

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE DEERHOUND**

Produced by
Deerhound Club of Victoria Inc.
in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council

Standard adopted by Kennel Club London amended 2009
Standard adopted by ANKC 1994 amended 2009
FCI Standard No: 164
Breed Standard Extension adopted by ANKC 2009

Copyright Australian National Kennel Council 2009
Country of Origin ~ United Kingdom

Extended Standards are compiled purely for the purpose of training Australian judges and students of the breed.

In order to comply with copyright requirements of authors, artists and photographers of material used, the contents must not be copied for commercial use or any other purpose. Under no circumstances may the Standard or Extended Standard be placed on the Internet without written permission of the ANKC.

HISTORY OF THE BREED

The origin of the Deerhound breed is of such antiquity and the earliest names bestowed on it so inextricably mixed that no sound conclusion can be arrived at as to whether the Deerhound was at one time identical with the ancient Irish Wolf dog and, in the course of centuries, bred to a type better suited to hunt deer, or whether, as some writers claim, he is the descendant of the hounds of the Picts. Very early descriptive names were used to identify the purpose of the dog rather than to identify species. We find such names as "Irish Wolf Dog," "Scotch Greyhound," "Rough Greyhound," "Highland Deerhound." Dr. Ciaos, in his book *Of Englished Doges* (1576) speaking of Greyhounds, relates: "Some are of the greater sorter, some of a lesser; some are smoothed skinned and some curled, the bigger therefore are appointed to hunt the bigger beasts, the buck, the hart, and the doe."

All this is relatively unimportant when we can definitely identify the breed as Deerhounds as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From there on the term Deerhound has been applied to the breed, which of all dogs has been found best suited for the pursuit and killing of the deer.

At all times great value has been set on the Deerhound. The history of the breed teems with romance increasing in splendour right down through the Age of Chivalry when no one of rank lower than an earl might possess these dogs. A leash of Deerhounds was held as the fine whereby a noble lord condemned to death might purchase his reprieve. Records of the middle Ages allude repeatedly to the delightful attributes of this charming hound, his tremendous courage in the chase, and his gentle dignity in the home.

So highly has the Deerhound been esteemed that the desire for exclusive ownership has at many times endangered the continuance of the breed. As the larger beasts of the chase became extinct, or rare, in England and Southern Scotland, the more delicate, smooth Greyhound took the place of the larger Deerhound. The Highlands of Scotland, last territory wherein the stag remained numerous in a wild state, became, as might be expected, the last stronghold of this breed. Here again the Highland Chieftains assumed exclusive proprietorship to such an extent that it was rare to find a good specimen south of the River Forth. So severely was this policy pursued that in 1769 the breed physically and numerically ran very low. This, of course, must be attributed in a great measure to the collapse of the clan system after Culloden 1745.

It was not until about 1825, when the restoration of the breed was undertaken very successfully by Archibald and Duncan McNeill (the latter afterwards Lord Colonsay), that the Deerhound regained his place of pre-eminence and former perfection. The First World War, in later times, had considerable effect on the breed when so many of the large estates in Scotland and England were broken up. Although this "Royal Dog of Scotland" is represented at English shows in good numbers and to a considerable extent at shows in the Eastern States of the United States of America, the Deerhound remains a rare dog of such historical interest and character that ownership should give anyone great pride of possession.

The high valuation of the Deerhound is not the result of rarity so much as the fact that as a hunter he is pre-eminent, with a high aggregate of desirable characteristics. He has a keen scent, which may be used in tracking, but it is that combination of strength and speed necessary to cope with the large Scottish deer (often weighing 250 pounds) that is most valued. The hounds are usually hunted singly or in pairs. Centuries of hunting as the companions and guards of Highland Chieftains have given the Deerhound an insatiable desire for human companionship. For this reason the best Deerhounds are seldom raised as kennel dogs. In character the Deerhound is quiet and dignified, keen and alert, and although not aggressive, has great persistence and indomitable courage when necessary. While it might savour of boasting to claim that the Deerhound of today is identical with the dog of early history, descriptions of which are mostly legendary, it is nevertheless a well-established fact that in type, size, and character he closely conforms to authentic records of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As a companion the Deerhound is ideal, being tractable and easy to train and possessing the most dependable loyalty and utmost devotion to his master. The most authentic and complete work on the breed is "Scotch Deerhounds and their Masters" written by George Cupples. Scrope has also written much about the Deerhound in "Days of Deerstalking" and other works. The best descriptions of the breed are found in nineteenth-century British dog books.

The grace, dignity and beauty of the Deerhound have been faithfully depicted in many of Landseer's paintings and drawings, and Sir Walter Scott, who owned the famous Deerhound Maida, makes many enthusiastic allusions to the breed, which he describes as "The most perfect creature of Heaven."

"We must try and keep the Deerhound a rugged, rough-coated, well-muscled animal and not to allow it to be ruined by shows, as has happened to so many breeds, which have become too refined, too stripped and over-groomed".

Jane Huntington, sculptor and Deerhound breeder from the 1930s-50s.



Fig. 1- Excellent specimen.

● GENERAL APPEARANCE

Resembles a rough coated greyhound of larger size and bone.

A Deerhound should resemble a rough-coated Greyhound of larger size and bone. The overall Deerhound is well balanced, slightly longer than tall, of good bone and muscle, with a hard, rugged coat. This rough-coated dog, natural in appearance, has an air of quiet dignity

● CHARACTERISTICS

The build suggests the unique combination of speed, power and endurance necessary to pull down a stag, but general bearing is one of gentle dignity.

The main characteristics of the Deerhound are: steadiness of nerves, attentiveness, loyalty, calm self-assurance, alertness and tractability, as well as courage. Combined with perfect physical condition these characteristics are necessary for a working hound.

● TEMPERAMENT

Gentle and friendly. Obedient and easy to train because eager to please. Docile and good-tempered, never suspicious, aggressive or nervous. Carries himself with quiet dignity.

The Deerhound projects a reserved, stately presence. He was bred to be quiet. There could be no noise in the ambush to avoid prematurely startling the deer before the dogs were released. A laid-back, quiet demeanor is an inherent trait in the breed. As a result, Deerhounds are not animated performers in the showing and should not be penalized for a lack of animation.

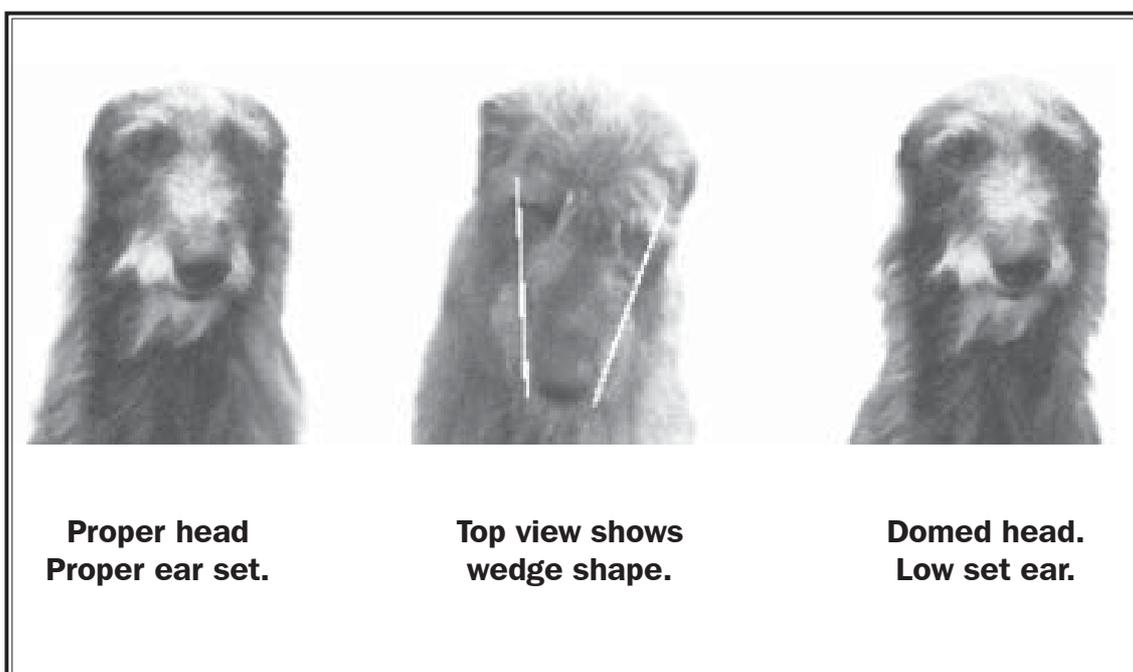
● HEAD AND SKULL

Broadest at ears, tapering slightly to eyes, muzzle tapering more decidedly to nose, lips level. Head long, skull flat rather than round, with very slight rise over eyes, with no stop. Skull coated with moderately long hair, softer than rest of coat. Nose slightly aquiline and black. In lighter coloured dogs black muzzle preferred. Good moustache of rather silky hair and some beard.

The head, as viewed from above or in profile, is wedge shaped with powerful jaws and level lips. It is long, level, well balanced, carried high. The head should be broadest at the ears, narrowing slightly to the eyes, with the muzzle tapering more decidedly to the nose. The muzzle should be pointed, but the teeth and lips level. The head should be long, the skull flat rather than round with a very slight rise over the eyes but nothing approaching a stop.

The black nose is slightly aquiline, giving the appearance of a slight downturn of the nose. There is a very slight rise over the eyes, but no stop. The head is well adorned with soft furnishings of the eyebrows, beard and moustache. The hair on the skull should be moderately long and softer than the rest of the coat. In lighter coloured dogs the black muzzle is preferable. There should be a good moustache of rather silky hair and a fair beard. Correct furnishings can often mask the appearance of an otherwise correct head. The expression is soft and gentle except when aroused. As in most sight hounds, a powerful under jaw is a desirable trait.

Fig. 2 - Head shape



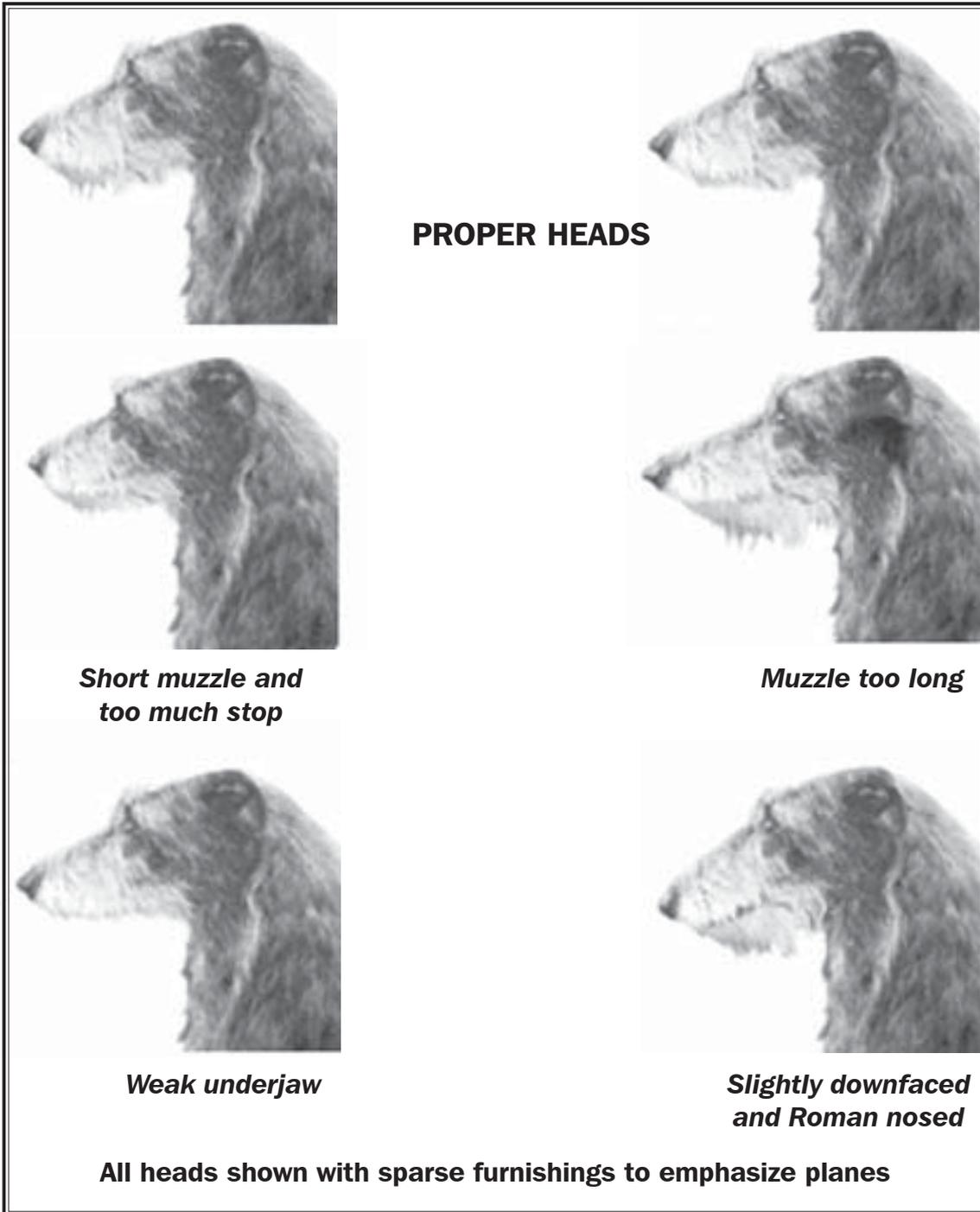


Fig. 3 - Correct heads

● **EYES**

Dark. Generally dark brown or hazel. Light eyes undesirable. Moderately full with a soft look in repose, but keen, far away look when dog is roused. Rims black.

Should be dark – generally dark brown, brown or hazel. The eye should be moderately full, with a soft look in repose, but a keen, far away look when the Deerhound is roused. Rims of eyelids should be black. A moderately full, medium-to-dark brown or

hazel eye and facial furnishings enhance the “soft look in repose”. A very light eye is not liked because it detracts from the desired soft expression. Eye rims should be well pigmented.

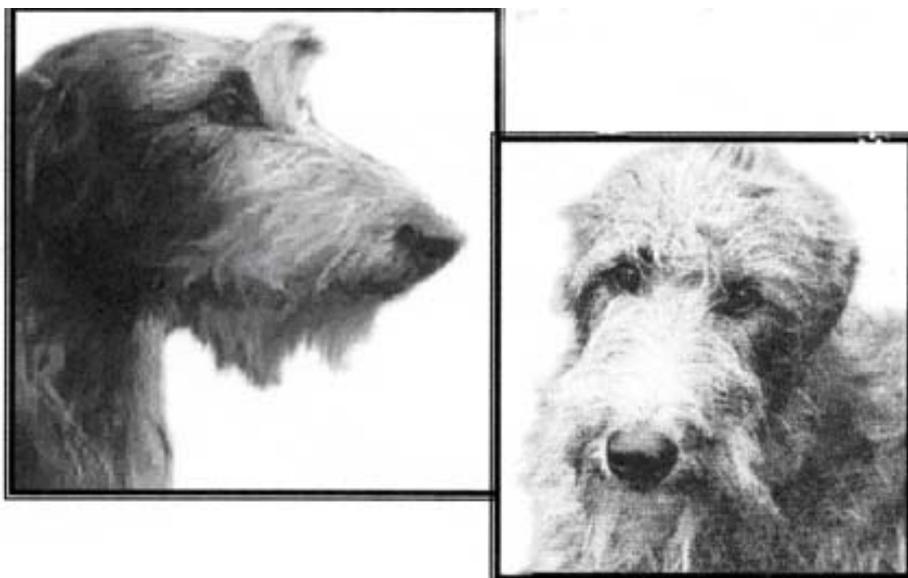
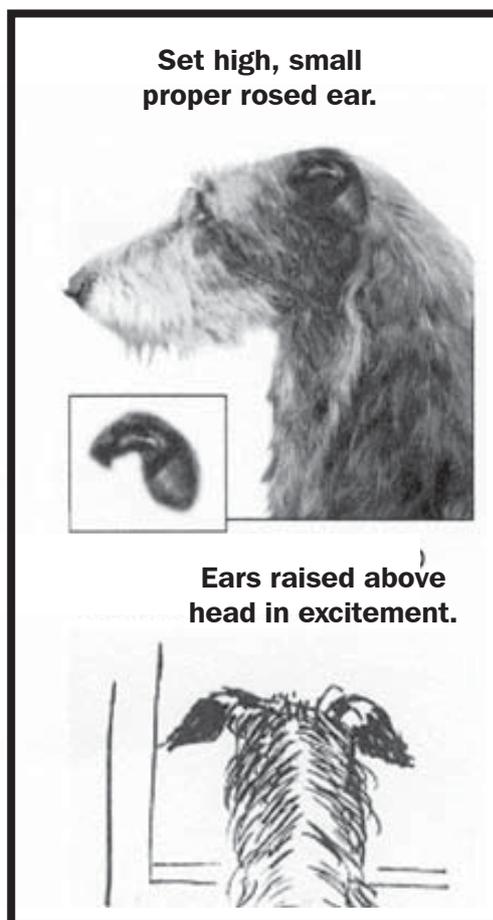


Fig. 4 – correct eyes.

● EARS

Set on high and in repose folded back. In excitement raised above head without losing the fold and in some cases semi-erect. A big thick ear hanging flat to the head or a prick ear most undesirable. Ear soft, glossy and like a mouse’s coat to the touch; the smaller the better, no long coat or fringe. Ears black or dark coloured.

The Deerhound has a rose ear that is set high. A Deerhound should not have prick ears or thick ears hanging flat to the head. If the ear is set incorrectly, the skull will not appear flat. Exhibitors sometimes strip the longer hair from the ears, exposing the soft dark undercoat, which feels like velvet. A Deerhound may not always respond to bait or a toy tossed by a judge, but if it does use its ears, they maybe semi-erect but should not lose the fold.



- **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.

A full mouth of forty-two teeth is most important, particularly for a dog with the shape of foreface of the Deerhound. A perfect scissor bite is a necessity.



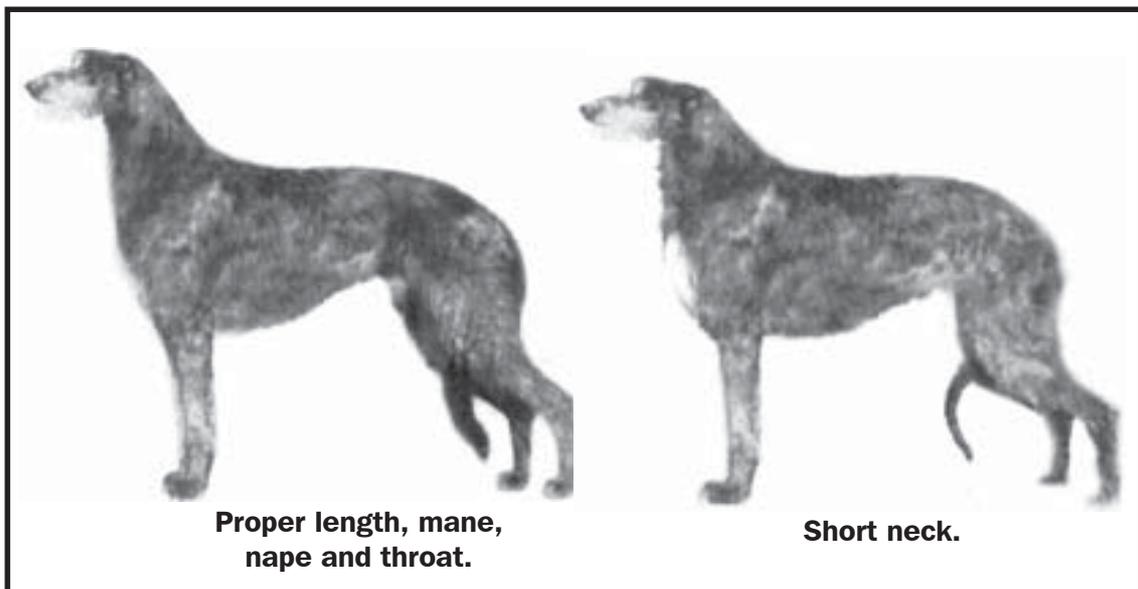
Fig. 6 – Correct bite

- **NECK**

Very strong with good reach sometimes disguised by mane. Nape of neck very prominent where head is set on, no throatiness.

The neck must be powerfully muscled, strong and arched, wide at the base and clean at the throat. The nape is strong, prominent and very muscular. The mane, “which every good specimen should have,” is composed of longer and thicker hair, which extends the length of the neck and forms a ruff at the sides. This sometimes detracts from the actual length of the neck, which should be in proportion to the rest of the dog. In his working gait, the double suspension gallop, an incorrectly set neck or one lacking muscle would hinder the Deerhound’s working ability.

Fig. 7 - Necks

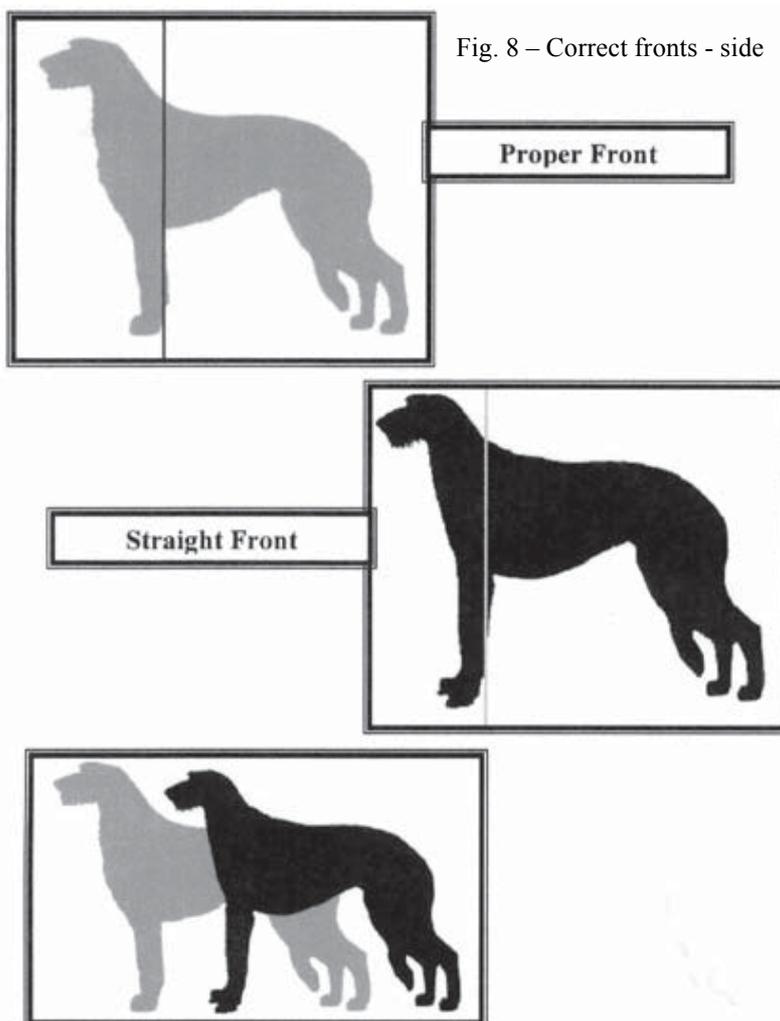


● FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders well laid, not too far apart. Loaded and straight shoulders undesirable. Forelegs straight, broad and flat, a good broad forearm and elbow being desirable.

Shoulders should be well sloped; blades well back and not too much width between them. Loaded and straight shoulders are very bad faults. Clean, set sloping. The shoulder (scapula), and upper arm (humerus) are equally long and align the elbow with the bottom of the deep brisket. When viewed from the side, a correctly laid-back shoulder blade and properly returned upper arm will bring the elbow well under the shoulder blade at the deepest part of the chest.

This assembly (construction) allows for a properly filled in fore chest. In contrast, a hollow or shallow fronted dog in profile will have a forward set front that will show a gap between the elbow and deepest part of the chest. The double suspension gallop requires well-laid shoulders that absorb the shock when the front legs hit the ground. Shoulders must be well muscled but not loaded. If there is too much width between the shoulder blades, look for loaded or straight shoulders, which are very bad faults.



Legs should be broad and flat, and good broad forearms and elbows are desirable. Forelegs strong and quite straight, with elbows neither in nor out. The straight foreleg is seen from the front with feet pointing forward rather than in or out. The pasterns should be slightly sloping, able to flex and absorb impact. Weak pasterns are a very bad fault.

The Deerhound standard refers to “broad and flat” legs. This does not refer simply to bone. The need for adequate bone and muscle mass is obvious if one considers the work of the deerhound. A well-developed leg of substantial bone and ample muscling is very important.

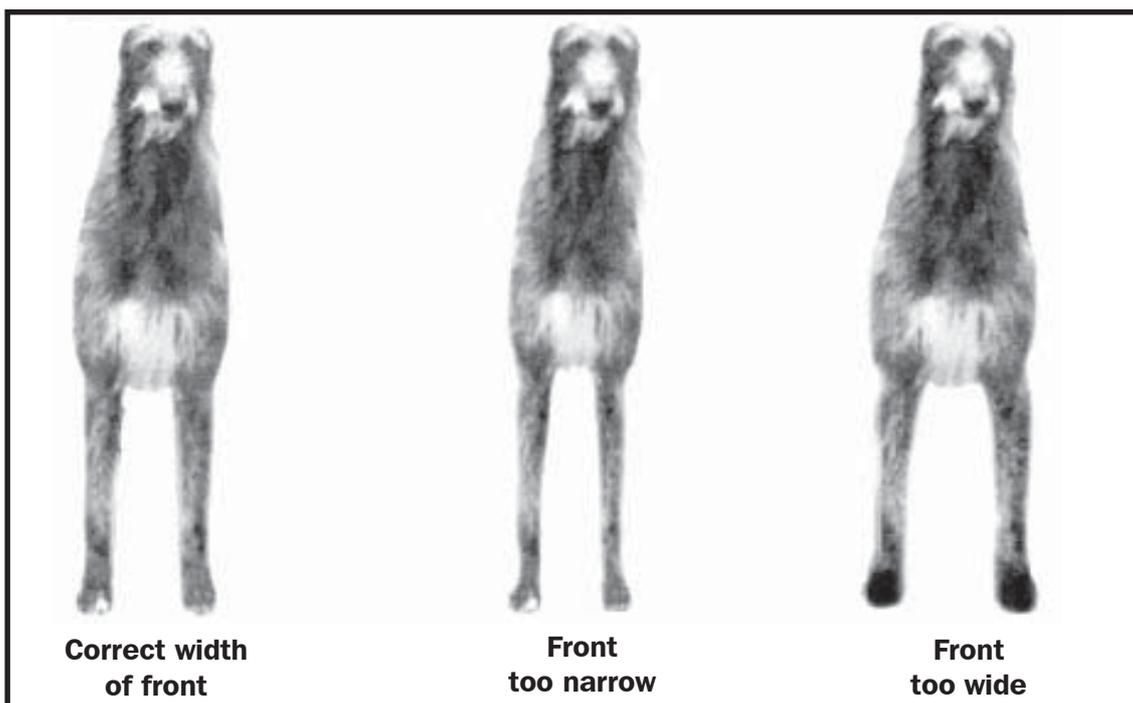


Fig.9 – Fronts – front view.

● BODY

Body and general formation that of a greyhound of larger size and bone. Chest deep rather than broad, not too narrow and flat-sided. Loin well arched and drooping to tail. Flat topline undesirable.

General formation is that of a Greyhound of larger size and bone. Long, very deep in brisket, well-sprung ribs and great breadth across hips.

At the time that the English version of the Scottish Deerhound standard was written, the comparison to the general conformation of “a Greyhound of larger size and bone” was applicable. Today the large range in Greyhound size makes it less so. The Deerhound’s body should be slightly longer than tall. The Deerhound can be viewed as a series of flowing curves and should never appear overly angular, flat or straight in any aspect of his outline. The topline should flow from the well-muscled neck into well-laid-back shoulders to the level back, and then rise slightly and smoothly over the loin. Note that the rise does not commence at the withers. The topline then flows into the croup and down to the tail. There should never be a dip or a rise behind the withers, or in the back, before the topline begins to rise at the loin. Chest deep rather than broad but not too narrow or slab-sided. Good girth of chest is indicative of great lung power.

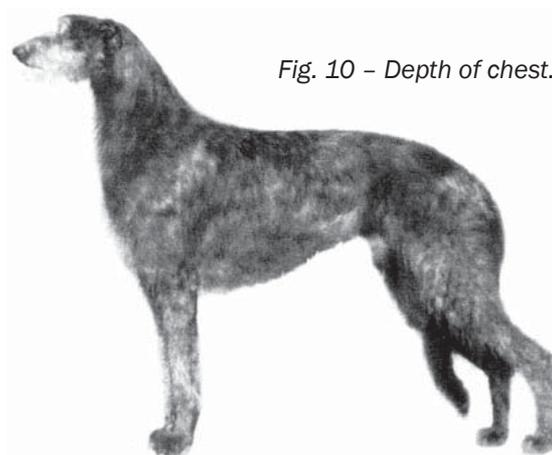


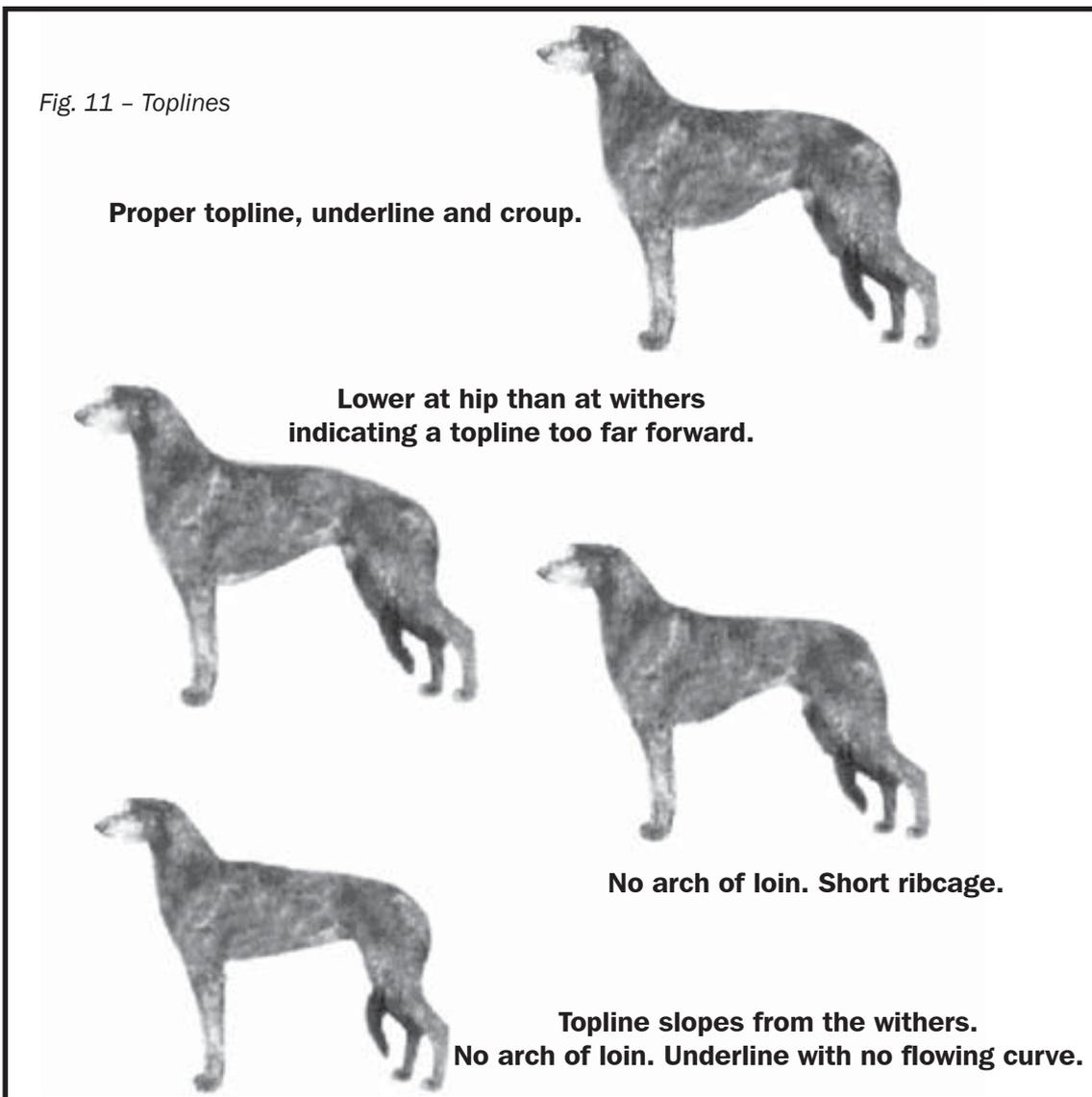
Fig. 10 – Depth of chest.

The chest is both deep and well sprung, although not a “barrel” chest. Old books about Deerhounds describe the chest circumference as 5 – 10 cms greater than the dog’s height at the withers.

The loin well arched and drooping to the tail. A straight back is not desirable, this formation being unsuited for uphill work, and very unsightly.

Faulty topline include flat loins, roach or wheel-back, an inflexible arch, arch too far forward and/or not over the loin, and sloping topline (setter or shepherd type). All of these topline would hinder deerhound movement during the double-suspension gallop, which requires a very flexible topline. The croup is a long, smooth continuation of the curve of the loin and should not be flat, short or abrupt.

The underline should again consist of flowing curves from the full fore chest to the deep brisket to the well-tucked-up loin. The deepest part of the brisket falls between the elbows. The tuck-up allows for flexion during the double-suspension gallop and should never be absent. The depth of the ribs should extend well back and not cut up too abruptly.



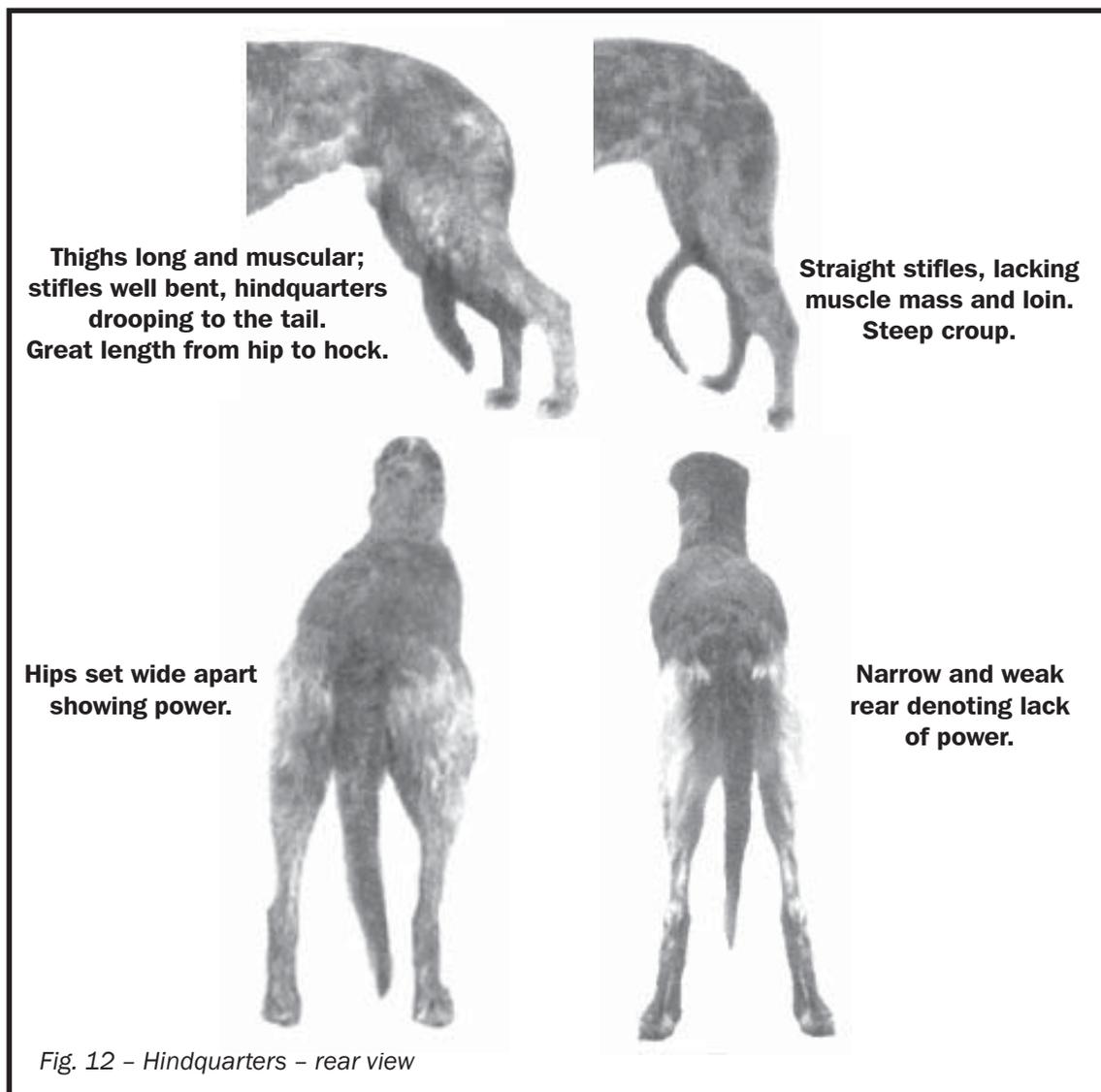
Viewed from above, the Deerhound should be well muscled through the neck, shoulders, loin, hips and hindquarters. The ribs are well sprung, not slab-sided or barrel-chested. The hips should be broader than the shoulders. The deerhound must never appear narrow or insubstantial.

● HINDQUARTERS

Drooping, broad and powerful, hips set wide apart. Hindlegs well bent at stifle with great length from hip to hock. Bone broad and flat.

The hindquarters drooping, and as broad and powerful as possible, the hips being set wide apart. A narrow rear denotes lack of power. The stifles should be well bent, with great length from hip to hock, which should be broad and flat. Cow hocks, weak pasterns, straight stifles and splay feet are very bad faults

The wide rear gives room for the muscle mass that the dog must have. The flexibility of the arched loin, the length between hip and hock, and the well-bent stifle are required to negotiate the steep hills of the Highland's rugged terrain.

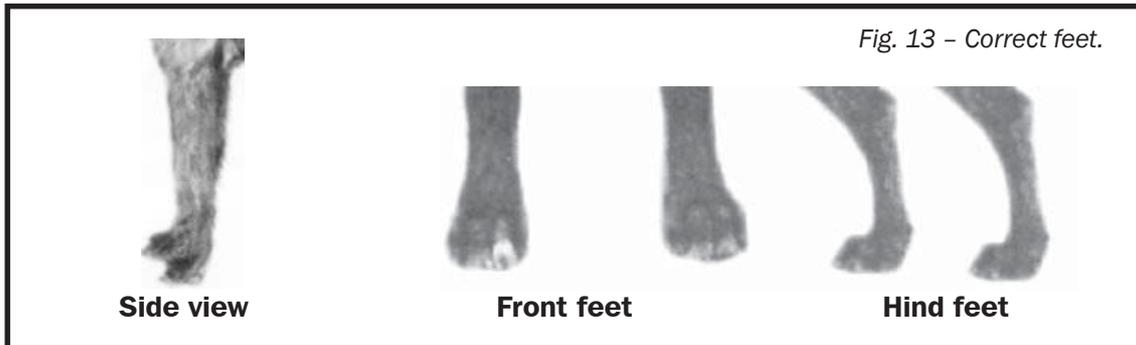


● FEET

Compact and well knuckled. Nails strong.

Feet close and compact, with well-arranged toes. Nails strong and curved.

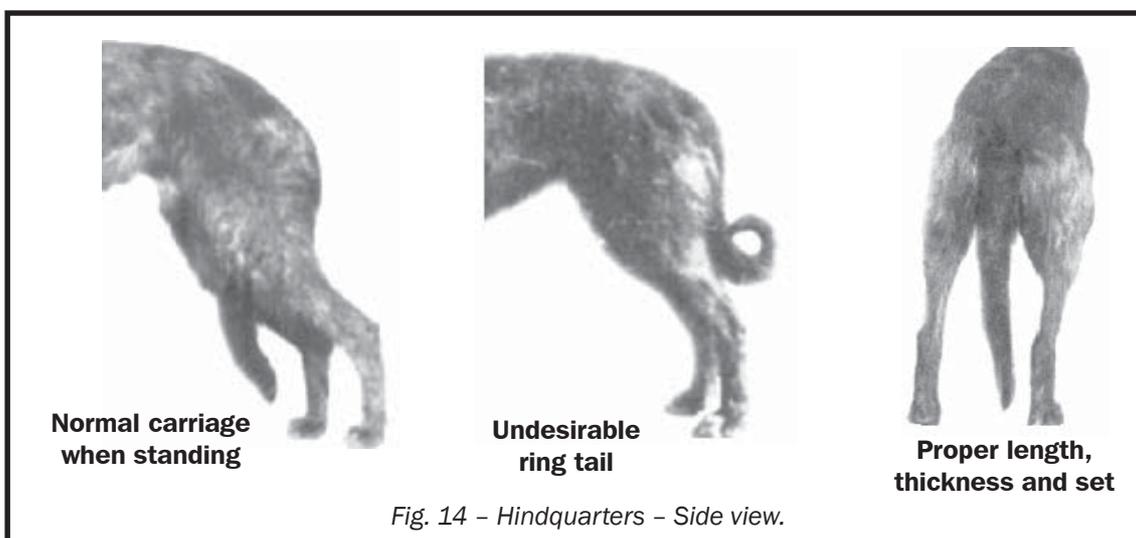
The feet must be well knuckled and strong to endure running over rough terrain. The foot must be compact but not so tight as to lose resiliency. The pads of a deerhound's foot are thick. Splayfeet could not support a Deerhound in its work and constitute a very bad fault. The hound to gain purchase in rough terrain uses strong nails.



● TAIL

Long, thick at root, tapering and reaching almost to ground. When standing dropped perfectly straight down or curved. Curved when moving, never lifted above line of back. Well covered with hair; on upper side thick and wiry, on under side longer, and towards end a slight fringe is not objectionable. A curl or ring tail undesirable.

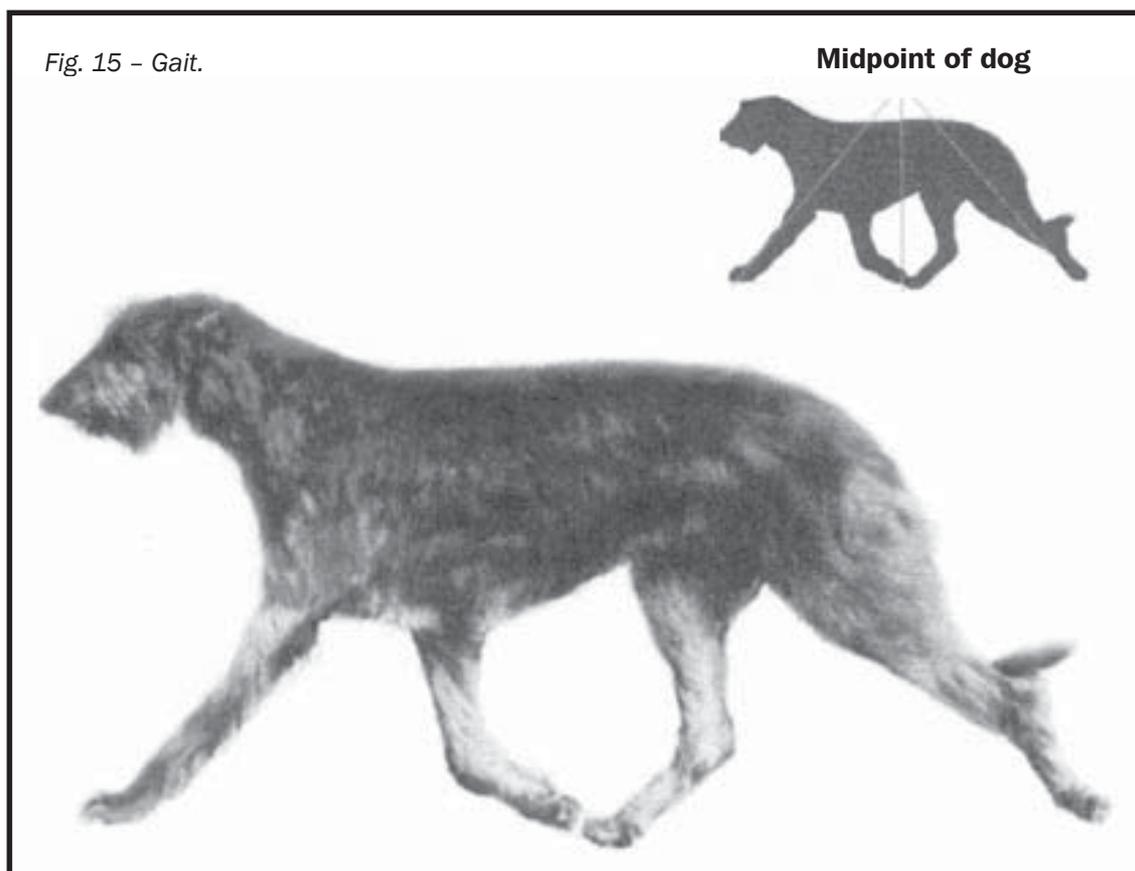
Some variation in length of tail is allowed; the tail should fall somewhere within the area between 4cms off the ground and 4cms below the hocks. The tail should be long, thick and strong as it is used as a counterbalance when the dog turns. It should be set on and carried low; continuing the flowing curve of the topline. It should never be carried above the topline. At the trot the tail will assume a lovely curve with the tip carried slightly above hock level. Ringtails are undesirable.



● GAIT/MOVEMENT

Easy, active and true, with a long stride.

Easy, active and true. The gait should be effortless and tireless, covering the ground smoothly while being propelled by the powerful rear. The front moves well out from under the head, staying close to the ground and conserving energy while covering the terrain. A large dog, moving correctly and with a great stride, will have a characteristic lightness to his gait. This is not to be confused with a high stepping, mincing gait, wrist flipping or other wasted movements.



● COAT

Shaggy, but not over coated. Woolly coat unacceptable. The correct coat is thick, close-lying, ragged; harsh or crisp to the touch. Hair on body, neck and quarters harsh and wiry about 8 cms (3 ins) to 10 cms (4 ins) long; that on head, breast and belly much softer. A slight hairy fringe on inside of fore- and hindlegs.

The adult 3 to 4 inch coat should be coarse, close lying and ragged. It should appear shiny and healthy. Woolly coats are not acceptable. A mixed coat of silky and harsh hairs is acceptable, provided there is a significant amount of hard coat present and the coat is the correct length. Grooming should be minimal so as to preserve the natural appearance of the dog. Ears are sometimes plucked. Judicious neatening in the areas of the back skull, tuck-up and feet is permissible. There should be no signs of trimming, stripping, scissoring or clipping.

Fig. 16 - Coats

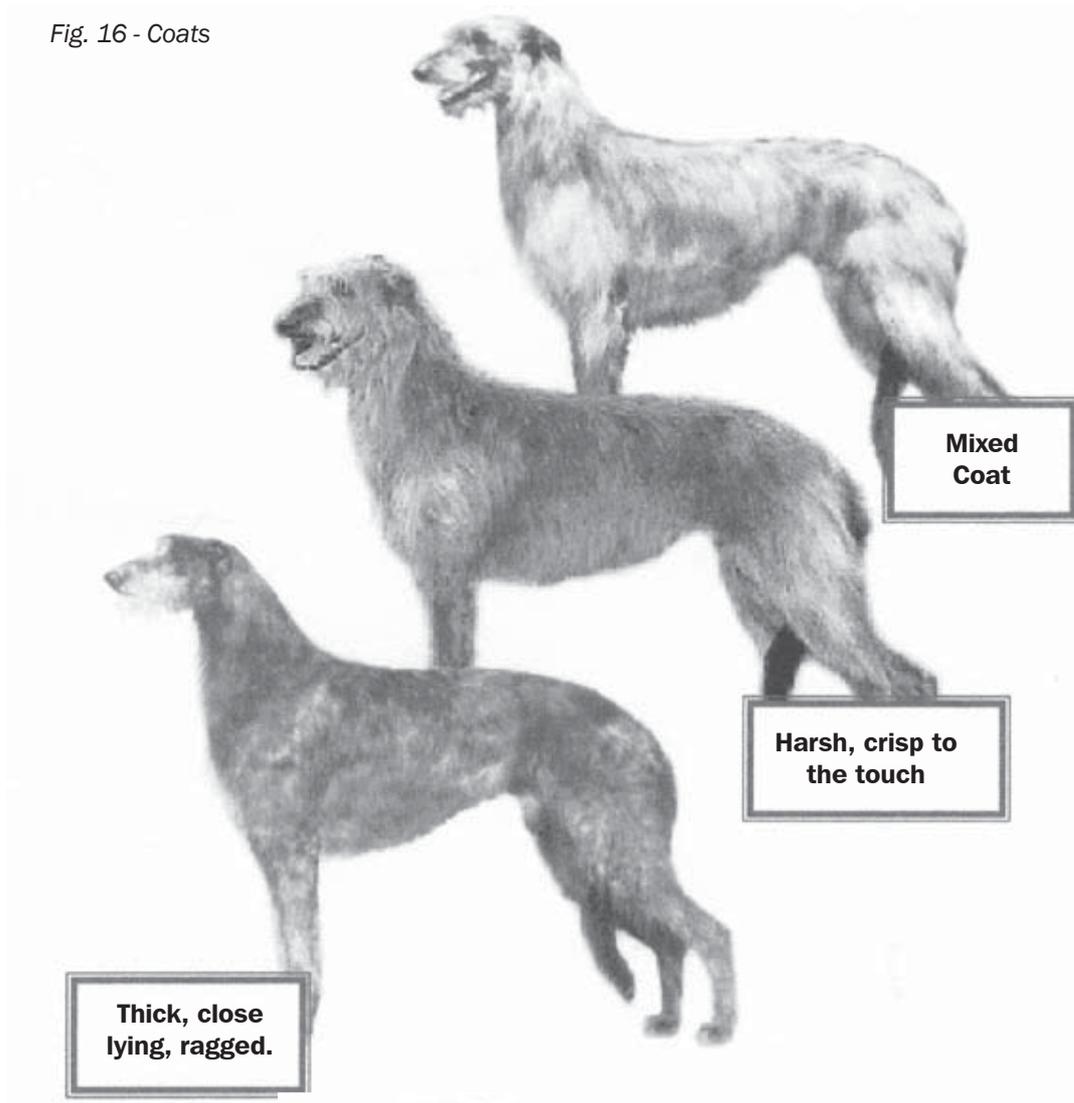


Fig. 17 – Incorrect woolly coat.

● COLOUR

Dark blue-grey, darker and lighter greys or brindles and yellows, sandy-red or red fawns with black points. A white chest, white toes and a slight white tip to stern are permissible but the less white the better, since it is a self-coloured dog. A white blaze on head or white collar unacceptable.

Today's deerhound is always some shade of grey, from nearly black to light silver. Brindles can be found in all shades of grey. One colour is not preferred over another. Red, fawn, wheaten, blue- fawn and all black masked varieties have disappeared from the gene pool. Most Deerhounds have some white in the allowed areas of chest, toes and/or tail tip, but as little white as possible is preferred. While a white blaze or collar will probably never be seen, it is unacceptable, should it emerge.

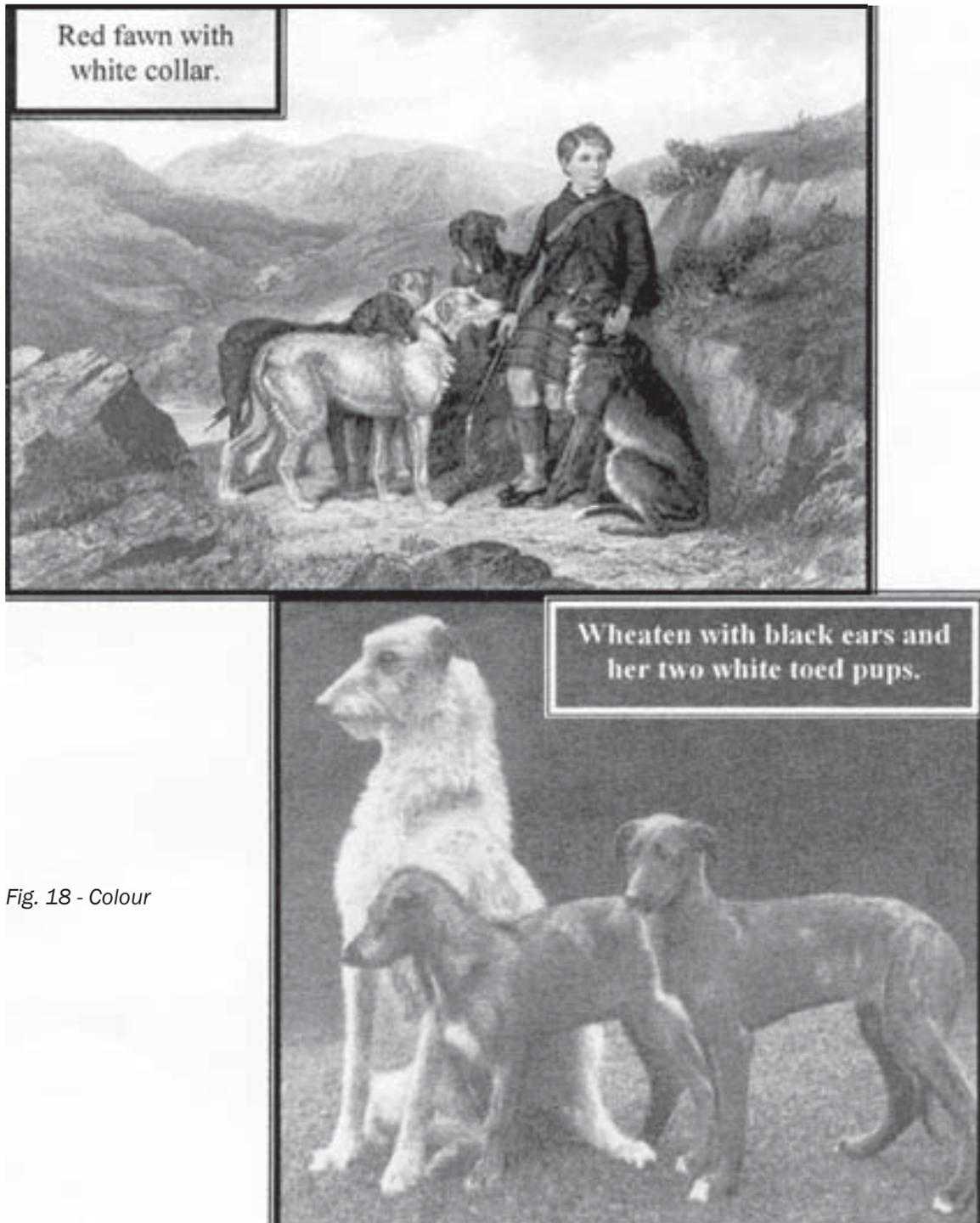


Fig. 18 - Colour

● SIZE

**Height: dogs: minimum desirable height at withers 76 cms (30 ins);
bitches: 71 cms (28 ins). Weight: dogs: about 45.5 kg (100 lbs);
bitches: about 36.5 kgs (80 lbs).**

The point of “as tall as possible consistent with quality” is very important. It speaks of balance as well as height. A Deerhound that exceeds the height/weight guidelines of the standard must also possess symmetry and not be coarse. A Deerhound with correct proportions should be slightly longer than tall. It should never appear square. Although the Deerhound is a running breed, the depth of chest and proportion of the body being slightly longer than tall do not give the impression of extreme legginess. While Deerhounds should have a substantial amount of bone and muscle, too large dogs would not be able to perform the work for which they were bred, as they would lack agility and speed. Likewise, dogs that are overly refined, lacking substance or breadth, or have too much or too little leg in proportion to body would be unable to bring down a red deer over rough terrain. Gender should be immediately apparent at first glance: dogs should have a definite masculine presence and bitches a distinct air of femininity.

● 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.

POINTS OF THE DEERHOUND IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. TAKEN FROM THE STANDARD PUBLISHED IN 1892 BY THE DEERHOUND CLUB (U.K.).

1. **Typical**-A Deerhound should resemble a rough-coated Greyhound of larger size and bone.
2. **Movements**-Easy, active and true.
3. **Height**-As tall as possible consistent with quality.
4. **Head**-Long, level, well balanced, carried high.
5. **Body**-Long, very deep in brisket, well sprung ribs and great breadth across hips.
6. **Forelegs**-Strong and quite straight, with elbows neither in nor out.
7. **Thighs**-Long and muscular, second thighs well muscled, stifles NICELY bent.
8. **Loins**-Well arched, and belly well drawn up.
9. **Coat**-Rough and hard, with softer beard and brows.
10. **Feet**-Close, compact, with well knuckled toes.
11. **Ears**-Small (dark) with Greyhound like carriage.

12. **Eyes**-Dark, moderately full.
13. **Neck**-Long, well arched, very strong with prominent nape.
14. **Shoulders**-Clean, set sloping.
15. **Chest**-Very deep but not too narrow.
16. **Tail**-Long and curved slightly, carried low.
17. **Teeth**-Strong and level.
18. **Nails**-Strong and curved.

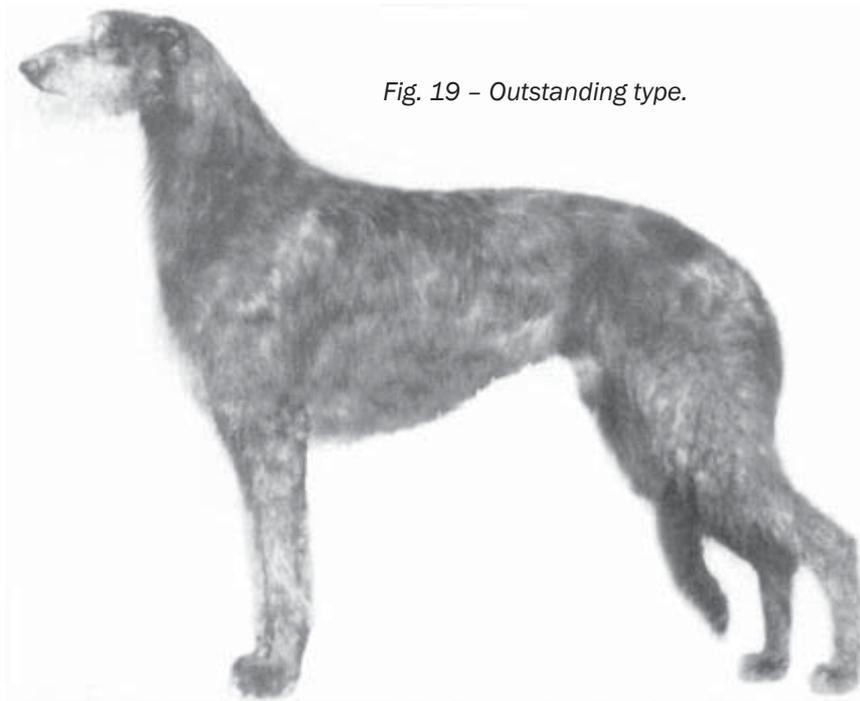


Fig. 19 - Outstanding type.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Scottish Deerhound Club of America for permission to use the Illustration of the standard published by the Club.

This Scottish Deerhound Club of America Publication was compiled and edited by diverse Scottish Deerhound breeders, owners, exhibitors and American Kennel Club Judges all of whom are long time members of the Scottish Deerhound Club of America.

Their combined knowledge spans over 150 years of experience with this most gentle and loving breed.

The undying love of this dog is the underlying drive for perfection in conformation, health and longevity.

The Scottish Deerhound Club of America and the Judges Education Committee sincerely thank you for your interest and desire for thorough understanding of the Scottish Deerhound.

The American Kennel Club for the history of the Breed.