

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG

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 01/02/2017

ORIGIN

Switzerland.

UTILISATION

Originally used as a guard-, draught- and cattle dog on farms in the Canton Bern, today also family dog and versatile working dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a farm dog of ancestral origin that was used as a guard and draught dog and for driving cattle in the pre-alpine regions and in the midland areas around Bern. Originally, he was named "Dürrbächler" according to the name of the hamlet and of the inn of Dürrbach, near Riggisberg in the Canton Bern, where these long-haired tri-coloured farm dogs were especially numerous. In 1902, 1904, and 1907, specimens of this breed had already been exhibited at dog shows and, in 1907, some breeders of the region of Burgdorf decided to promote the pure breeding of these dogs by founding the "Schweizerischer Dürrbach-Klub", and fixing the characteristic traits of the breed. In 1910, at a show in Burgdorf, where many farmers of that region brought their Dürrbächler dogs, 107 specimens were shown. From that day onward this dog, renamed "Bernese Mountain Dog", following the example of the other breeds of Swiss Mountain Dogs, became rapidly appreciated all over Switzerland and in the neighbouring parts of Germany. Today the Bernese Mountain Dog is well-known and appreciated all over the world as a family dog thanks to its striking tri-coloured coat and its great adaptability.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Long-haired, tri-coloured, strong, and agile working dog, of above medium size, with sturdily built limbs; harmonious and well-balanced.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Height at withers: length of body (measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock) is 9 : 10, rather compact than elongated.
- Ideal relation of height at withers: depth of chest is 2 : 1.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Self-confident, attentive, vigilant, fearless in everyday situations; good-natured and devoted to his own people, self-assured, and placid towards strangers; of medium temperament, docile.

HEAD

Strong. In size, balanced to general appearance, not too massive.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Viewed from the front and in profile, a little rounded. Frontal furrow hardly marked.

Stop: Well-defined, but without being too pronounced.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black

Muzzle: Strong, of medium length; nasal bridge straight.

Lips: Close-fitting; black.

Jaws and teeth: Strong, complete scissor bite (molars 3 (M3) are not taken into consideration). Pincer bite accepted.

Eyes:

Dark brown, almond-shaped, with close-fitting eyelids. Neither too deep-set nor prominent. Loose eyelids are faulty.

Ears:

Medium-sized, set high, triangular in shape, slightly rounded at the tips. In repose, hanging flat and close to the head. When alert, the rear part of the set-on is raised, while the front edge of the ear remains close to the head.

NECK

Strong, muscular, of medium length.

BODY

Topline: From the neck running slightly downwards to the withers in a harmonious line, then running on straight and level.

Back: Firm, straight, and level.

Loin: Broad and strong; seen from above, slightly less broad than the chest.

Croup: Smoothly rounded.

Chest: Broad and deep, reaching to the elbows; forechest distinctly developed; ribcage of wide-oval section, extending as well back as possible.

Underline and belly: Slightly rising from chest to hindquarters.

TAIL

Bushy, reaching at least to the hocks; hanging straight down when at rest; carried level with back or slightly above when moving.

LIMBS

Strong bones.

Forequarters:

General appearance: Forelegs seen from the front, straight and parallel, standing rather wide apart.

Shoulder: Shoulder blade long, strong, and well laid back, forming an angle with the upper arm – not too obtuse; well-attached to the chest, well-muscled.

Upper arm: Long, set oblique.

Elbow: Close-fitting; neither turned in nor out.

Forearm: Strong, straight.

Metacarpus (pastern): Seen from the side, almost upright, firm; seen from the front, in straight line with the forearm.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Seen from the rear, straight and parallel, not too close.

Upper thigh: Long, broad, strong and well-muscled.

Stifle (knee): Distinctly well-bent.

Lower thigh: Long and oblique.

Hock joint: Strong, well-angulated.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Set almost vertically. Dewclaws to be removed (except in those countries where it is prohibited by law).

FEET

Forefeet:

Short, roundish; with well-knit, well-arched toes. Turned neither in nor out.

Hind feet:

Slightly less arched than forefeet, turned neither in nor out.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Sound and balanced movement in all gaits, covering a lot of ground; free stride reaching well out in front, with good drive from behind; at the trot, coming and going, legs moving forward in a straight line.

COAT

Hair long, shining, straight, or slightly wavy.

COLOUR

- Jet black main colour, with rich tan markings on the cheeks, above the eyes, on all four legs, and on the chest, and with white markings as follows:
 - Clean white symmetrical markings on the head: blaze extending towards the nose on both sides to a muzzle band; the blaze should not reach the tan markings above the eyes, and the white muzzle band should not extend beyond the corners of the mouth.
 - Moderately broad, unbroken white marking on throat and chest.
 - Desirable: white feet, white tip of tail.
 - Tolerated: small white patch on nape of neck, small white anal patch.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 64cm – 70cm (approx. 25" – 27½"); ideal size: 66cm – 68cm (approx. 26" – 27")

Females: 58cm – 66cm (approx. 23" – 26"); ideal size: 60cm – 63cm (approx. 23½" – 25")

***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.

- Unsure behaviour.
- Fine-boned.
- Irregular set of incisors, provided that the bite remains correct.
- Absence of any other teeth than 2 PM1 (premolars 1); the M3 (molars 3) are not taken into consideration.
- Coat: Distinctly curly coat.
- Faults of colour and markings:
 - Absence of white on head.
 - Blaze too large and/or muzzle band reaching noticeably beyond the corners of the mouth.
 - White collar.
 - Large white patch on nape of neck (maximum diameter more than 6cm).
 - White anal patch (maximum size 6cm).
 - White markings on forelegs reaching distinctly beyond half-way of pasterns ("boots").
 - Disturbingly asymmetrical white markings on head and/or chest.
 - Black ticking and stripes within the white on the chest. "Dirty" white (strong spots of pigmentation).
 - Black coat with a touch of brown or red.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Split nose.
- Undershot or overshot mouth, wry mouth.
- One or two blue eyes (wall eye).
- Entropion, ectropion.
- Kinked tail, ring tail.
- Short coat, double coat (Stockhaar).
- Other than tri-coloured coat.
- Other main colour than black.

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FCI Standard No 45: BERNER SENNENHUND, DÜRRBÄCHLER (BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG)

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid type dogs, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs

Section 3. Swiss Mountain and Cattle Dogs
Without Working Trial