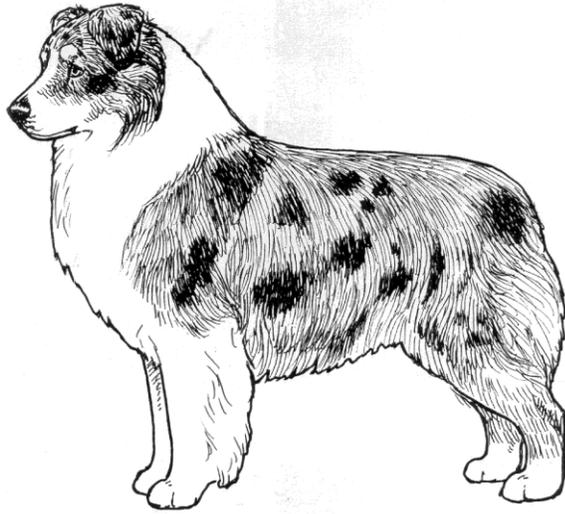


AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD

Official UKC Breed Standard

Revised January 1, 2008



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.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Australian Shepherd is a well-balanced dog of medium size and bone. He is attentive and animated, showing strength and stamina combined with unusual agility. Slightly longer than tall, he has a coat of moderate length and coarseness, with coloring that offers variety and individuality in each specimen. An identifying characteristic is his natural or docked bobtail. In each sex, masculinity or femininity is well defined.

The Australian Shepherd has been recognized by the United Kennel Club since 1979.

CHARACTER

The Australian Shepherd is intelligent, primarily a working dog of strong herding and guardian instincts.

Herding Dog Group

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He is an exceptional companion. He is versatile and easily trained, performing his assigned tasks with great style and enthusiasm. He is reserved with strangers but does not exhibit shyness. Although an aggressive, authoritative worker, viciousness toward people or animals is intolerable.

HEAD

Clean cut, strong, dry and in proportion to the body. The topkull is flat to slightly rounded, its length and width each equal to the length of the muzzle which is in balance and proportioned to the rest of the head. The muzzle tapers slightly to a rounded tip. The stop is moderate but well defined.

TEETH

A full complement of strong, white teeth meet in a scissors bite. An even bite is a fault. Teeth broken or missing by accident are not penalized.

EYES

Very expressive, showing attentiveness and intelligence. Clear, almond shaped, and of moderate size, set a little obliquely, neither prominent nor sunken, with pupils dark, well defined and perfectly positioned. Color is brown, blue, amber, or any variation or combination including flecks and marbling.

EARS

Set on high at the side of the head, triangular and slightly rounded at the tip, of moderate size, with length measured by bringing the tip of the ear around to the inside corner of the eye. The ears, at full attention break slightly forward and over from one-quarter (1/4) to one-half (1/2) above the base. Prick ears and hound-type ears are severe faults.

NECK AND BODY

The neck is firm, clean, and in proportion to the body. It is of medium length and slightly arched at the crest, setting well into the shoulders. The body is firm and muscular. The topline appears level at a natural foursquare stance. The chest is deep and strong, with ribs well sprung. The loin is strong and broad when viewed from the top. The bottom line carries well back with a moderate tuck-up. The croup is moderately sloping, the ideal being thirty (30) degrees from the horizontal. Tail is straight, not to exceed four (4) inches, natural bobtail or docked.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulder blades (scapula) are long and flat, close set at the withers, approximately two fingers' width at a natural stance and are well laid back at an angle approximately forty-five (45) degrees to the ground. The upper arm (humerus) is attached at an approximate right angle to the shoulder line with forelegs dropping straight perpendicular to the ground. The elbow joint is equidistant from the ground to the withers. The legs are straight and powerful. Pasterns are short, thick and strong, but still flexible, showing a slight angle when viewed from the side. Feet are oval shaped and compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Dewclaws may be removed.

HINDQUARTERS

Width of hindquarters approximately equal to the width of the forequarters at the shoulders. The angulation of the pelvis and upper thigh (femur) corresponds to the angulation of the shoulder blade and upper arm, forming an approximate right angle. Stifles are clearly defined, hock joints moderately bent. The metatarsi are short, perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other when viewed from the rear. Feet are oval shaped, compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Rear dewclaws are removed.

COAT

Of medium texture, straight to slightly wavy, weather resistant, of moderate length, with an undercoat. The quantity of undercoat varies with climate. Hair is short and smooth on the head, outside of ears, front of forelegs and below the hocks. Backs of forelegs are moderately feathered, breeches are moderately full. There is a moderate mane and frill, more pronounced in dogs than bitches. Non-typical coats are severe faults.

COLOR

All colors are strong, clear and rich. The recognized colors are blue merle, red merle, solid black and solid red all with or without white markings and/or tan (copper) points, with no order of preference. The blue merle and black have black pigmentation on nose, lips and eye rims. The red merle and red do not. Butterfly nose should not be faulted under one year of age. On all colors the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white. The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point of the withers.

GAIT

Smooth, free and easy; exhibiting agility of movement with a well-balanced, ground-covering stride. Fore and hind legs move straight and parallel with the center line of the body; as speed increases, the feet, both front and

rear, converge toward the center line of gravity of the dog, while the topline remains firm and level.

SIZE

Preferred height at the withers for males is 20 to 23 inches; that for females is 18 to 21 inches. However, quality is not to be sacrificed in favor of size.

ELIMINATING FAULTS

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

Any Australian Shepherd female over six months of age that measures under 17 inches or over 22 inches at the withers must be considered so faulty that it should not receive a placement, regardless of competition. Any Australian Shepherd male over six months of age that measures under 19 inches or over 24 inches at the withers must be considered so faulty that it should not receive a placement, regardless of competition.

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.

Albinism.

Undershot bites; overshot bites exceeding one-eighth inch.

Other than recognized colors.

White body splashes.

Dudley nose.

The docking of tails and cropping of ears in America is legal and remains a personal choice. However, as an international registry, the United Kennel Club is aware that the practices of cropping and docking have been forbidden in some countries. In light of these developments, the United Kennel Club feels that no dog in any UKC event, including conformation, shall be penalized for a full tail or natural ears.