

The Basset Hound Breed Standard

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General appearance

Short-legged hound of considerable substance, well balanced, full of quality. It is important to bear in mind that this is a working hound and must be fit for purpose, therefore should be strong, active and capable of great endurance in the field.

Characteristics

Tenacious hound of ancient lineage which hunts by scent, possessing a pack instinct and a deep melodious voice.

Temperament

Placid, never aggressive or timid. Affectionate.

Head and skull

Domed with some stop and occipital bone prominent; of medium width at brow and tapering slightly to muzzle; general appearance of foreface lean not snipy. Top of muzzle nearly parallel with line from stop to occiput and not much longer than head from stop to occiput. There may be a small amount of wrinkle at brow and beside eyes. In any event skin of head supple enough as to wrinkle slightly when drawn forward or when head is lowered. Flews of upper lip overlap lower substantially. Nose entirely black except in light-coloured hounds when it may be brown or liver. Large and well-opened nostrils may protrude a little beyond lips.

Eyes

Lozenge-shaped eyes, neither prominent nor deep set; dark but may shade to mid-brown in light coloured hounds. Expression calm and serious. Light or yellow eye undesirable.

Ears

Set on low, just below line of eye. Long; reaching only slightly beyond end of muzzle of correct length, but not excessively so. Narrow throughout their length and curling well inwards; very supple, fine and velvety in texture.

Mouth

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Neck

Muscular, well arched and fairly long with pronounced but not exaggerated dewlap.

Forequarters

Shoulder blades well laid back; shoulders not heavy (set 45 degrees to the horizontal). Upper arm the same length as the shoulder blade (set at 90 degrees to it), lying close to ribs. Forelegs short, powerful and with great bone; elbows turning neither in nor out, but fitting neatly against side. Upper forearm inclined slightly inwards, but not to such an extent as to prevent free action or to result in legs touching each other when standing or in action; forechest fitting neatly into crook when viewed from front. Knuckling-over highly undesirable. Some wrinkles of skin may appear on lower legs, but this must on no account be excessive.

Body

Long and deep throughout length, breastbone prominent but chest neither narrow nor unduly deep. There should be adequate clearance between the lowest part of the chest and the ground to allow the hound to move freely over all types of terrain. Ribs well rounded and sprung, without flange, extending well back. Back rather broad and level; withers and quarters of approximately same height, though loins may arch slightly. Back from withers to onset of quarters not unduly long.

Hindquarters

Full of muscle and standing out well, giving an almost spherical effect when viewed from rear. Stifles well bent. Hocks well let down and slightly bent under but turn neither in nor out and just under body when standing naturally. Some wrinkles of skin may appear between hock and foot, and at rear of joint a slight pouch of skin may be present, but on no account should any of these be excessive.

Feet

Large well knuckled up and padded. Forefeet may point straight ahead or be turned slightly outwards but in every case hound always stands perfectly true, weight being borne equally by toes with pads together so that feet would leave an imprint of a large hound and no unpadded areas in contact with ground.

Tail

(Stern) well set on, rather long, strong at base, tapering, with moderate amount of coarse hair underneath. When moving, stern carried well up and curving gently, sabre fashion, never curling or gay.

Gait/movement

Most important to ensure that the hound is fit for purpose. Smooth, powerful and effortless action with forelegs reaching well forward and hind legs showing powerful thrust, hound moving true both front and rear. Hocks and stifles never stiff in movement, nor must any toes be dragged.

Coat

Smooth, short and close without being too fine. Whole outline clean and free from feathering. Long hair, soft coat or feathering highly undesirable. Skin is supple and elastic without any exaggeration.

Colour

Generally black, white and tan (tricolour); lemon and white (bicolour); but any recognised hound colour acceptable.

Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

Size

Height: 33-38 cms (13-15 ins) at withers.

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.

Note

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

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