American Rottweiler Club

Judges Education Breed Study

Breed Study Outline

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Breed Study Outline

Editor's Notes:

- *Italic Type in yellow indicates the Official AKC Rottweiler Standard.*
- Standard Type in white indicates commentary approved by the American Rottweiler Club Board of Directors.
- Pictures of faults are not intended to promote fault judging. They are presented in combination with pictures of correct features, to help the student differentiate between correct and faulty, and better understand/recognize correct. Most of the faulty photos are of actual show dogs (and often champions) to give a realistic depiction of faults that might be seen in the show ring.

History

The origin of the Rottweiler is not a documented record. It is believed to descend from one of the drover dogs indigenous to ancient Rome. This drover dog has been described by various accredited sources to have been of the Mastiff-type, a rugged, dependable, willing worker with great intelligence and strong guarding instinct.

When large Roman armies traversed the Alps to conquer Europe, they brought herds of livestock for the men to eat en route. The dogs accompanied the Romans to drive the herds, protect the soldiers, and guard their supplies. In approximately 74 A.D., the Roman Army and their drover dogs settled in Germany. Around 700 A.D., excavation revealed red tile "Rote Wil" under the ground. The town was then named Rottweil and the dogs became known as Rottweilers.

Through the 19th century, the breed's principle duties remained guarding and driving large herds to market, defending their masters and their property, and pulling carts. Legend has it the dogs would drive the butcher's herd to market, pull the meat back home on a cart, and wear the proceeds from the sale in a pouch around their necks to protect the money from bandits!

In the 20th Century, the breed's natural protective instinct, hardness, willingness to please, and trainability led to its use in military and police work.

The Rottweiler was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1935. The first revision to the standard was made in 1979, the second in 1990, and the third in 2022.

History – cont.

Pulling Milk Carts

Pulling a Munition Cart WWI

Pulling an Ambulance Cart in Belgium

General Appearance

The ideal Rottweiler is a medium large, robust and powerful dog, black with clearly defined rust markings. His compact and substantial build denotes great strength, agility and endurance. Dogs are characteristically more massive throughout with larger frame and heavier boned than bitches. Bitches are distinctly feminine, but without weakness of substance or structure.

Dog

Bitch

General Appearance – cont.

Femininity vs Masculinity: Do not mistake the bitch's femininity as being inferior relative to the male. Evaluate the overall exhibits for structure, type, gait, and temperament, and give bitches equal consideration for Best of Breed and/or Best of Winners when warranted.

25 ½" Height Dog

23 ½" Height Bitch

General Appearance – cont.

Rottweilers are ideally presented carrying no excess weight. The well conditioned Rottweiler is comparable to a heavy-weight boxer in fighting form-sturdy, muscled, yet agile.

Balance and proportion are key to this breed. Balance in all parts-head and neck to body; height to length; bone and substance to frame; angulation of fore to rear quarters, etc. Each part must flow smoothly into the next to create the total well conformed, compact, substantial animal.

Dog

Bitch

Size, Proportion, Substance

Dogs – 24 inches to 27 inches. Bitches 22 inches to 25 inches, with preferred size being mid-range of each sex. Correct proportion is of primary importance, as long as size is within the standard's range.

The length of body, from prosternum to the rear-most projection of the rump, is slightly longer than the height of the dog at the withers, the most desirable proportion of the height to length being 9 to 10.

The Rottweiler is neither coarse nor shelly. Depth of chest is approximately fifty percent (50%) of the height of the dog. His bone and muscle mass must be sufficient to balance his frame, giving a compact and very powerful appearance.

Serious Faults *- Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches).*

Dog

Bitch

Size - Proportion – Substance – cont.

Dogs: 24 to 27 inches. Bitches: 22 to 25 inches.

Preferred size being mid-range of each sex.

Correct proportion is of primary importance, as long as size is within the standard's range.

Size, Proportion, Substance - cont.

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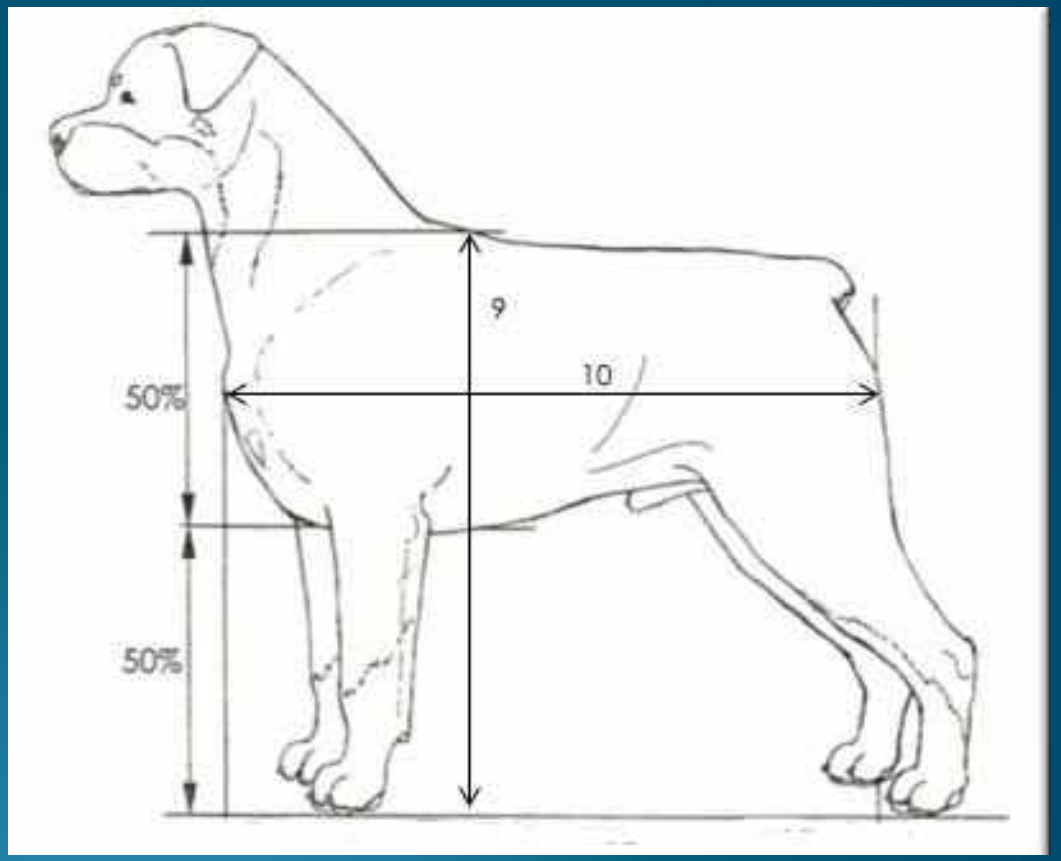


Size, Proportion, Substance - cont.

Serious Faults: *Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches).*

Proportion, height to length, is important to correct body type and balance. A working dog cannot perform properly if it is not correctly balanced and it is not a Rottweiler without correct body proportions. Remember, the Rottweiler is a nearly square dog, the height to length is as 9 to 10. Neither a long bodied dog nor a square one is correct. It makes no difference what distorts correct body proportions: Length of back, shortness of legs, or legs that are too long, all are incorrect.

Long back, 11 to 9 ratio. Will likely move with extended reach and drive but excessive flex in topline

Short back. Will likely crab or move wide in the rear to avoid interference between rear feet and front feet

Size, Proportion, Substance - cont.

Serious Faults: *Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches).*

Reversal of Sex Characteristics - Bitchy Dog - insufficient bone, depth & breadth of chest, and weak underjaw

Reversal of Sex Characteristics – Doggy Bitch, too much bone, depth and breadth of chest, too much stop & zygomatic arch, too short muzzle

Head

Head *- Medium length, broad between the ears; forehead line in profile moderately arched; zygomatic arch and stop well developed with strong broad upper and lower jaws. Desired ratio of back skull to muzzle is 3 to 2. Forehead is preferred dry, some wrinkling may occur when dog is alert.*

Expression is noble, alert, and self-assured.

Dog Heads

Bitch Heads

Head – cont.

Head - Medium length, broad between the ears; forehead line in profile moderately arched; zygomatic arch and stop well developed with strong broad upper and lower jaws. Desired ratio of back skull to muzzle is 3 to 2. Forehead is preferred dry, some wrinkling may occur when dog is alert.

If the head geometry, zygomatic arch, muzzle width/length/taper, or skin are incorrect, the head may resemble another breed. This should be penalized.

Doberman

Rottweiler Dog
Narrow backskull
Insufficient Zygomatic Arch
Muzzle lacks breadth

Rottweiler Dog
Correct breadth of skull
Correct well-developed
Zygomatic arch
Correct muzzle

Rottweiler Dog
Stop too pronounced
Muzzle too short
Features exaggerated

Bullmastiff

Head – cont.

The proportion of backskull to foreface is approximately 3/2 (60/40). That means 60% of the length of the skull is from the occiput to the inside corner of the eyes, and 40% is from the muzzle tip of the nose to the inside corner of the eye.

The stop is definite and more pronounced in the males, which contributes to their masculine expression. Too little stop should be penalized. Conversely, too much stop, which may be combined with a domed backskull, should be penalized.

If the backskull/muzzle proportions and/or stop are wrong, the head may resemble another breed. This should be penalized.

Doberman
Backskull/Muzzle 50/50.
Stop Slight

Rottweiler Bitch
Muzzle too long
Stop too slight

Rottweiler Bitch
Backskull/Muzzle 60/40
Stop well developed

Rottweiler Bitch
Muzzle too short
Stop too pronounced

Bullmastiff
Backskull/Muzzle 66/33

Head – cont.

Eyes *- medium size, almond shaped with well fitting lids, moderately deep-set, neither protruding nor receding. The desired color is a uniform dark brown.*

SERIOUS FAULTS *– Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color or size, hairless eye rim.*

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS *- Entropion, Ectropion.*

Dog

Bitch

Head – cont.

Desired uniform dark brown almond shaped eyes, properly set with well fitting lids.

Serious faults – *Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color or size, hairless eye rim.*

Disqualification– *Entropion. Ectropion*

Expression should be alert, intelligent and animated, not staring, dull, or piercing. Too round an eye; eyes set too far apart or too close together or a hairless eye rim, all detract from the noble expression of the breed. Please do not ignore lids that look entropic.

Round, light amber eyes

Round, protruding eyes

Hairless eye rims

Loose fitting lid, eyes of different size, possible entropion (DQ)

Head – cont.

Ears - *medium size, pendant, triangular in shape; level with the top of the skull hanging forward with the inner edge lying against the head and terminating at approximately mid-cheek.*

Serious Faults – *Improper carriage (creased, folded, or held away from cheek/head).*

Dog

Bitch

Head – cont.

Ears Serious Faults *– Improper carriage (creased, folded, or held away from cheek/head).*

Properly set and carried ears are essential to true Rottweiler expression and deviations should be penalized. Too long or too large ears give the Rottweiler a houndy look, as do ears set too low. Ears set too high reflect a terrier appearance. During the teething stage, puppies may hold their ears incorrectly. Ears may be taped at that time to aid in correct carriage as an adult.

Low set, long, large ears create a Houndy look, Bitch

Creased ears, somewhat too small, Dog

High-set ears carried away from the cheeks, Bitch

Head – cont.

Muzzle *- bridge is straight, broad at base with slight tapering towards tip. The end of the muzzle is broad with well developed chin. Nose is broad rather than round and always black.*

Lips *- always black, corners closed, inner mouth pigment is preferred dark.*

Serious Faults *– Total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth).*

The bridge of the muzzle is straight when viewed from the side and broad when viewed from the front. There should be a strong chin to maintain the depth and breadth of a correct muzzle.

Dogs

Bitches

Dark Mouth Pigment

Pink Mouth Pigment

Dog and Bitch Head Type

a discussion of their differences

Dog

Bitch

What are the differences in Dog and Bitch Head Type?

Both the Dog and the Bitch should have the same general head geometry with broad top skull, strong muzzle and well developed zygomatic arch and stop.

The AKC standard states:

"Dogs are characteristically more massive throughout with larger frame and heavier bone than bitches. Bitches are distinctly feminine, but without weakness of substance or structure."

The head of the dog is more massive to complement his body, which possesses more substance with larger frame and heavier bone than bitches. The stop is definite and more pronounced in males, which contributes to their masculine expression.

Correct Dog Head Type

Incorrect Dog Head Type

Skin too wrinkled, entropic eyelids, droopy jowls

High-set ears carried away from cheeks, triangular eye shape, sooty markings

Muzzle too short, Zygomatic Arch & Stop too pronounced, features exaggerated

Ears creased, Insufficient Stop & Zygomatic Arch, narrow muzzle

Small ears carried away from cheeks, Round amber colored eyes

Round eyes

Eyes of unequal shape, excessive wrinkles, loose jowls, hair loss on muzzle

Correct Bitch Head Type

Incorrect Bitch Head Type

Long muzzle, insufficient stop, roman nose

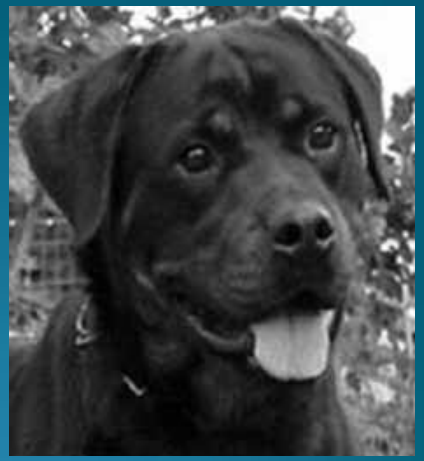
High-set, incorrectly carried ears, insufficient stop, narrow muzzle

Doggy bitch

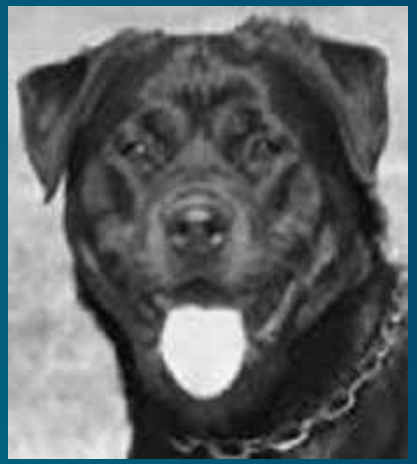
Doggy bitch, exaggerated stop & zygomatic arch

Insufficient Stop & Zygomatic Arch, narrow muzzle, mismatched ears with incorrect carriage

High-set incorrectly carried ears, Excessive light-colored markings, Amber eye color



Round eyes, Insufficient zygomatic arch, narrow muzzle



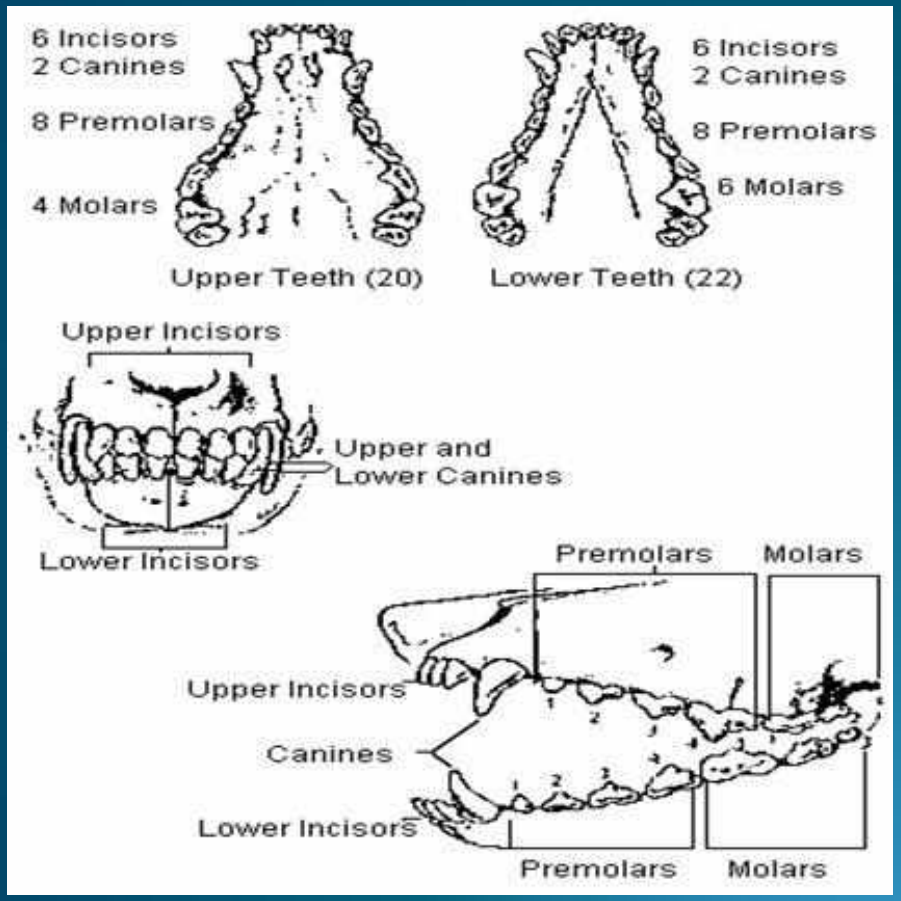
Eyes set too-close together, narrow topskull

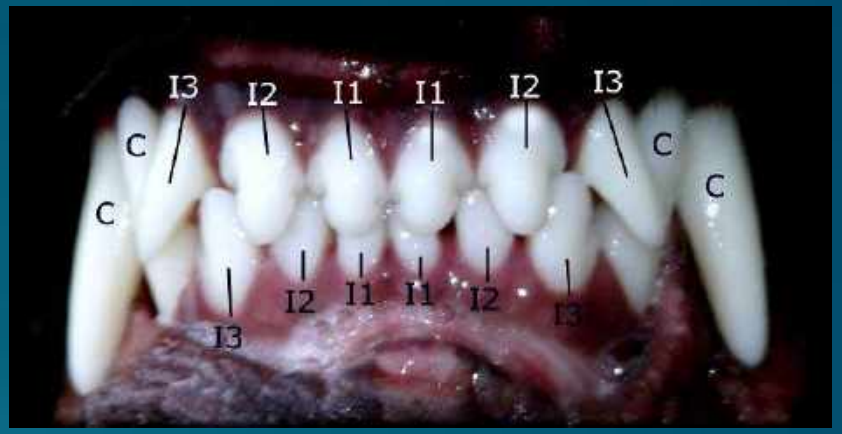
Bite and Dentition

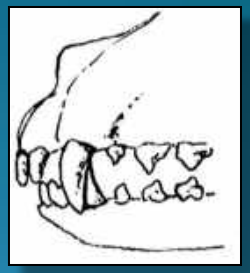
Teeth 42 in number (20 upper, 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite – lower incisors touching inside of upper incisors.

Serious Faults *– Level bite; any missing tooth.*

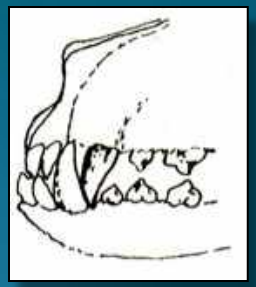
Disqualification *– Overshot, undershot (when incisors do not touch or mesh) wry mouth; two or more missing teeth.*



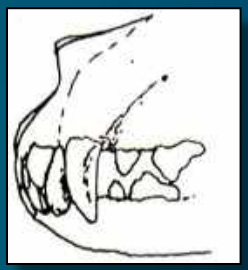




Overshot
Disqualification



Undershot
Disqualification



Level
Serious fault

Bite and Dentition – cont.

Correct Bite and Dentition are EXTREMELY important for the Rottweiler to perform its function. It is important to count all of the teeth rather than looking for gaps, as the Rottweiler's relatively short muzzle and large teeth can make the gaps less noticeable. Occasionally, some handlers have difficulty showing the bite. Be patient and polite so that the handler doesn't become discouraged with the sport. But if you are unable to examine the mouth adequately to ensure it has no serious or disqualifying faults, then the American Rottweiler Club respectfully requests that you excuse the exhibit from competition and mark your book "excused – unable to examine mouth."

Neck

The neck should be powerful, well muscled, moderately long, slightly arched and without loose skin.

Dog

Bitch

Neck – cont.

Proper length of neck is related to correct shoulder layback. A dog with a short *bull* neck will often have upright shoulders. A *throaty* appearance is undesirable, but judges should determine whether this is excess skin or the collar displacing skin on the neck.

Bull neck with upright shoulder

Ewe neck with throaty jawline

Topline

The back is firm and level, extending in a straight line from the withers to the croup. The back remains horizontal to the ground while moving or standing.

Dog

Bitch

Topline – cont.

The back is firm and level, extending in a straight line from the withers to the croup. The back remains horizontal to the ground while moving or standing.

There should be no dip or roach, nor high rear or high wither (sloping from wither downward to the rear) either standing or moving, as the back must serve to transmit the power generated by the rear quarters for follow through to the forequarters.

Dog with sloping topline

Dog with high rear

Bitch with long, roached topline

Body

Dogs

The chest is roomy, broad and deep, reaching to elbow, with well pronounced forechest and well sprung, oval ribs. Back is straight and strong. Loin is short, deep and well muscled. Croup is broad, of medium length and only slightly sloping. Underline of a mature Rottweiler has a slight tuck-up. Males must have two normal testicles properly descended into the scrotum.

Disqualification: *Unilateral Cryptorchid or Cryptorchid males.*

Bitches

Body – cont.

Depth of chest, pronounced prosternum and well sprung, oval ribs all combine to give the Rottweiler its correct compact substantial build. The strength and shortness of loin is further enhanced by the Rottweiler's deep, full flanks. The tuck-up is in no way exaggerated.

Slab-sided (Insufficient spring of ribs), long back, sloping croup

Short-legged/long-backed.

Hollow chest with insufficient forechest, too wide between the elbows, out at the elbows, and insufficient depth of chest

Insufficient forechest, depth of chest, and spring of ribs (slab sided). Upright upper arm, long loin.

Tail

The set of the tail is more important than length. Properly set, it gives an impression of elongation of topline; carried slightly above horizontal when the dog is excited or moving. Docked, the tail is short, close to the body leaving one or two tail vertebrae. Undocked, the tail is carried straight or upward curved and may hang at rest. Faults – Tails with kinks, strong lateral deviation, or ringtails.

The Standard has NO PREFERENCE between docked and undocked tails.

Tail – cont. - Docked Tails

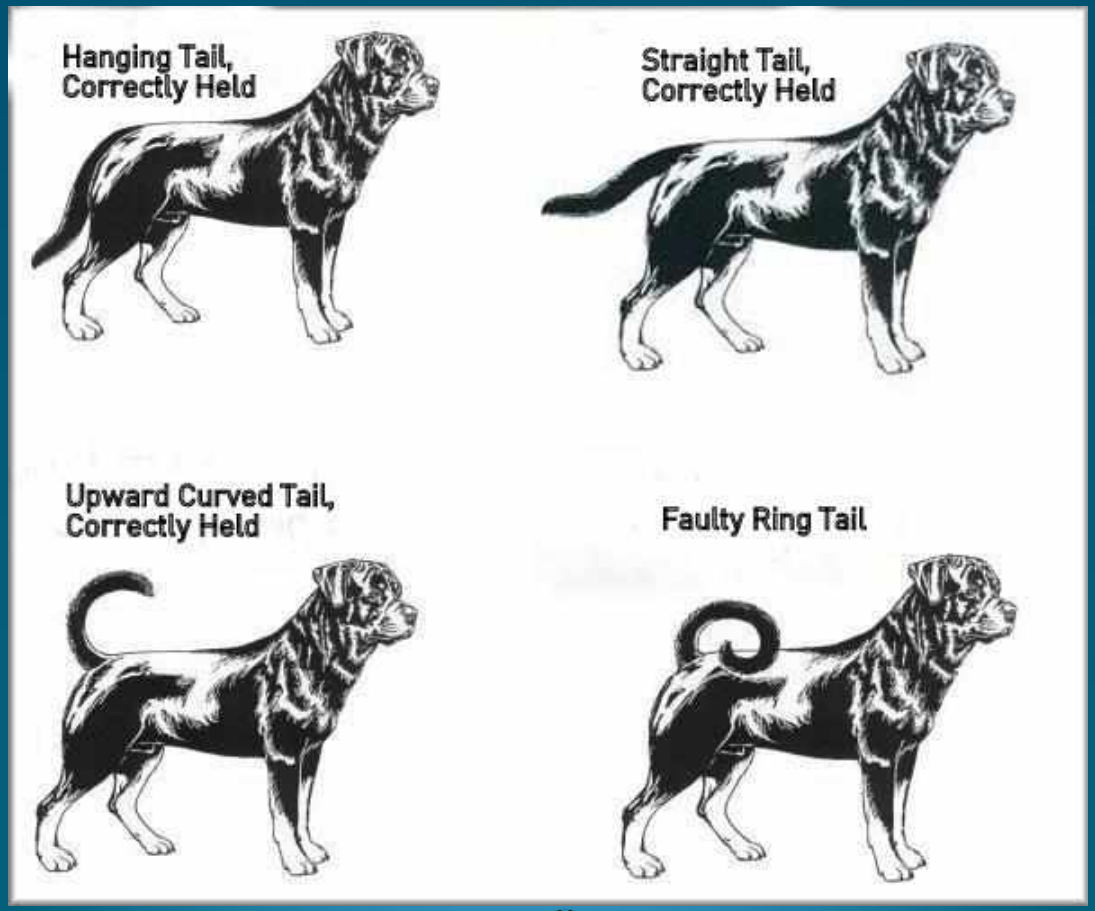
Docked, the tail is short, close to the body leaving one or two tail vertebrae.

Dog

Bitch

Tail – cont. - Undocked Tails

Undocked, the tail is carried straight or upward curved and may hang at rest. Faults – Tails with kinks, strong lateral deviation, or ringtails.



Note the upturned tail tip on the Ring Tail

Tail – cont. - Undocked Tails

Hanging Tail, correctly held, Dog

Straight Tail, correctly held, Dog

Upward Curved, correctly held, Dog

Hanging Tail, correctly held, Bitch

Straight Tail, correctly held, Bitch

Faulty Tail, Dog

Forequarters

Shoulder blade is long and well laid back. Upper arm equal in length to shoulder blade, set so elbows are well under body. Distance from withers to elbow and elbow to ground is equal.

Legs are strongly developed with straight, heavy bone, not set close together.

Pasterns are strong, springy and almost perpendicular to the ground.

Feet are round, compact with well arched toes, turning neither in nor out. Pads are thick and hard. Nails short, strong and black. Dewclaws may be removed.

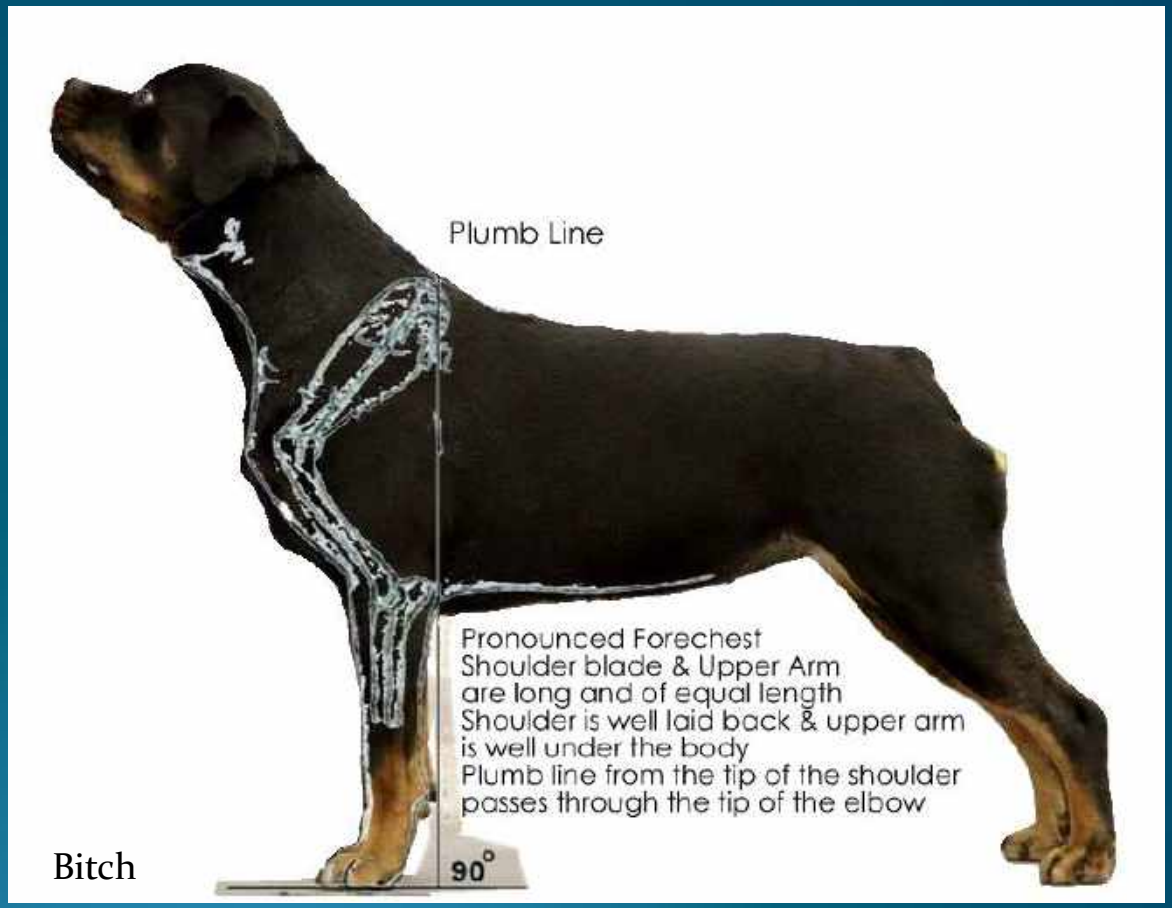
Dog

Bitch

Forequarters – cont.

Well laid back shoulders are critical to the Rottweiler's far-reaching, effortless trot. Correct leg length, withers to elbow and elbow to ground being equal, also contributes to correct body type.

Viewed from the side, the front foot should be directly under the center of the shoulder blade. Viewed from the front, the legs should be a straight column of support, and be far enough apart to allow for correct width of chest (approximately the width of a man's hand).



Bitch

Forequarters – cont.

Correct forequarters and balance front to rear

Upright upper arm, forelegs forward of wither, insufficient forechest

Under-angulated fore & hindquarters, upright upper arm, forelegs forward of wither, insufficient forechest

Weak pasterns, flat front feet, Long back

Hindquarters

Angulation of hindquarters balances that of forequarters. Upper thigh is fairly long, very broad and well muscled. Stifle joint is well turned.

Lower thigh is long, broad and powerful, with extensive muscle leading into a strong hock joint.

Rear pasterns are nearly perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, hind legs are straight, strong and wide enough apart to fit with a properly built body.

Feet are somewhat longer than the front feet, turning neither in nor out, equally compact with well arched toes. Pads are thick and hard. Nails short, strong, and black. Dewclaws must be removed.

Dog

Bitch

Hindquarters – cont.

The degree of angulation of forequarters and hindquarters must be equal to achieve balance and correct movement. Prominent muscling of the inner and outer thighs should be visible when viewed from the rear. A correctly angulated (bent) stifle contributes to good movement, i.e. rear drive and length of stride. The Rottweiler should not appear straight in stifle, nor over-angulated. Viewed from the side, a vertical line drawn from the point of the rump to the ground should touch the front tip of the rear foot. The length of the muscular, substantial lower thigh balances that of the upper thigh.

Under-angulated forequarters, upright upper arm, more rear angulation, imbalance front to rear

Under-angulated hindquarters, straight stifles, Dog

Over-angulated hindquarters, with sickle hocks

Coat

Dog

Outer coat is straight, coarse, dense, of medium length and lying flat.

Undercoat should be present on neck and thighs, but the amount is influenced by climatic conditions. Undercoat should not show through outer coat. The coat is shortest on head, ears and legs; longest on breeching. The Rottweiler is to be exhibited in the natural condition with no trimming.

***Fault** – Wavy Coat.*

***Serious Faults** – Open, excessively short, or curly coat; total lack of undercoat; any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.*

***Disqualification** – Long coat*

Coat – cont.

Fault – Wavy Coat.

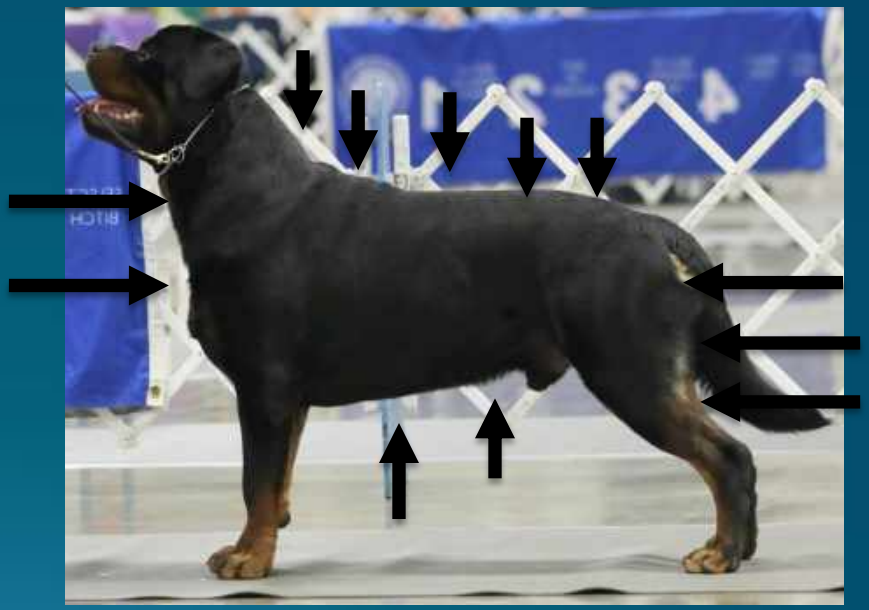
Dog

Coat – cont. - Trimming

***Serious Fault* - Any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.**

The correct texture and length of coat requires no trimming, therefore, the Rottweiler should be shown in its natural state. The amount of undercoat will vary with climatic conditions. Incorrect coats detract from the appearance of the dog. Soft wiry, open, curly or very short coats should be penalized more strongly than visible undercoat or a slight wave.

Currently in the show-ring, Rottweilers are being trimmed on the necks, bodies, and rear quarters. The American Rottweiler Club wants the Rottweiler to be exhibited untrimmed and in its natural state. We hope that you will help us achieve our goal and penalize this practice



Arrows indicate where trimming occurs

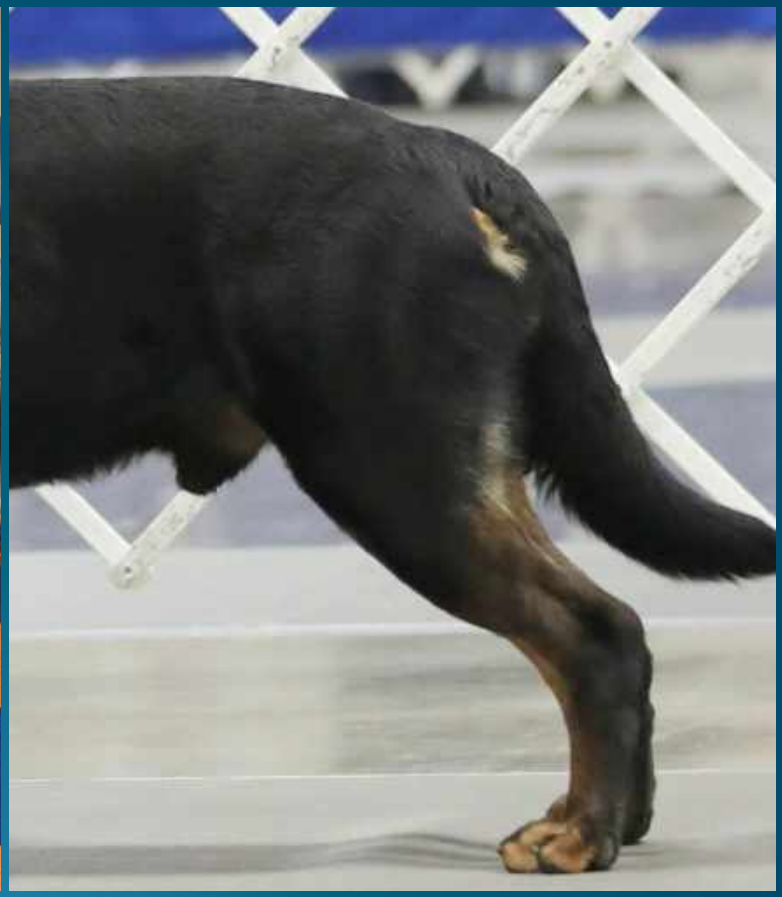
These dogs are untrimmed. Note the natural hair length and texture on the britches, underline and mane.

Coat – cont. Trimming

Serious Fault *- Any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.*

Left side natural
Right side trimmed

Trimmed Rear, note the
Smooth edges



Natural coat, note the rough hair on the rear of the thighs and underline

Coat – cont.

Disqualification* - *Long Coat

Suspected Long-Coated dog trimmed to show in conformation

Although rare, long-coated dogs have been trimmed and finished their championships. Please feel for correct coat texture on all exhibits and do not reward exhibits that you suspect have been trimmed.

Color

Always black with rust to mahogany markings. The demarcation between black and rust is to be clearly defined. Markings should be located as follows: a spot over each eye; on cheeks; as a strip around each side of muzzle, but not on the bridge of the nose; on throat; triangular mark on both sides of prosternum; on forelegs from carpus downward to toes; on inside of rear legs showing down the front of the stifle and broadening out to front of rear legs from hock to toes, but not completely eliminating black from rear of pasterns; under tail; black penciling on toes.

The undercoat is gray, tan, or black. Quantity and location of rust markings is important and should not exceed 10% of body color.

Dog

Bitch

Bitch

This amount of mahogany on the stifle is common

Color – cont.

Serious Faults *– straw-colored, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings; rust markings other than described above; white marking any place on dog (a few rust or white hairs do not constitute a marking).*

Disqualification *– Any base color other than black; absence of all markings.*

Base color must be black with dark rust-colored markings as described. The darker shades are preferred. Excessively large, small, or absence of markings in any location are undesirable as are sooty or light colored (tan) markings.

Excessively large straw-colored markings on chest, incorrect marking on front of thigh above knee and around stifle

Insufficient Markings on Chest

Sooty markings on pasterns and chest

Disqualification – Red base color

Gait

The Rottweiler is a trotter. His movement should be balanced, harmonious, sure, powerful and unhindered, with strong forereach and a powerful rear drive. The motion is effortless, efficient, and ground- covering. Front and rear legs are thrown neither in nor out, as the imprint of hind feet should touch that of forefeet. In a trot, the forequarters and hindquarters are mutually coordinated while the back remains level, firm and relatively motionless. As speed increases the legs will converge under body towards a center line.

Correct Balanced Side-Gait

Gait – cont.

As a working dog, requiring both agility and endurance, the Rottweiler should move in a straight line, exhibiting a smooth, rhythmical gait. In order to achieve this straight line of travel, the dog must have proper balance of fore and hind quarters.

Undocked Rottweilers can carry their tail trailing or varying levels of upward curved while gaiting.

Proper gait viewed from the side, and coming and going, is an important indicator of correct structure and balance. Movement faults indicate structural faults, hence correct movement is extremely important.

Faulty side gait with high rear and limited reach and drive

Unbalanced side gait, acceptable tail carriage

Faulty side gait with hackney in front, over-reaching and crabbing in rear

Temperament

The Rottweiler is basically a calm, confident and courageous dog with a self-assured aloofness that does not lend itself to immediate and indiscriminate friendships. A Rottweiler is self-confident and responds quietly and with a wait-and-see attitude to influences in his environment. He has an inherent desire to protect home and family, and is an intelligent dog of extreme hardness and adaptability with a strong willingness to work, making him especially suited as a companion, guardian and general all-purpose dog.

The behaviour of the Rottweiler in the show ring should be controlled, willing and adaptable, trained to submit to examination of mouth, testicles, etc. An aloof or reserved dog should be not be penalized, as this reflects the accepted character of the breed. An aggressive or belligerent attitude towards other dogs should not be faulted.

A judge shall excuse from the ring any shy Rottweiler. A dog shall be judged fundamentally shy if, refusing to stand for examination, it shrinks away from the judge.

A dog that in the opinion of the judge, menaces or threatens the judge or exhibits any sign that it may not be safely approached or examined by the judge in the normal manner, shall be excused from the ring. A dog that in the opinion of the judge attacks any person in the ring shall be disqualified.

Temperament – cont.

The Rottweiler can excel at Obedience, Rally, Herding, Tracking, Agility, Carting, Pet Therapy, Protection, and almost any other activity its owner chooses.

Herding

Tracking

Agility

Carting

Obedience

Pet Therapy

Faults

Coat: *Wavy coat*

Tail: *Tails with kinks, strong lateral deviations, or ringtails*

Serious Faults

Size, Proportion, Substance - Lack of proportion; undersized; oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches)

Head -

- *Eyes - Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color or size, hairless eye rim*
- *Ears - improper carriage (creased, folded or held away from cheek/head)*
- *Lips - total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth)*
- *Bite - level bite, any missing tooth*

Coat - Open, excessively short, or curly coat; total lack of undercoat; any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.

Color - Straw-colored, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings; rust marking other than described; white marking any place on dog (a few rust or white hairs do not constitute a marking)

Disqualifications

Head

- *Eyes – entropion, ectropion*
- *Bite – overshot, undershot (when scissors do not touch or mesh); wry mouth; two or more missing teeth*

Neck, Topline, Body

- *Body -- unilateral Cryptorchid or Cryptorchid males*

Coat

- *Long coat*

Color

- *Any base color other than black; absence of all markings*

Temperament

- *A dog that attacks any person in the ring*

Rank these Dogs 1 - 4

Please rank from 1st through 4th, and list strengths & weaknesses for each.

Rank these Bitches 1 - 4

Please rank from 1st through 4th, and list strengths & weaknesses for each.

Rank these Dogs 1 - 4

Please rank from 1st through 4th, and list strengths & weaknesses for each.

A

B

C

D

Rank these Bitches 1 - 4

Please rank from 1st through 4th, and list strengths & weaknesses for each.

A

B

C

D

The End

Dear Judges Education attendees,

Thank you for your interest in our beloved Rottweiler. We hope we didn't bore you with too many details!

The purpose of our presentation is to enhance your understanding of the AKC Rottweiler Standard and provide you with keen insights that will assist you in making decisions while judging our breed.

Please feel free to contact our JEC Lew Olson at lewolson@earthlink.net for assistance arranging additional mentoring if desired.