

BORZOI RUSSIAN HUNTING SIGHTHOUND

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 01/01/2021

ORIGIN

Russia.

UTILISATION

Hunting Sighthound, racing, and coursing Hound. The Borzoi is a hunting Sighthound to be used mostly for chasing hare and fox, less for wolf hunting. Combines high agility with endurance and the ability to tackle game deftly at once. Successfully used for coursing and racing.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The history of the Borzoi dates from the 15th century, to the Mongol invasion. The Tatars used Sighthounds of Arab origin – Koutsis – while the Russian hunters did not have Sighthounds; when hunting, they used extraordinarily strong Loshaya dogs, which were able to catch and kill a deer or even an elk. Koutsis and Loshaya crossbred dogs became the prototype of the Borzoi. These dogs were depicted on the prayer book belonging to Grand Prince Vasily III, Ivan the Terrible's father. In the 16th and 17th centuries, new blood from the Polsky Chart (Polish Greyhound) added nobility to their descendants. Having grown fame, these dogs crossed the borders of the Russian Empire. Further development of the breed was influenced by cross-breeding with the Klock – a huge, strong, and fierce bearded Courland Sighthound. Their descendants became dogs without beards, with long, fine hair. They marked the beginning of "Gustopsovy" Borzoi type. The blood of Greyhounds, added to the breed at the same time, initiated the appearance of "Chistopsovy" Borzoi type. Bloodlines from Mountain (Gorsky) and Crimean Sighthounds, known for their endurance, were used later. The Borzoi was the result of this multi-breed crossing. The vigilance, agility, and expedition of the Borzoi in pursuing the game, its ability to flash-like rush, to tackle the game deftly at once, its savageness and courage; all these important qualities proved to be very useful when hunting the game in short in irregular terrain. Borzois were also successfully used for hunting in the Steppes, where it was required to work on longer distances. Hunt with large packs of Sighthounds and Hounds, and with special horses – "hunters", appeared in the 18th to 19th centuries. Such hunts consisted of up to several hundred dogs, and differed from one another in type and working abilities. The Pershino hunt by Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich was especially renowned, for both the exquisite beauty of the dogs, and their speed and passion for the game. The first Congress of Borzoi-lovers was organised in 1874, but only in 1888, the Moscow Hunting Society adopted the first breed standard of the Borzoi, where a type of the Borzoi was unified after all. N.P. Yermolov was the author of this breed standard. The fundamental principles of this standard still remain the same despite changes made in the 20th and 21st centuries.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Dog of aristocratic appearance, tall, lean, and strong, harmoniously built, rather high-legged, fairly narrow in body. Slightly elongated format. Females are longer than males. Skin is thin, elastic, without folds. Muscles lean, elongated, very well-developed. Bone structure is strong but not massive.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- In males, the height at the withers is equal or 1cm – 2cm (approx. ½" – under 1") more than the height at the point of sacrum. In females, these two heights are equal.
- The length of the body somewhat exceeds the height at the withers.
- The depth of the chest is equal to almost half of the height at the withers.
- The height at elbows is slightly superior to half of the height at the withers.
- The length of the muzzle, from the tip of the nose to the stop, is slightly superior to that of the skull, from the stop to the occipital bone.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is calm; visual response is well-evident. Typical gaits: before the game is found – slow trot and even walk; in chasing the game – full gallop. The attitude towards people is neutral to friendly.

HEAD

Aristocratic, narrow, long, in proportion to the general appearance; the head is so lean that the principal veins are shown through the skin. Viewed from the side, the topline of the head forms a long, slightly convex line.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Seen from above, narrow, elongated, oval-shaped. Seen in profile, almost flat. Occiput is well-pronounced.

Superciliary arches: Superciliary arches and zygomatic arches are not pronounced.

Stop: Hardly visible.

Facial Region:

Nose: Large, always black in any coat colour, considerably prominent in relation to the lower jaw.

Muzzle: Long, lean, well-filled out in all its length, straight, or slightly down-faced, slightly arched near the nose. The length of the muzzle, from the tip of the nose to the stop, is slightly superior to that of the skull, from the stop to the occiput.

Lips: Tight, well-fitting, fine, with black edging whatever the coat colour.

Cheeks: Flat, not pronounced.

Jaws and teeth: Teeth white, strong, incisors are closely spaced; canines are not too wide apart. Scissor bite. Level bite is permitted but not desirable. Complete dental formula. The absence of 3rd molars (M3) and one or two P1 is acceptable

Eyes:

Large, almond-shaped, dark brown to brown; eyelids are with black edging, tight-fitting.

Ears:

Small, thin, mobile, pointed-tipped, covered with short hair. Set-on above the eye level, set closely and backwards, pointing towards the nape of the neck. The tips of the ears are placed near each other, directed downwards along the neck and close to it. When the dog is alert, the ears are carried higher on the cartilages; their tips are directed sideward or forward. Sometimes one or both ears are erect like horse ears.

NECK

Long, dry, muscled, slightly arched, oval-shaped (slightly flattened laterally), of medium set.

BODY

Topline: A smooth arch.

Withers: Not marked.

Back: Broad, muscled, supple, flexible.

Loin: Rather long, arched, muscled, broad. Together with the back, forms the smooth arch, which is more pronounced in males than in females. The highest point of this arch is in its middle, that is, the region of the 1st or 2nd lumbar vertebrae.

Croup: Long, broad, moderately sloping. The width of the croup measured between the two iliac tubers [*ed. hip bones*] must not be less than 8cm (approx. 3").

Chest: Oval in cross-section, deep, not narrow, yet not wider than the croup, let down almost up to the elbow joints. Viewed from the side, the forechest is somewhat prominent and places almost at humero-scapula level [*ed. at the point of shoulder*]. In the shoulder blade region, the chest is rather flat, but towards the false ribs it grows gradually wider. Definitely shortened false ribs.

Underline and belly: Abruptly tucked-up towards the flanks.

TAIL

Sickle- or sabre-shaped, thin, long, with dense, and abundant feather. Passed between the hind legs and flanks, it must reach up to the iliac tuber. When the dog is standing naturally, the tail hangs downwards. In movement, it is raised, but not above the back level.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Forelegs lean, muscled, seen from the front perfectly straight and parallel. Shoulder muscles are well-developed. The height at elbows slightly superior to half of the height at the withers.

Shoulder: Shoulder blades are long and oblique.

Upper arm: Long, moderately oblique. Angle of the scapular-humeral articulation [*ed. at the point of shoulder*] is well-pronounced.

Elbow: In parallel planes to the median plane of the body or slightly turned out ("in field").

Forearm: Long, clean, of oval cross-section; seen from the front, narrow; seen from the side, broad; points of elbows strongly developed.

Metacarpus (pastern): Rather long, slightly oblique.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Lean, bony, muscled; well-angulated. Seen from behind, straight and parallel, set slightly wider than the forequarters. When the dog stands naturally, placed slightly behind. The vertical line dropping from the point of buttock (sciatic tuber) must run along the front edge of the hock and rear pastern (metatarsus). All the articulations are well-angulated. The hindquarter muscles are very well-developed especially on upper thighs.

Upper thigh: Long, strong.

Lower thigh: Strong, as long as the thigh.

Hock joint: Wide, dry, with well-developed heel bone (calcaneum).

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Short, placed vertically, straight.

FEET

Lean, narrow, of elongated oval shape (called "hare-feet"); toes long, arched, tight; nails long, strong, touching the ground.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

In everyday life, the typical gait is the extended, free, easy trot. When hunting the gait is a full-rushing gallop.

SKIN

Thin, elastic, tight-fitting (with no wrinkles).

COAT

Hair long, supple, silky, light, wavy, or forming large curls. Small curls are permitted. The hair of different length on different parts of body: on the head, the ears, and the interior side of the limbs, the hair is very short, close-lying; on the back and the neck, the hair is longer and often wavy; on the outer side of thighs and the sides, is shorter and may form finer curls. The feathering is rather long and shiny. The feather is located on the neck (forming a "ruff"), on the lower side of the chest and belly, on the back side of the forelegs and thighs. The feather is from below the tail; at the tail root, the curls are usual.

COLOUR

- White.
- Pale, of different shadings (red-fawn, grey-fawn, silver-fawn, pale with light-grey shading).
- Light red or light grey at the root of the hair with darker red or grey main colour.
- Red with black overlay, hair often combined with dark muzzle (sable).
- Grey (from ashy to yellowish-grey).
- Brindle: pale, or red, or grey main colour with dark stripes, like stria [*ed. linear marks*] on marble.
- Red.
- Black.
- Transitional colours between red or black.

* All the colours may be solid, pied, and with tans.

* Typically, any colour tends to lighten-up downwards.

* Any colours from white to black in any combination are acceptable, except brown, blue, isabella (lilac) and their shadings, i.e. dilute colours without a black nose.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 75cm – 85cm (approx. 29½" – 33½").

Females: 68cm – 78cm (approx. 26½" – 30½").

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.

- Over- or undersize by 2cm (under 1”) against indicated in the standard.
- The length of the body more than 10% or less than 5% superior to the height at the withers.
- Eyes not big enough; deep-set; round in shape; light (all shades of hazelnut).
- Teeth small; diastemas [*ed. gaps*] between teeth; absence of one or two PM2. Absence of one or more incisor(s) due to injury, if the bite is clearly evaluated.
- Topline is not smooth enough. Pronounced withers. Arch not symmetrical. The highest point of the topline evidently shifted towards the croup.
- Belly insufficiently tucked-up; paunchy, pendulous.
- Tail a bit short, too high in carriage, with lateral deviation, with curled end.
- Abundant flecks on the body of the same shade as the base colour.
- Too straight, furry, dull, tousled coat; fringes and featherings poorly developed; lacking in feathering.
- Equal length of the coat all over the body; coat too harsh in shedding.

Severe faults:

- Head coarse with loose, thick skin; pendulous lips. Seen from the profile, blunt muzzle due to the nose not prominent enough. Very pronounced stop.
- Bleached (not dark enough) colour of nose, eyelids or lips in all colours. Partly depigmented (pink) nose, lips, eyelids (without signs of injuries).
- Eyes small; yellow; weak-sighted; with third eyelid too developed.
- Absence of any teeth not mentioned under “Faults”.
- Ears low-set; not placed closely directed downwards along the nape of the neck; set wide apart; too big; thick, heavy, coarse, with tough cartilage; with rounded tips.
- The length of the body is the length of the body more than 12% or less than 3% superior to the height at the withers. Over- or undersize by more than 2 cm (under 1”).
- Neck set high or low, round in cross-section.
- Sloping topline from well-pronounced withers towards the root of the tail; pronounced roached back, straight back in males.
- Loin narrow, short, too long (the length of the loin is comparable to the length of the back), straight.
- Belly not tucked up.
- Forearms massive, with bones round in cross-section.
- Fleshy feet, rounded or flat, splayed toes.
- Tail short, thick, with no feathering.
- Vivid flecks on the body of different colour than main colour; colour on the body not lightening downwards.
- Abundant coat on entire body, excessive undercoat, rough, hard, bristle coat not in shedding, lack of featherings.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Colour: brown (including cocoa, coffee, chocolate); blue, isabella (lilac), dilute colours with the tip of the nose other than black in colour.
- Completely depigmented (pink) nose, eyelids, lips.
- Eyes: of all shades of grey, green, blue; eyes of different colours.
- Teeth: overshot or undershot; wry mouth. Incomplete incisors, if densely spaced; missing at least one canine, if not broken. Lack of correct interlock of upper and lower canines. Jaws non-locking.
- Legs: knuckling over. Presence of dewclaws.
- Tail: corkscrew, broken (fused vertebrae); docked, even partially.

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FCI Standard No 193: RUSSKAYA PSOVAYA BORZAYA (BORZOI (RUSSIAN HUNTING SIGHTHOUND))

FCI Classification: Group 10 – Sighthounds

Section 1. Long-haired or fringed Sighthounds.

Without Working Trial