness and strength of the breed.

Stop: Well-defined and moderately deep.

Facial Region:

Nose: Large, with wide open nostrils. All colours of the nose are accepted. The colour of the nose is usually in harmony with the colour of the coat.

Muzzle: Wide, solid and square. The length of the muzzle is shorter than the length of the skull, ratio of approximately 1:2 to 2:3 of the total length of the head. The nasal cone is straight, with parallelism of the skull and muzzle.

Lips: The lips are usually tight and firm; slightly loose lips are accepted, but not preferred.

Cheeks: With prominent muscles, some wrinkles may be present.

Jaws and teeth: Well-developed, wide and deep jaw, with a perfect and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. The teeth must be white.

Eyes:

Medium in size, oval to almond-shaped, set well apart and low in the skull. Colour according to coat colouration.

Ears:

High set and semi-erect: rose or tulip. Erect, totally drooping, or wide ears are not desired.

NECK

Short, thick and muscular, slightly arched at the crest. The neck gradually widens from its insertion into the skull to its junction in a well-positioned shoulder. The skin on the neck is without excessive dewlap.

BODY

Compact. The body is close-coupled and appears square. The distance from the withers to the elbow is equal to the distance from the elbows to ground. Dogs that are slightly shorter from elbow to ground are acceptable, but not desirable.

Topline: The back is level and straight, loins are wide and short with the croup sloping slightly downwards to the base of the tail. The topline should be muscular.

Back: Flat.

Loin: Broad, short and muscular. Slightly arched towards the rump, but narrower than the rib cage.

Croup: The rump is slightly rounded and the croup slopes slightly down to the base of the tail. The rear is wide, strong and firm.

Chest: Wide and deep. The chest can be wider than it is deep, but without exaggeration. The forechest does not extend far in front of the tip of the shoulder.

Ribs: Well-arched.

Underline and belly: Moderately tucked up.

TAIL

The characteristic tail, crank- or pump-handle tail, reaches almost to the hock. Straight tails are also acceptable. Inserted into the natural continuation of the topline and tapering to the tip. On the move, the tail is carried level with the top-line. When excited, the tail may be carried slightly higher, but never over the back. When standing and relaxed, the tail is carried low, reaching approximately to the hock.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Strong and muscular, with strong round bone.

Shoulder: long, wide, muscular and well laid back.

Upper arm: approximately the same length as the scapula, forming an apparent right angle.

Elbows: close to the body or slightly away from the body.

Forelegs: Strong round bone. Viewed from the front, the legs are moderately broad and spread apart, perpendicular to the ground. A slight "French hand" outward is accepted, but should not exceed 10 degrees in a clockwise position.

Carpus (Wrist): Strong-boned.

Metacarpus (pastern): Pasterns short, powerful, flexible, and nearly erect.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: The hindquarters are very powerful, strong, muscular, and broad. Width of the hindquarters should be in balance with the forequarters.

Thigh: The thighs and rump are covered by developed musculature.

Stifle (Knee): Knees well-angled in harmony with the forequarters, with extremely well-developed thighs and well-defined muscles.

Lower thigh: Well-developed and muscular

Hock joint: Strong and well-angled.

Metatarsals (Pastern): The pasterns are perpendicular to the ground. Seen from behind, straight and parallel.

FEET

Forefeet: The toes should be close together, round and tight, and well-proportioned to the leg and bone.

Hind feet: The paws are thick, round, tightly closed and proportional to the size of the dog. Well arched.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Moves with a jaunty, confident attitude, giving the impression that he expects something new and exciting at any minute. When trotting, the movement is effortless, powerful and well-coordinated, showing good reach and drive. When moving the top-line remains level with only a slight flexibility to indicate suppleness. Seen from any position, legs do not turn outwards or inwards; the legs do not cross or interfere with each other. At speed, the paws tend to approach the midline of the body.

SKIN

Thin and smooth.

COAT

Hair:

The coat is short, glossy and smooth, lying close and moderately harsh to the touch.

Colour:

All colours, markings, or colour combinations are allowed, except merle.

SIZE

Total balance and the correct ratio of weight and height is much more important than appropriate measurements. Two varieties of breed, both with the same characteristics except for the size, are currently recognised:

Pocket:

Males: 35.1cm – 43cm (approx. 13.8" – 16.9").

Females: 33.1cm – 40.5cm (approx. 13" – 15.9").

Standard:

Males: 43.1cm – 51cm (approx. 16.9" – 20").

Females: 40.6cm – 48cm (approx. 15.9" – 18.8").

Note: Every puppy or young dog up to 12 months is considered to be of the Standard variety for the purpose of assessment.

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.

- Weak bone.
- Insufficient musculature.
- Twisted, knotted, excessively long or short tail, or curled tail.
- Blue, either one or both eyes.
- Excessively visible haw.
- Bulging or protruding eyes.
- Neck that is too thin or weak.
- Concave or ewe neck.
- Excessive flews.
- Excessive cutting, grooming and styling of coat.
- Curly, wavy or sparse coat.
- Legs with excess reach, crossing excessively in the forequarters and hindquarters; hind legs moving too close or touching each other; "camel step", "padding", walking sideways ("crab step"), "hackney" movement, hitting on the ground.
- Bowed legs.

Severe Faults:

- Lower or higher prognathism.
- Mandibular torsion.
- Missing teeth.
- Nose turning up, pushed back, or pinched nostrils.
- Narrow hindquarters.
- Knees straight with little angle.

Disqualifying Faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs
- Tail docked, bobbed, screwed, kinked, knotted or fused.
- Long coat.
- Albinism.
- Neutered dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.

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This breed is not yet recognised by the FCI