

GREAT DANE

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 01/01/2025

ORIGIN

Germany.

UTILISATION

Companion, watch- & guard dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

As forerunners of the present-day Great Dane, one must look at the old "Bullenbeisser" (Bulldog) as well as the "Hatz-and Saurüden" (Hunting and wild boar hounds), which were midway between the strong Mastiff of English type and the fast, handy Greyhound. The term Dogge was, at first understood to mean a large powerful dog, not of any particular breed. Later, particular names such as Ulmer Dogge, English Dogge, Great Dane, Hatzrüde (Hunting Dog), Saupacker (boarfinder) and Grosse Dogge (Great Dogge), classified these dogs according to colour and size.

In the year 1878 a committee of seven was formed in Berlin, consisting of active breeders and judges with Dr. Bodinus in the chair, which made the decision to classify all the forenamed varieties as "Deutsche Doggen" (Great Danes). Thus, the foundation was laid for the breeding of a separate German breed. In the year 1880, on the occasion of a show in Berlin, the first standard for the Deutsche Dogge was laid down. This standard has been taken care of since the year 1888 by the "Deutsche Doggen Club 1888 e.V." (German Doggen Club, registered Club 1888) and frequently been revised over the years. The present Standard meets the requirements of the F.C.I.



Illustration, courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Great Dane in his noble appearance combines a large, powerful well-constructed body with pride, strength and elegance. By substance together with nobility, harmonious appearance, well-proportioned outlines, as well as an especially expressive head, the Great Dane strikes the onlooker as a noble statue, never coarse or with refined elegance. Perfect in balance and always with clearly defined sexual dimorphism. He is the Apollo amongst all breeds.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Almost square in build, this applies particularly to males. Females can be a little longer in body.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Friendly, loving and devoted to his owners. Might be reserved towards strangers, but required is a confident, fearless, easily tractable, docile companion and family dog with high resistance to provocation and without aggression. Socially acceptable behaviour is of the utmost importance.

HEAD

In harmony with the general appearance. Long, narrow, distinct and expressive. Never wedge shaped. Finely chiselled, especially under the eyes. The distance from tip of nose to stop and from stop to the slightly defined occipital bone should be as equal as possible: Ratio 1:1. The upper lines of muzzle and skull should definitely run parallel. The head must appear narrow and angular seen from the front with bridge of nose as broad as possible.

Cranial Region:

Top skull must be flat and angular.

Skull: Superciliary ridges well developed but not protruding.

Stop: Clearly defined.

Facial Region:

Nose: Well developed, more broad than round with large nostrils. Must be black with the exception of harlequins (white with black patches). In these a black nose is desired but a butterfly nose (black with pink patches) or flesh coloured nose is tolerated. In blue dogs the colour of the nose is anthracite (diluted black).

Muzzle: Deep and as rectangular as possible. Bridge of nose must never be concave (dish shaped), convex (roman nose) or falling away in front part (eagle nose).

Lips: Front boundary lines of the lips angular, well-defined corners of lips. Lips neither lacking flews nor being too pendulous or rolled in. Dark pigmented lips. In harlequins (white with black patches) not totally pigmented or flesh coloured lips are tolerated.

Jaws/Teeth: Well developed broad jaws. Strong sound and complete scissor bite (42 teeth according to the dentition formula). The absence of up to two P1 teeth in the upper or lower jaw is tolerated.

Cheeks: Cheek muscles only slightly defined and in no way protruding.

Eyes:

Of medium size with lively friendly intelligent expression. Almond shaped with close fitting lids. Eyes not set too wide apart or slit eyes. As dark as possible, light piercing or amber-coloured eyes are undesirable. Although in blue dogs slightly lighter eyes are tolerated. In harlequins (white with black and grey with black patches) pale (ice blue) eyes or two differently coloured eyes are to be tolerated.

Ears:

Naturally pendant set on high, but not lifted above skull or hanging low. Medium sized. Front edges lying close to cheeks but neither hanging flat nor standing off from sides of head.

[*refer note below]

NECK

Long, clean, muscular and never short or thick. Well-formed set on, tapering slightly towards the head, with arched neckline. Carried upright but inclined slightly forward.

BODY

Withers: The highest point of the strong body. It is formed by the points of the shoulder blades which extend beyond the spinal processes.

Back: Short, firm and muscular, in almost straight line falling away imperceptibly to the rear.

Loin: Slightly arched, broad, strongly muscled.

Croup: Broad, well-muscled. Sloping slightly from hipbone to tail set, imperceptibly merging into the tail set.

Chest: Reaching to the elbows. Well sprung ribs, reaching far back. Ribs must never be barrel shaped or flat. Chest of good width and depth and must never look flat sided or shallow. Well-marked fore-chest, although breastbone must not be too strongly pronounced.

Underline and belly: Belly well tucked up towards rear, forming a nicely curved line with the underside of the brisket.

TAIL

Reaching to the hocks, must not be too long or too short. Set on high and broad, neither too high nor too low. Not too thick, tapering evenly towards tip. In repose tail is hanging down with natural curve. When the dog is alert or moving the tail is carried slightly saber-like and not significantly above the backline or twisted sideways.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Must be sufficiently angulated and with strong bone and muscles. Viewed from the front, standing straight and parallel.

Shoulder: Strongly muscled. The long, slanting shoulder blade forms an angle of 100 to 110 degrees with the upper arm.

Upper arm: Strong and muscular, close fitting should be slightly longer than the shoulder blade.

Elbow: Turned neither in nor out.

Forearm: Strong, muscular. Seen from front and side, completely straight with vertical stance.

Carpus (Wrist): Strong, firm, only slightly standing out from the structure of the forearm.

Metacarpus (Pastern): Strong, straight when seen from the front, seen from the side, barely slanting forwards.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: The whole skeleton is covered by strong muscles which make the croup, hips and upper thighs appear broad and rounded. The strong well angulated hind legs, viewed from behind, are parallel to the

front legs.

Thigh: Long, broad, very muscular.

Stifle (Knee): Strong, positioned almost vertically under the hip joint.

Lower thigh: Long, of approximately the same length as the upper thigh. Well-muscled.

Hock joint: Strong, firm, turning neither in nor out.

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): Short, strong, standing almost vertical to the ground.

FEET

Rounded, well arched, well-knit (cat feet). Nails short, strong and as dark as possible.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Harmonious, lithe, covering a lot of ground, slightly springy. Never with a short stride or pacing. Legs must be parallel in movement, both coming and going and always well-coordinated between front and rear.

SKIN

Tight fitting. In solid colours, well pigmented. In harlequins, the distribution of pigment mainly corresponds to the markings.

COAT

Hair:

Very short, dense, smooth and close lying, glossy. Must never be coarse, dull or a double coat.

Colour:

The Great Dane is bred in three separate colour varieties:

Variety 1: Fawn and brindle;

Variety 2: Harlequin: white and black spotted, Merle: grey and black spotted, and black;

Variety 3: Blue.

- **Fawn:** Light gold fawn to deep gold fawn, evenly shaded throughout the body. Black mask desired. Small white markings on the chest are permitted.
- **Brindle:** Basic colour, light golden fawn to rich golden fawn with black stripes running with the direction of the ribs, as even and clearly defined as possible. Black mask desired. Small white markings on the chest are permitted.
- **Harlequin (white with black splashed patches):** Basic colour pure white, preferably with no ticking. Pure black patches well distributed all over the body, having the appearance of being torn. Grey or brownish patches or nuances of those colours in the black are undesirable as well as blue-grey ticking in the white.
- **Merle (grey-black splashed patches):** Basic colour grey, preferably with no ticking, with well-distributed, irregular, torn, jet-black spots over the entire body. White markings on the chest and paws are allowed. Included here are "Mantel Great Danes", where the grey-black spotting covers the body like a mantle and the muzzle, neck, chest, belly, legs, and tail tip are white.
- **Black:** Jet black, white markings on chest and feet permitted. Included here are "Mantel Great Danes" in which the black covers the body like a coat ("mantel") or blanket and muzzle, throat, chest, belly, legs and tip of tail are white. Also, dogs with basic white colour and large black patches so called "Plattenhunde".
- **Blue:** Pure steel blue, white markings on chest and feet permitted.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: at least 80 cm (approx. 31"), should not exceed 90 cm (approx. 35.4").

Females: at least 72 cm (approx. 28"), should not exceed 84 cm (approx. 33").

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.

*Note: Cropped ears

KUSA Schedule 2 Regulation 7:

"Any dog with cropped ears born within the jurisdiction of the KUSA, imported into it and cropped within it, shall not be registered or recorded by the Kennel Union, and if any such dog is registered or recorded in contravention of this Regulation, upon discovery, its registration or recording shall be cancelled.

7.1. Any dog with ears cropped before importation into the KUSA area of jurisdiction is not eligible for competition at any Kennel Union event."

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.

- **Head:** Insufficient stop.
- **Muzzle:** Tendency for occasional presence of a rolled in lip (covering of the lower jaw incisors by the lower lip).
- **Jaw/Teeth:** Irregular position of individual incisors as long as the bite remains correct, teeth too small. Partial pincer bite.
- **Eyes:** Protruding or too deeply set.
- **Ears:** Not set too high or too low, standing out to the sides or lying flat.
- **Neck:** Sheep neck.
- **Shoulders:** Loose or loaded. Upright shoulder blades.
- **Back:** Rising towards the rear, too long.
- **Breast:** Barrel-shaped or flat ribs.
- **Underline and belly:** Insufficiently drawn up belly line, insufficiently regressed mammary glands
- **Elbows:** loose.
- **Forearm:** Bent. Distensions above the pastern joint.
- **Metacarpus (pastern):** Swollen. Significantly yielding or overbent. Pasterns which are markedly weak, too sloping too upright.
- **Hindquarters:** with too much or too little angulations. Cow hocked, close-set, or barrel-hocked stance.
- **Tail:** Set too high or too low, carried hooked or curled, brush tail.
- **Feet:** Flat, splayed, long. Dewclaws.
- **Colour:** Fawn Danes: grey, blue, or sooty fawn; Brindle Danes: grey, blue, or sooty fawn with indistinct brindling; Black Danes: yellow, brown or blue-black colouration; Blue Danes: fawn or blackish-blue colouration.

Severe faults:

- **Temperament:** Lacking self-confidence, shy, nervous.
- **Skin:** Strong wrinkles in the area of the muzzle and cheeks, strongly pronounced throat skin or dewlap.
- **Head:** Apple head and too prominent cheek muscles, top skull too round.
- **Eyes:** Slack eye lids and showing red haw.
- **Back:** Sway or roach back.
- **Croup:** Too steeply sloping or horizontally positioned.
- **Tail:** Damaged, thickened at the tip or which has been docked.
- **Gait:** Short steps, constant pacing.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Temperament: Fear-biting, easily provoked.
- Blind or deaf Danes.
- **Nose:** Liver coloured. Split nose.
- **Eyes:** Ectropion, entropion, macroblepharia. Differently coloured eyes in all solid-colours.
- **Muzzle:** Permanent presence of a rolled in lip (covering of the lower jaw incisors by the lower lip) or rolled in lip with signs of injury, swelling or inflammation of the oral mucosa.
- **Jaw/Teeth:** Bite that is overshot, undershot or a wry mouth, pincer bite. Missing teeth apart from up to two P1 in the upper and lower jaw.
- **Tail** with kink.
- **Colour:** Fawn and brindle Great Danes: Silver blue or isabella- coloured, with a white blaze, white neck collar, white paws or "stockings," and white tail tip. Harlequin Great Danes: White without any black (albinos), known as porcelain Danes (they exhibit mainly blue, fawn, brindle, or grey spots on a white base colour). Blue Great Danes: White forehead stripe, white neck collar, white stockings, or white tail tip.
- **Size:** Below minimum height.

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FCI Standard No 235: DEUTSCHE DOGGE (GREAT DANE)

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

Section 2.1. Molossoid breeds: Mastiff type

Without Working Trial