

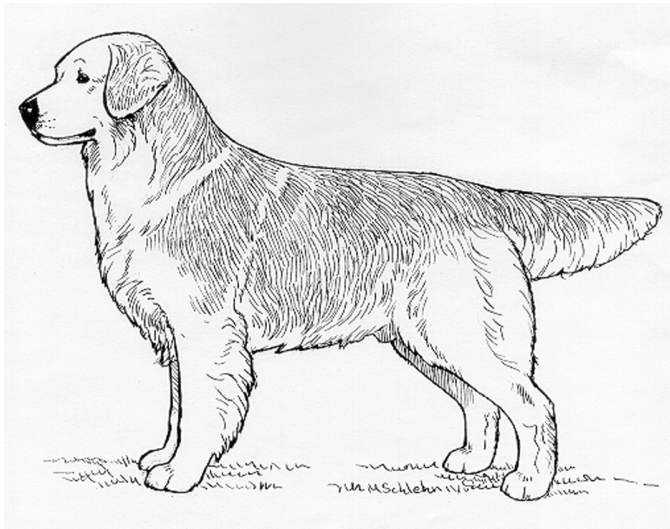
GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Official UKC Breed Standard

Revised January 2, 2024

Gun Dogs Group

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The goals and purposes of this breed standard include: to furnish guidelines for breeders who wish to maintain the quality of their breed and to improve it; to advance this breed to a state of similarity throughout the world; and to act as a guide for judges.

Breeders and judges have the responsibility to avoid any conditions or exaggerations that are detrimental to the health, welfare, essence and soundness of this breed, and must take the responsibility to see that these are not perpetuated.

Any departure from the following 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.

HISTORY

The Golden Retriever was developed in late 19th Century Scotland and England primarily by crossing Flat- and Wavy-coated Retrievers, Tweed Water Spaniels, and a red Setter. The Golden was bred by British aristocrats to be a dual-purpose dog, able to retrieve waterfowl and upland game birds and also to be a companion. Lord Tweedmouth produced some of the early foundation stock by mating a yellow Wavy-coated Retriever named Nous to his Tweed Water Spaniel, Belle. The Golden Retriever's friendly disposition, attractive appearance, and high level of trainability have made this breed one of the most popular in the United States. Today, Goldens are found at field trials and dog shows, in family homes and nursing homes, leading the blind and serving as ears or hands for handicapped persons.

The Golden Retriever was recognized by the United Kennel Club in 1956.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Golden Retriever is a medium-sized, well-balanced dog with a distinctive golden-colored coat; small, drop ears; and a natural tail carried level with the back or with a slight upward curve. The correct relationship of length of body to height is 12:11. The Golden Retriever is a dog without exaggeration. The Golden Retriever should be evaluated as a working gun dog, and exaggerations or faults should be penalized in proportion to how much they interfere with the dog's ability to work.

CHARACTERISTICS

The breed's most readily identifiable characteristic is its rich, lustrous golden color. Another essential characteristic is proper temperament. A Golden Retriever is friendly, calm, compliant and compatible with people and other dogs. Goldens are particularly good with children. The Golden Retriever's friendly temperament is reflected in his kindly expression. The Golden Retriever is a powerfully built dog, with a good nose for tracking, a soft mouth, and an eagerness to learn.

HEAD

The head is proportionate to the size of the dog and is without exaggeration of any sort. When viewed from the side, the skull and muzzle are roughly parallel to one another and joined by a well-defined, but not abrupt, stop.

SKULL - The skull is broad and slightly arched laterally and longitudinally. The skull is clean without prominence of orbital arches or occipital bones. Cheeks should be clean.

MUZZLE - In profile, the muzzle is deep and, measured from nose to stop, is slightly shorter than the skull, measured from stop to occiput. The bridge of the muzzle is straight. Viewed from the top or the side, the muzzle is slightly deeper and wider at the stop than at the tip. Lips are close-fitting, with dark pigment. Removal of whiskers is permitted but not preferred.

TEETH - The Golden Retriever has a complete set of evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite.

Faults: Misaligned teeth; level bite.

Serious Fault: Missing teeth leaving obvious gaps.

Disqualifications: Overshot or undershot bite.

NOSE - The nose leather is black. A slight fading of nose pigment (“winter nose”) is not serious. Nostrils must be large and open.

Serious Fault: Pink nose without pigment.

EYES - The eyes are set in to the skull, but not too deep, and wide apart. They are medium sized and somewhat triangular in appearance, but never so much as to give a hard expression. Eye color is brown. Darker brown is preferred, but a medium brown that does not detract from the desired kindly expression is acceptable. Eyelids are close-fitting, and eye rims are dark.

Faults: Light eyes; eyes too dark, creating a blank expression; eyes set obliquely; white of eye or haw visible when dog is looking straight ahead.

Serious Faults: Functional abnormality of eyelids or eyelashes.

EARS - The ears are drop and rather short, with the front edges attached well behind and just above the eyes. When pulled forward, the tip of the ear should just cover the eye. The ear leather is pliable. The lower part of the ear should be well furred with short, soft hair. The hair is slightly longer where the ear attaches to the skull. At rest, the ears may be drawn back half folded into the neck ruff. When alert, the ears are drawn up and forward with the inner edges of the ears close to the cheeks. A Golden Retriever with a correct temperament will not normally keep its ears at the “alert” position for long periods of time, in or out of the show ring.

Fault: Low-set, hound-like ears.

NECK

The neck is of medium length, blending smoothly into well laid back shoulders, giving a sturdy, muscular appearance. The neck is free of throatiness.

Fault: Long, upright neck; short, stuffy neck.

Serious Fault: Ewe neck.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders are smoothly muscled. The shoulder blades are long and well laid back with the upper tips fairly close together at the withers. The upper arm appears to be equal in length to the shoulder blade and joins it at an apparent right angle. The elbows are close to the body. The forelegs are straight, strong and sturdy in bone, with strong, short, slightly sloping pasterns.

Faults: Weak pasterns; upright shoulders; out at elbows.

BODY

A properly proportioned Golden Retriever is slightly longer (measured from prosternum to point of buttocks) than tall (measured from the withers to the ground), and length of the front leg (measured from point of elbow to the ground) should approximately equal one-half of the dog’s height. Whether the dog is

standing or moving, the line of the back is strong and level from the withers to the slightly sloping croup. The loin is moderately short, muscular and deep, with very little tuck-up. The ribs extend well back and are well sprung out from the spine, forming a broad, strong back, then curving down and inward to form a deep body. The brisket extends to the elbow. Viewed from the front, the chest between the forelegs is well filled and is at least as wide as a man’s closed hand.

Faults: Sloping topline; slab-sidedness; chest too narrow, too shallow or too wide; excessive tuck-up.

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarters are broad and muscular. In profile, the croup slopes slightly. The angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with the angulation of the forequarters. The stifles are well-bent, and the hocks are well let down. When the dog is standing, the short, strong rear pasterns are perpendicular to the ground and, viewed from the rear, parallel to one another.

Faults: Cow hocks; spread hocks; sickle hocks; over-angulation.

FEET

Good feet are essential for a working retriever. The feet are of medium size, round and compact, with well-arched toes and thick, elastic pads. In the field, toenails help to grip the terrain so they should not be cut back so far as to be useless. Dewclaws may be removed. Excess hair around the feet and between the pads may be trimmed.

Faults: Splay or hare feet.

TAIL

The tail is a natural extension of the topline. It is thick and muscular at the base and tapers to the tip. A tail of the correct length extends to the hock but never below. When the dog is relaxed, the tail hangs down naturally. When the dog is moving or alert, the tail is carried level with the back or only slightly above level, with a merry action. The tail should never curl over the back or be carried between the legs.

COAT

The Golden Retriever has a dense, water-repellent double coat. The outer coat lies close to the body and may be straight or wavy. The coat texture is firm and resilient, neither coarse nor silky. Undercoat is soft and dense. The untrimmed coat forms a natural ruff around the neck, blending into the front of the neck and chest; moderate feathering on the back of the forelegs and the underbody; and heavier feathering on the front of the chest, the back of the thighs, and the underside of the tail. Coat on the head, lower part of the ears, paws, and the front of the legs is short and even. Feet may be

trimmed and stray hairs neatened, but neither the natural appearance of the coat nor the outline of the dog should be altered by trimming.

Fault: Trimming other than described above.

Serious Faults: Excessively long coat; open coat; soft coat.

COLOR

Any shade of gold or cream which is rich and lustrous. Body color that approaches white or mahogany is undesirable. Some latitude may be given when judging a lighter-colored puppy whose coat shows promise of darkening with age. Feathering may be lighter than the rest of the coat, and lighter shadings extending upward from the underbody are typical and acceptable. These lighter shadings must not be confused with white markings. With the exception of graying or whitening of face or body due to age, any white marking, other than a few white hairs on the chest, should be penalized in proportion to its extent.

Serious Fault: Any noticeable area of black or other off-color hair.

Disqualification: Albinism.

HEIGHT & WEIGHT

Standard height for males is 23-24 inches, and for females, 21½-22½ inches. A correctly built Golden Retriever male in working condition should weigh between 65-75 pounds, and a female should weigh between 55-65 pounds.

Faults: Dogs up to one inch above or below standard height should be penalized proportionately.

GAIT

When trotting, the gait is effortless, smooth, powerful and well coordinated, showing good but not exaggerated reach in front and drive behind. When moving, the dog's head moves forward so that the head, back line, and tail are nearly even. The topline remains level with only a slight flexing to indicate suppleness. Viewed from any position, legs turn neither in nor out, nor do feet cross or interfere with each other. As speed increases, feet tend to converge toward center line of balance. It is recommended that dogs be shown on a loose lead and moved at a moderate speed to reflect true gait.

Poor movement should be penalized to the degree to which it reduces the Golden Retriever's ability to perform the tasks it was bred to do.

ELIMINATING FAULTS

(An Eliminating Fault is a Fault serious enough that it eliminates the dog from obtaining any awards in a conformation event.)

One inch or greater over or under the standard height.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

(A dog with a Disqualification must not be considered for placement in a conformation event, and must be reported to UKC.)

Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid.

Viciousness or extreme shyness.

Overshot or undershot bite.

Albinism.