

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



## Extended Breed Standard of **THE BICHON FRISE**

Produced by the

BICHON FRISE CLUB OF VICTORIA (INC)

In Conjunction with the  
Australian National Kennel Council

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## **HISTORY OF THE BREED**

A French/Belgian breed, the origins of the Bichon Frise have probably been lost in time. But it is fair to say that all who have delved into their past in an effort to find out the history of the breed have similar tales to tell.

The Bichon Frise, it appears, descends from the Barbet (or Water Spaniel). It is believed to have been imported into France by Francis I, King of France, during the time of the Renaissance, coming from Italy from the court of Rome. All the Kings of France had these little white dogs until the French Revolution. Marie Antoinette was thought to have had three dogs at the time of the Revolution, but those, along with others owned by the aristocracy were exterminated at that time.

The Bichon Frise was extremely popular in the times of French Royalty and was much doted on. Henry III was thought to be very fond of the breed. In paintings of the 17th and 18th century little white dogs resembling the Bichon are seen in the company of Lords and Ladies.

When the French Royalty fell from favour however, so too did the little dogs. The aristocrat Bichon Frise became the democratic (or peoples) Bichon Frise and in this way became very popular in the streets. He accompanied organ players, distracting passers-by with his clown like antics and expression.

The first world war dealt a serious blow to the breed and between the two great wars the breed practically disappeared. It was only the dedication of those breeders in France and Belgium that kept the breed alive

He was introduced into Australia in 1976, and immediately made an impact on the show scene. In the years since then this delightful breed has charmed all whom have come into contact with them. The Bichon Frise is a wonderfully intelligent dog with an affectionate nature, and his love of life make him a joy to behold.

## ● GENERAL APPEARANCE

***Toy dog standing less than 30cm tall. The head carriage is proud and high; the coat falling in soft, corkscrew curls.***

The Bichon Frise is essentially a dog without exaggeration. The coat will stand out from the body (because of the proper grooming and presentation) however, when parted, the coat should show soft “crinkles” as evidence of the soft curls. On the move the dog displays a proud head carriage, with the movement being free flowing, plenty of reach and drive, and with a level top line. Fore and aft movement should be straight through - neither too wide nor too close and no weakness in hocks.

## ● CHARACTERISTICS

***Lively little dog, with eyes alert and full of expression.***

The soft, fairly round dark eyes should fill the face with appealing pleasantness. One of the characteristics of the breed is the black pigmentation set against the pure white coat of an adult specimen. The black pigmentation should be present in the nose, lips, eye rims, toe nails (although this is rare) and pads of the feet.

## ● TEMPERAMENT

***Gay and happy.***

The Bichon Frise should convey a feeling of happiness and brightness on sight. Neither shyness or aggressiveness should be tolerated. The Bichon must show the temperament required of a companion dog.

## ● HEAD AND SKULL

***The head longer than the muzzle, the whole head in balance with the body. The muzzle should not be thick or heavy; nor should it be snipy; the cheeks flat and not very strongly muscled; the stop should be slight and the hollow between the eyebrows just visible. Skull flat when touched, although the hair tends to make it look round. The nose should be round, black, soft and shiny. The lips should be fine, fairly tight and completely black, dropping just sufficiently for the lower lips to be covered by the upper, but never heavy nor hanging. The lower lip should be neither heavy, protruding nor flabby and should never show the mucous membrane when the mouth is closed.***

The head should be in proportion to the body. From stop to nose must never be as long, or longer than length of skull. A ratio of 5 parts skull to 3 parts muzzle is ideal and on no account should the muzzle ever be any longer than this. The muzzle should be in balance with the head, forming an equilateral triangle from the outside corners of the eye to the centre of the nose. If the triangle is long and narrow then the dog will in all likelihood be too long in muzzle, and if the triangle is short and thick then the muzzle will be too short. The lips should be fine and completely black. The nose must be black.



Figure 1- Excellent Illustration of the Head of the Bichon Frise

### ● EYES

***Dark, with dark eye rims, fairly round, never almond shaped nor obliquely set; lively, not too big; never showing any white. Neither large nor prominent. The socket should not be pronounced.***

The eyes must be dark, surrounded by dark pigmentation - often referred to as the “prized halos”. The eye should be soft and round, not bulging or protruding nor obliquely set, nor should it be too large. The “dark halos” around the eyes (which are essential to the expression of the breed) give the appearance of the eye being larger than it is. When looking forward the dog should show no white in the eye.

## ● EARS

***Narrow and delicate. Hanging close to the head and well covered with tightly curled, long hair. Carried forward when the dog is alert but in such manner that the forward edge touches the skull and not carried obliquely away from the head. The leather should reach halfway along the muzzle.***

The ears should not be set below eye level, nor should they be too high set - otherwise the head appears out of balance. The ears are set rather back on the skull. The size of the ear is such that the tip of the leather should reach halfway along the muzzle. The standard calls for tight curls on the ears, but you will find more of a long flowing curl due to the length of coat.

## ● MOUTH

***Scissor bite, that is to say, the incisors of the lower jaw should be placed immediately behind and in contact with those of the upper jaw.***

“Normal scissor bite”, Undershot, overshot or wry mouths should be heavily penalised. Full dentition preferred.

## ● NECK

***Fairly long, carried high and proudly. Round and slim near the head, gradually broadening to fit smoothly into the shoulders. Length about one third the length of the body (proportions of 33cm - 11cm for a dog of 27cm high at the withers).***

The neck should be gracefully carried and well arched. The length should about one third the length of the body measured from the prosternum to the buttocks.

## ● FOREQUARTERS

***Shoulders oblique, not prominent, and equal in length to the upper arm (approx. 10cm). The upper arm should fit close to the body. Legs straight when seen from the front, perpendicular and finely boned. The pastern should be short and straight when viewed from the front, very slightly sloping when viewed from the side.***

Angulation should appear to be a 90° angle where the scapula and humerus meet. Elbows are held close to the body and legs when viewed from the front perfectly straight – feet turning neither in nor out. From the side the legs should be straight and perpendicular from elbow to pastern – with a slight slope forward from pastern to foot.

## ● BODY

***Chest well developed, with deep brisket. The floating ribs well rounded and not terminating abruptly. Loin broad, well muscled, slightly arched and well tucked up. The pelvis broad, the croup slightly rounded.***

Substantial body well muscled both front and back. Good deep chest reaching to elbows. There should be breadth in the ribcage. There should be a slight rise over the loin (although the top line should be trimmed level), with a slight rounding on the croup to the slightly low tail set. In a correctly balanced dog the length from withers to set on of tail will be about the same as the height at the withers. Thus allowing the dog from prosternum to the buttocks to be slightly longer than the height at the withers.

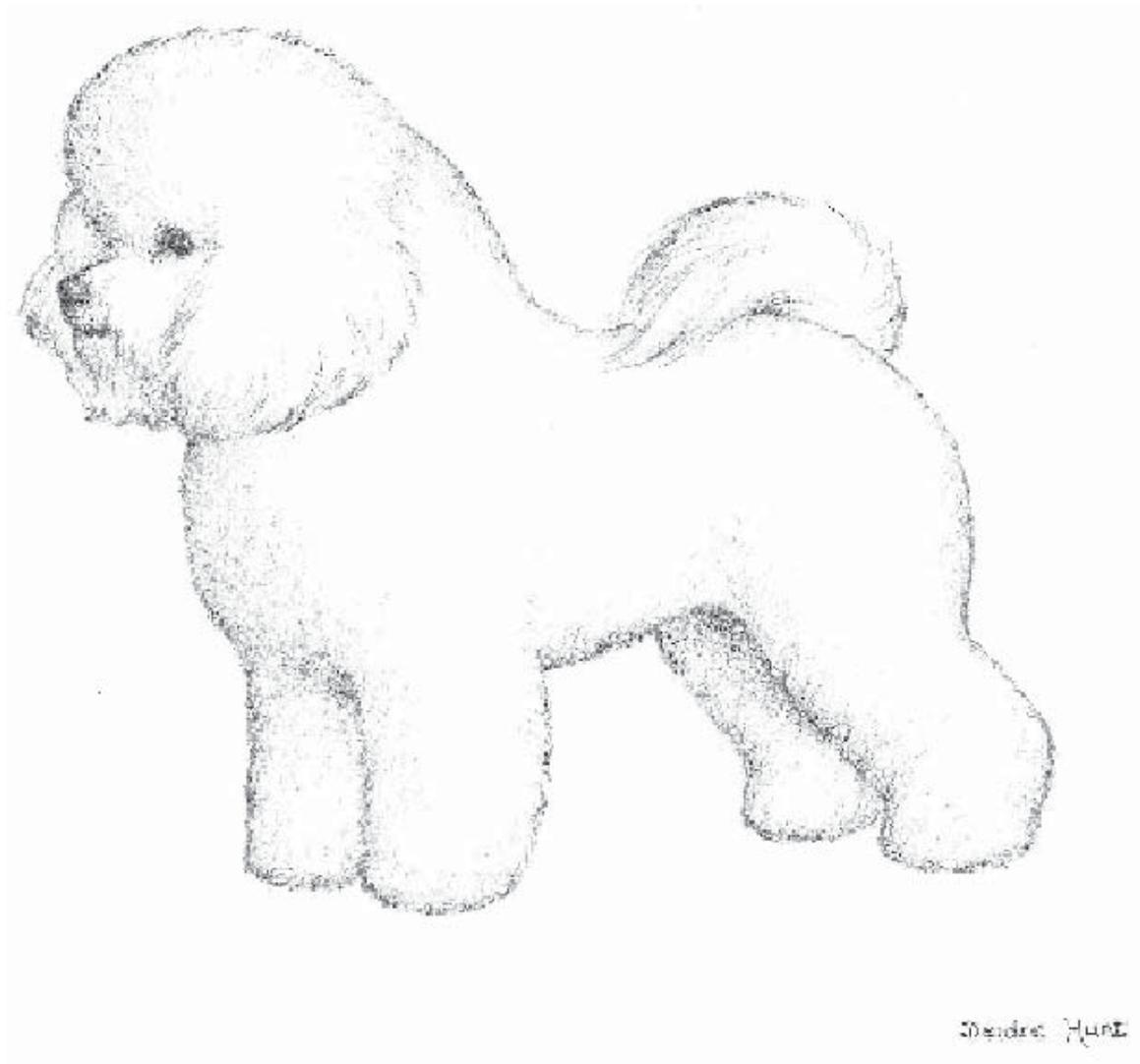


Figure 2- Excellent Illustration of the Bichon Frise

### ● HINDQUARTERS

***Thighs broad and well muscled, oblique. Stifles well bent and hocks well let down.***

The length of croup is such as to allow the hindquarters to be broad and muscular, with well-developed first and second thighs. The hock joints are well let down and stifle sufficiently bent to form a definite angle. The rear pastern should not be too long and should be vertical whether viewed from the side or from behind.

- **FEET**

***Small, rounded and well knuckled up. Nails preferably black.***

Should be “cat footed”. Nails black, although this is rare. Colour of pads is not mentioned although you would expect them to be black.

- **TAIL**

***Normally carried raised and curled gracefully over the back but never tightly curled. It should not be docked and should not touch the backbone, but the hair should always fall onto the back. Slightly low set.***

Tail should curve over the back. Never “gay”. The tailcoat should lie on the back at all times, although the tail itself should not touch the back. The carriage will vary in some dogs, but it is preferable for the tail to be carried on the back than too high.

- **GAIT MOVEMENT (NOT DETAILED)**

On the move the dog displays a proud head carriage, with the movement being free flowing, plenty of reach and drive, and with a level top line. Fore and aft movement should be straight through - neither too wide nor too close and no weakness in hocks. The Bichon has a “normal” construction and consequently a “normal” movement. Short stepping and mincing actions should be heavily penalised, as should dogs that do not carry their head proudly.

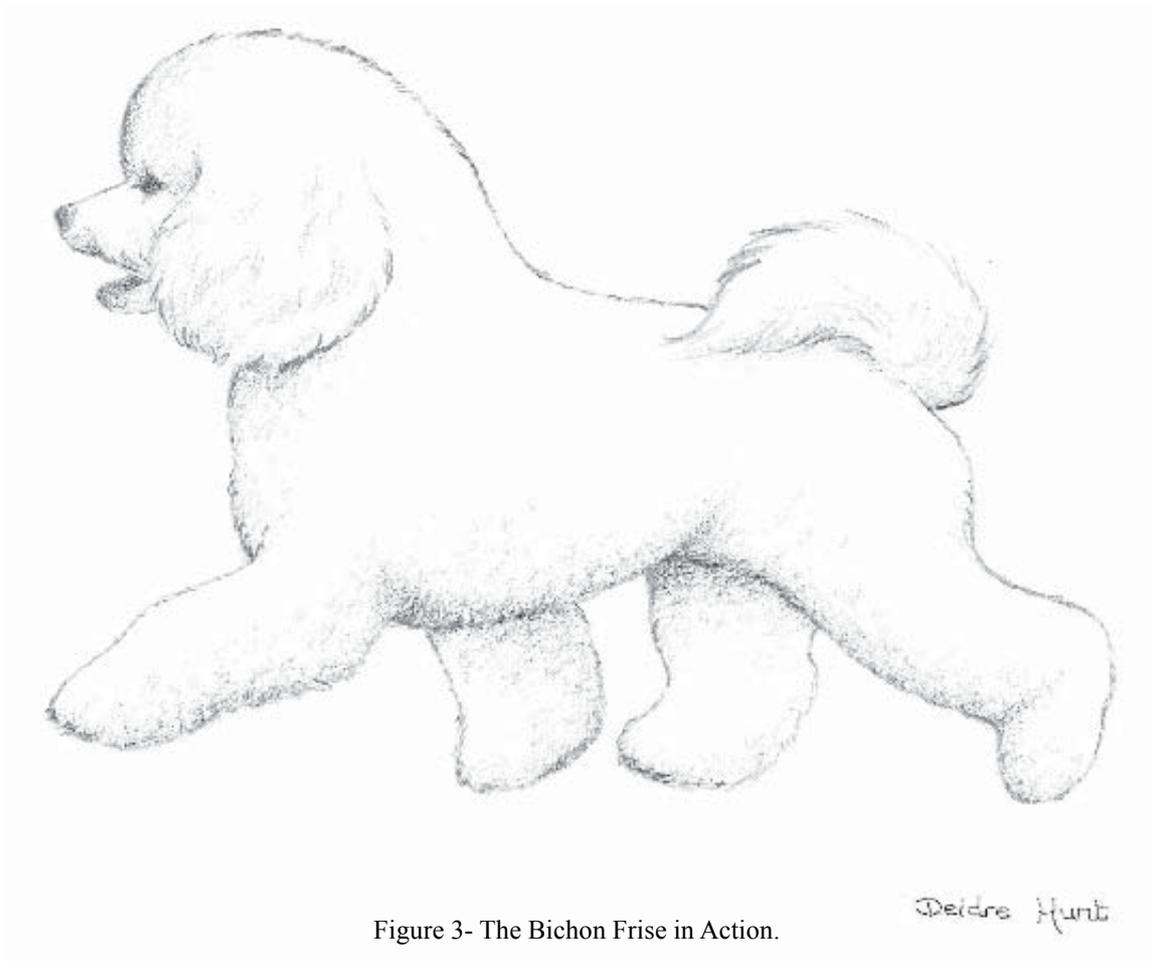


Figure 3- The Bichon Frise in Action.

## ● COAT

***Fine, silky, with soft corkscrew curls. Neither flat no corded, and measuring 7cm - 10cm in length. The dog may be presented untrimmed or have muzzle and feet slightly tidied up. In Australia the coat is usually trimmed to reveal the natural outline of the body. It is rounded off from any direction and never cut so short as to create an overly trimmed or squared off appearance***

This is a double coated breed with an outer coat of longer hair with a short softer dense undercoat. The coat should be soft and silky, never coarse or harsh. Presentation and grooming should be encouraged, however this is not an excuse to lose the soft, corkscrew curl that is part of the coat. To ensure the correct curl, the groomed coat should be parted - if soft “crinkles” are evident then the coat has the correct curl - this “crinkle” cannot be groomed out. The adult coat is somewhat thicker than the puppy coat.

## ● COLOUR

***Pure White. Under the white coat dark pigmentation is preferred. Black, blue or beige markings are often found on the skin.***

White- some “biscuit” shading should be allowable in puppies up to 10 - 12 months, but this should not detract from the “white” look of the dog.

## ● SIZE

***Height: less than 30cm, smallness being highly desirable.***

Overall balance is essential. In general, a dog less than 24cm or greater than 28cm seems to have legs too short or too long respectively and thus loses balance. However well balanced dogs outside this range (but still within the standard) should not be ignored. Dogs in excess of 30cm should be heavily penalised. With regard to “smallness being highly desirable” breeders have generally concentrated on producing dogs in the range of 25cm - 28cm. The only time smallness should be a deciding factor is when two dogs are of equal merit.

## ● 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 on 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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