

MASTIFF

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 01/01/2018

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Watchdog and security dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 264]

The Mastiff, perhaps not exactly in the form as we know it today, has been with us for many hundreds of years, and played its part in history since well before the Battle of Agincourt, in the early 15th century. Even then, the Mastiff was known for his courage and guarding instincts. It is recorded that, when the Romans invaded Britain, they found a Mastiff-type dog already here, and were so impressed that they took some back to fight in the arenas of Rome. When the Normans came to Britain the Mastiff-type was so common that the French word 'dogue' found its way into the English language. The breed almost became extinct in Britain after the Second World War. Stock was then imported and, since that time, the numerical strength and quality of the breed have taken an upsurge. Combining grandeur with good nature, he is an extremely large dog in both height and girth; broad, and deep in body, full of substance, with large strong bones.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Head, in general outline, giving a square appearance when viewed from any point. Breadth desired, and in ratio to length of whole head and face as 2 : 3. Body broad, deep, long, powerfully built, on legs wide apart and well-set. Muscles sharply defined. Size is desirable, but only if combined with quality, and if absolute soundness is maintained. Height and substance important if both points are proportionately combined.

CHARACTERISTICS

Large, powerful, well-knit frame. A combination of grandeur and courage.

TEMPERAMENT

Calm, affectionate to owners, but capable of guarding. Usually indifferent with strangers; timidity is unacceptable.

HEAD

Skull broad between ears, forehead flat, but wrinkled when attention is excited. Brows (superciliary ridges) slightly raised. Muscles of temples and cheeks (temporal and masseter) well-developed. Arch across skull a flattened curve, with depression up centre of forehead, from median line between eyes, to halfway up sagittal suture [ed. where the left and right skull plates meet in the centre, i.e. the forehead]. Muzzle short, broad under eyes, and keeping nearly parallel in width to end of nose; truncated, i.e. blunt and cut off squarely, thus forming a right angle with upper line of face, of great depth from point of nose to underjaw. Underjaw broad to end. Nose broad, with widely spreading nostrils, as viewed from front, flat (not pointed or turned up) in profile. Lips diverging at obtuse angles with septum, and slightly pendulous, so as to show a square profile. Length of muzzle to whole head and face as 1 : 3. Circumference of muzzle (measured mid-way between eyes and nose) to that of head (measured before the ears) as 3 : 5. Whilst in repose, any exaggeration of wrinkle or excess loose skin is unacceptable in mature adults.

Eyes:

Moderate size, wide apart. Stop between eyes well-marked but not too abrupt. Colour hazel brown, the darker the better, showing no haw. Loose eyelids highly undesirable. Free from obvious eye problems.

Ears:

Small, thin to the touch, wide apart, set on at highest points of sides of skull, so as to continue outline across summit, and lying flat and close to cheeks when in repose.

Mouth:

Canine teeth healthy, powerful, and wide apart; incisors level, or lower projecting beyond upper, but never so much as to become visible when mouth is closed.

NECK

Slightly arched, moderately long, very muscular, and measuring in circumference, about 2.5cm – 5cm (approx. 1" – 2") less than skull before ears.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulder and arm slightly sloping, heavy, and muscular. Legs straight, strong, and set wide apart; bones being large. Elbows square. Pasterns upright. Balanced and in harmony with hindquarters.

BODY

Chest wide, deep, and well let down between forelegs. Ribs arched and well-rounded. False ribs deep and set well back to hips. Back and loins wide and muscular; flat and very wide in bitches, slightly arched in dogs. Great depth of flanks. Topline level and maintained whilst on the move. Length of body taken from point of shoulder to point of buttock greater than height at withers.

HINDQUARTERS

Broad, wide, and muscular, with well-developed second thighs, hocks bent, wide apart, and quite squarely set when standing or walking. Strength in hindquarters is of paramount importance, cow-hocks in mature adults unacceptable.

FEET

Large, round, and tight. Toes well-arched. Nails black.

TAIL

Set on high, and reaching to hocks, or a little below them, wide at its root and tapering to end, hanging straight in repose, but forming a curve with end pointing upwards, but not over back, when dog is excited.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Powerful, easy extension, driven from the rear, fluent, sound, with ground-covering strides. Tendency to pace is undesirable. Absolute soundness essential.

COAT

Short and close-lying, but coarser over neck and shoulders.

COLOUR

- Apricot, fawn, or brindle.
- * In any case, muzzle, ears, and nose should be black with black around eye rims, and extending upwards between them.
- * Excessive white on body, chest, or feet is unacceptable.

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.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 264: MASTIFF

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schanuzer, Molossoid, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs.

Section 2.1. Molossian breeds: Mastiff type
Without working trial.