

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD



Extended Breed Standard of **THE FINNISH LAPPHUND**

Produced by
The Finnish Lapphund Club of Victoria Inc
In conjunction with the Finnish Lapphund Club Of NSW Inc
and in collaboration with the
Australian National Kennel Council Ltd

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BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

For hundreds of years the Lapps have used dogs of the same type as the Finnish Lapphund as reindeer herders and watchdogs in Finnish Scandinavia and in the northern parts of Russia. Because of these dogs, the first standard of the Lapponian Herder was established by the Finnish Kennel Club in 1945. The breed name was changed to Lapphund in 1967.

In the 1970s, the type and picture of the breed became fixed and the standard has since been updated several times. The breed name was changed to Finnish Lapphund in 1993. The breed type has become stable in a short time and today the breed is very popular in the whole of Finland, mainly as a house and hobby dog.



BRIEF HISTORY

The Finnish Lapphund is by tradition a herder of reindeer, its function requiring the gathering and holding together of significantly large herds of moving and migrating reindeer in sub-zero conditions, requiring bursts of high speed, great agility, and frequent vocalisation. It should be emphasised that the Finnish Lapphund must be fit for function, with the correct structure and movement to perform this traditional work. Anything which would affect the dog's ability to work as a reindeer herder is a fault.

The breed standard of the Finnish Lapphund has been intentionally kept somewhat open. Minor details have never played an important part in the show rings of breeding programs, let alone when choosing a "friend for life". Therefore, while dogs are easily identified as Finnish Lapphunds, there is still a great deal of variation within the breed – that is the beauty of the Finnish Lapphund.

Often, a breed standard only provides a description of the breeds' anatomy, and that is also the case when it comes to that of the Finnish Lapphund – that “certain something” that makes a Lapphund, a Lapphund remains unclear.

This booklet was compiled in order to guide judges and breeders; anyone who reads this should create a mental picture of the typey, correct Finnish Lapphund, as well as pay attention to those fundamental features that make a Lapphund look like a typical representative of the breed.

! GENERAL APPEARANCE

Smaller than medium sized, its conformation is strong for its size, slightly longer than the height at the withers. Long and thick coated with pricked ears.

The general appearance is the most essential section of the standard. The cynological type, proportions and the overall picture are described in that section.

Furthermore, the general appearance should be the deciding factor when a judge places a dog at a show. Even an excellent specimen of the breed may have minor faults when it comes to details, but it is the general appearance that should immediately reveal a dog's breed and gender, as well as indicate type at first glance.

What is more, the general appearance also is the most difficult feature to judge – a typey appearance cannot be fully described in words, it is something that one has to learn to recognise.

So the general appearance is of the utmost importance in judging. In the show ring there are often dogs that admittedly are “long-haired spitz” but not Finnish Lapphunds. Abundant coat and upright carriage, together with an acceptable construction can easily fool a judge into placing a dog well, even though the dog is missing that “certain something” that makes a Lapphund, a Lapphund.

There are Finnish Lapphunds that resemble Eurasiers, coloured Samoyeds or an “average spitz” in general. It is only the breed-specific appearance and expression, correct proportions and movement, as well as correct coat that make a Lapphund.

With respect to its size, the Finnish Lapphund is strongly built, and, what is more, the impression of strength is accentuated by an abundant, thick, erect coat. The lavish furnishings make the head and limbs in particular appear considerably stronger than they are in reality. Furthermore, the coat makes the body look both broader and deeper – in other words, rounder. Therefore, it is always necessary to go over a dog by using the hands.

Proportions too, can be distorted because of the coat. A heavily coated dog can easily appear low-legged. The especially abundant and long hair on the chest, and in the rear in particular, make a dog appear longer than it really is. It requires a lot of practice before one is able to see the dog itself underneath the coat.

Despite their strength, the Finnish Lapphund should express a certain softness. It should never create a picture of a sharp and snappish dog. The Lapphund essence and appearance must create an image of a serene dog that has respect for people. A typical disposition is seen in a dog's carriage, tail set, movement and expression.

This humility and submissiveness is particularly characteristic of bitches. It should be noted that both pricked and tipped ears are equally acceptable.

! IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

The depth of the body is slightly less than half of the height at the withers. The muzzle is slightly shorter than the skull. The skull is slightly longer than broad, the depth is the same as the breadth.

When it comes to proportions, the Finnish Lapphund is slightly longer than tall – by no means does this mean square proportions!

Compared to many other spitz breeds, the Lapphund has a lower carriage, and it is not as alert in the show ring. These factors, combined with the abundant coat and the fact that bitches in particular tend to keep their tails down, contribute to the fact that the Finnish Lapphund acceptably, in fact desirably, appears long-bodied and low-legged rather than short-bodied and high legged.

Whereas the Lapponian Herder represents pure trotting type, the Finnish Lapphund is a mixture of different cynological types. Both the Finnish Lapphund and Lapponian Herder descend from the varied canine population in Lapland; the Finnish Lapphund originated from dogs that were used at a time when reindeer were kept under constant supervision.

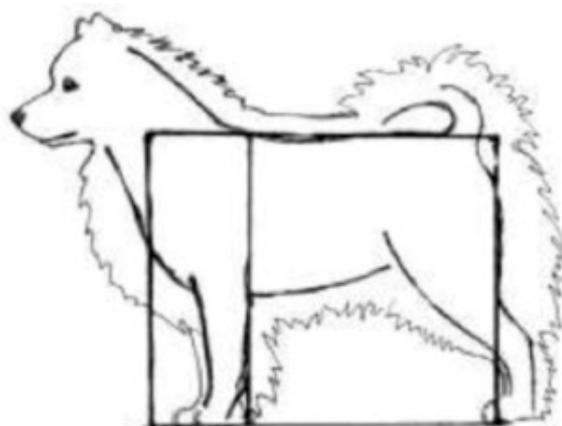
The dog's task was mostly to guard and keep the flock together. Later on, when the reindeer no longer were under 24-hour supervision but wandered freely in the woods, it was necessary to have a dog that was able to run long distances and gather up the flock.

The Lapponian Herder type was better suited for this than the Finnish Lapphund, as more stamina was needed. This is why the Finnish Lapphund is slightly less angulated and has a shorter body than the Lapponian Herder.

However, even today, the Finnish Lapphund still possesses features that are characteristic of a hardy dog; those characteristics were vital as the working days were long and hard.

Considering the two breeds similar backgrounds and the several common ancestors, Lapponian Herder-like features in a Finnish Lapphund should not be regarded as major a fault as features referring to other breeds.

(Illustration)
An example of correct proportions and balanced body, 9 as to 10.



Dogs that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance.



Very good head and bone, and even though the tail set is rather loose, it does not disturb the excellent general outline.



Excellent dog in general outline, though the upper arm is slightly short and upright.



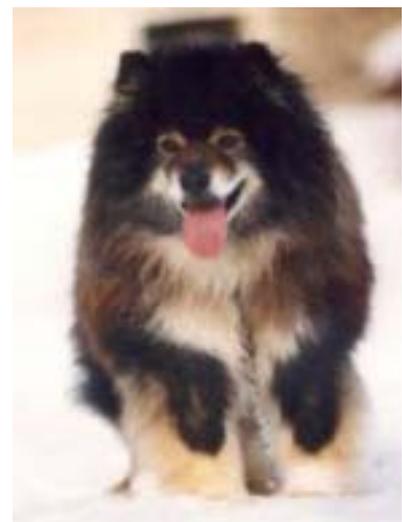
Tipped ears. Excellent type. Pay attention to his very characteristic appearance.



Strong male, though should have a stronger head.



Very promising youngster, not in full coat yet.



Strong bone, excellent in general. Extremely good head and expression.

Bitches that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance.



Very beautiful bitch with an excellent feminine appearance



Strong body, good head



Strong in bone and head, still not too masculine



Beautiful bitch, not too long in body, though not even a bitch should be any longer than this



Well angulated, strong in bone, not in full coat



Young bitch, very beautiful expression

Finnish Lapphunds displaying faulty general appearance.



1. Short and light

Short in body, light in bone and head. Lacks angulation, too little coat.



2. High legged.

Too high in leg and hock.



3. Heavy

Way too heavy and low-legged.



4. Long

Too long in body and low in leg. Shoulder blade positioned too far in front and too upright.

These illustrations demonstrate how the coat makes the body appear longer. More important than the relation of the height and length is what the length consists of:

In Picture 1 it consists of a strong front and rear as well as a relatively short back whereas, in Picture 2, it consists of a weak front and rear combines with a long back and loin.



Picture 1

Picture 2

! TEMPERAMENT

Keen, courageous, calm and willing to learn. Friendly and faithful.

Temperament is the most essential section in the standard. A dog with a faulty construction is still a good companion, if it is good natured.

So, what is an ideal temperament like? A Finnish Lapphund with an ideal temperament is suited for its purpose, and in harmony with the people and animals around it; its owner in particular. Evaluation of the temperament is, of necessity, rather superficial in the show ring, as the time allocated to each dog is limited.

The Finnish Lapphund should be calm and friendly, as well as submissive towards people. It may be a little bit distant, but never timid, although bitches may seem a little shy.

Excessive sharpness and snarling are by no means acceptable features in Lapphunds, not even in males.

The Finnish Lapphund should under no circumstances show any signs of aggression towards people.

The need to cooperate and interact with people is characteristic of herding dogs. This can often be seen in the show ring, as many Lapphunds tend to keep contact with their handlers instead of focusing on other dogs in the ring, or outside the ring.

! HEAD AND SKULL

Strong in outline, rather broad.

Cranial region:

Skull – Broad, slightly convex. the forehead is rather domed. The frontal furrow is clearly defined.

Stop – Clearly defined.

Facial Region:

Nose – Preferably black, yet harmonising with the coat colour.

Muzzle – Strong, broad and straight; viewed from above and in profile, evenly tapering, but only slightly.

Lips – Tight.

Cheeks – The zygomatic arches are clearly marked (defined).

! EYES

Dark brown in colour, yet harmonising with the coat colour, oval shaped. The expression is soft and friendly.

! EARS

Medium sized. Carried erect or semi-erect, set rather far apart. Triangular in shape, rather broad at the base. Very mobile.

! MOUTH

The jaws are strong. Scissor bite.

! NECK

Medium in length, strong and covered with profuse hair.

HEADS

Head features should be strong; yet the expression should be soft. A correct “teddy-bear like”, friendly expression is attained when the skull is broad and slightly convex, the stop is clearly defined and the muzzle is strong, broad and shorter than the skull. The muzzle tapers only a little bit towards the nose and should be “full” and well cushioned.

The jaws should be strong and broad. Special attention must be paid on the bottom jaw; it must be sufficiently strong. The juncture between muzzle and skull must be straight in profile, and furthermore, the stop must be clearly defined, forming an angle with the muzzle. The frontal furrow is clearly defined too and must be visible through the coat.

Ears must be set rather far apart, not on top of the head, nor too close to each other. They should be quite small in size, triangular, broad at the base and round at the top – by no means long or pointed. Furthermore, the ears must be heavily coated, so that they are protected against the cold and mosquitos. Large, pointed or short-coated ears are a fault.

Semi-erect ears are equally as acceptable as erect ears. Drop ears, however, are faulty, though not disqualifying. What is more, odd ears (one erect, the other semi-erect) are acceptable.

Eyes must be oval in shape and as dark as possible. Brown dogs may have lighter eyes, though not yellow. Blue eyes should be considered a serious departure from the eye colour description in the standard. Large round eyes occur sometimes – they are faulty.

The nose is preferably black. Brown dogs, however, always have a brown nose. Domino (previously known as Sable) coloured dogs in particular may have a light streak on the nose – it is not a fault.

In general, Finnish Lapphunds have a scissor bite, although a level bite is acceptable too. A clearly overshot or undershot mouth is a disqualifying fault. Premolars may sometimes be missing; this should always be mentioned in the written critique.

Excellent Heads and Expressions



Excellent, strong, masculine head



Very good profile. Note the clearly defined stop and hairy ears.



Beautiful male with soft expression. good “full” muzzle.

Excellent Heads and Expressions



Nice headed young male



Young male with rounded ears



Excellent, soft, friendly female expression



Very beautiful female expression



Correct pricked ears at rest



Excellent feminine head, acceptable odd ears

Faulty Heads and Expressions



Stop not clearly defined; long, thin muzzle



Strong head but lacking in stop and typical Lapphund expression.



Too large, German Shepherd Dog-like ears



Drop ears - must be penalised

! BODY

Withers – Muscular and broad, only slightly marked (not prominent).

Back – Strong and straight.

Loins – Short and muscular.

Croup – Of medium length, well developed, sloping only slightly.

Chest – Deep, rather long, reaching almost to the elbows, not very broad. The ribs are slightly arched; the forechest clearly visible but not too pronounced.

Underline – Slightly tucked up.

The body is relatively sturdy, though never heavy. Withers are only slightly marked and the topline is level; by no means sloping or roached. The Finnish Lapphund often has a clearly marked anticline (dip behind the withers), and if a dog also has a lot of coat on the croup, it may create the illusion of a swayback.

The loin is short, though bitches generally have a little bit longer loin than dogs. The croup is only slightly oblique, of medium length, and broad (especially on bitches).

(Illustration) High rear end is due to an upright croup – hence, the rear quarters are underneath the body. Low tail set.



Very upright croups sometimes occur, which is why some dogs tend to keep their rear quarters underneath their body. The chest is in no way exaggerated. A broad chest resembling a barrel causes a dog to elbow out, which leads to incorrect front movement. Also, too narrow chests occur, but too broad a chest still affects a dog's action more harmfully than a slightly narrow chest. Furthermore, the chest should not be too deep either. It should almost reach the elbows, but never go below them.

! FOREQUARTERS

General Appearance – Powerful with strong bones.

Viewed from the front straight and parallel.

Shoulders – Slightly oblique.

Upper Arm – As long as the shoulder blade. The angle between shoulder and upper arm is rather open.

Elbows – Placed slightly lower than the lower edge of the ribcage, pointing straight backwards.

Forearm – Rather strong, vertical.

Carpus (Wrist) – Flexible.

Pastern – Of medium length, slightly sloping.

! HINDQUARTERS

General Appearance – Strong boned, powerful. Viewed from behind, straight and parallel. The angulation is clearly marked but not too strongly.

Upper Thigh – Of medium length, rather broad with well developed muscles.

Stifles – Pointed forward, the angulation is clearly marked (well angulated).

Second Thigh – Relatively long and sinewy.

Hock Joint – Moderately low set; the angulation is clearly marked but not too strongly. (Moderate angulation)

Metatarsus (Rear Pastern) – Rather short, strong and vertical.

! FEET

Well-arched, oval rather than round, covered with dense hair. The pads are elastic with the sides covered with dense hair. Rear dewclaws are not desirable.

! TAIL

Set rather high, medium in length, covered with profuse and long hair. The tip of the tail may have a J-formed hook. In movement the tail is curved over the back or side; at rest it may hang down.

! GAIT/MOVEMENT

Effortless. Changes easily from a trot to a gallop, which is the most natural style of movement. The legs move parallel. Agile and fast when working.

LIMBS AND MOVEMENT

The limbs are powerful with strong bones. Judges should always go over the limbs with their hands, as the hair on the legs is often very deceiving. When standing, the limbs are parallel seen from the front and rear, whereas on the move, ideal front action is not completely straight and parallel but resembles that of the wolverine; in other words, the Finnish Lapphund toes in slightly and the front quarters make an arch. The Lapphund tends to move so that it only leaves a single trail (resembling a string of pearls) on the ground – this should not be misinterpreted as narrow movement. In addition, if the pasterns are heavily coated, rear movement may appear narrower than it actually is.

(Illustrations)

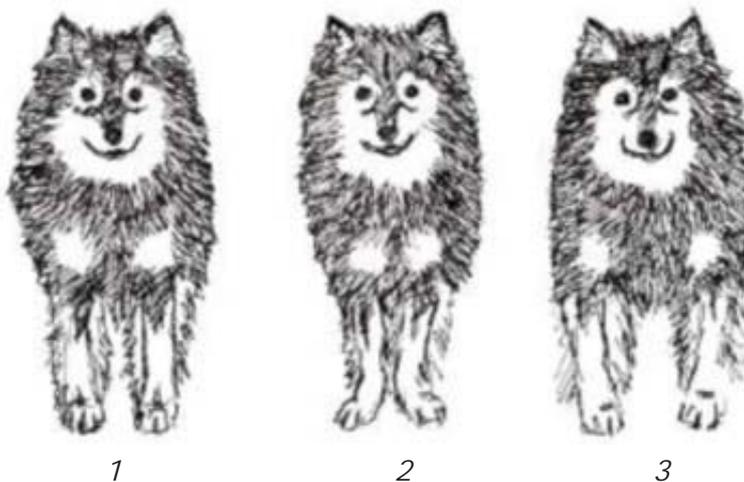
Coming: Note that front action is not completely straight and parallel.

Going: Note the tendency towards only leaving a single trail on the ground.



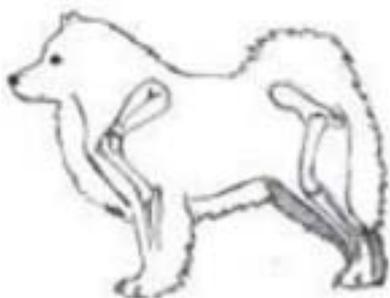
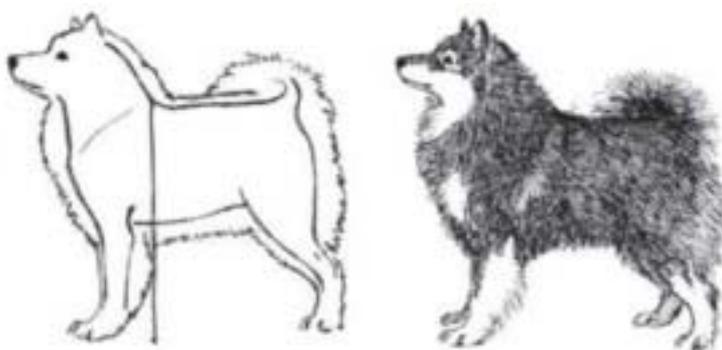
Seen from the front, the breadth of chest is correct when there is enough room for one hand, though the size of the dog must be taken into account. Too narrow fronts occur in Lapphunds but there are also too broad fronts, which is why some dogs tend to elbow out on the move.

1. Correct front
2. Narrow chest
3. Broad chest



The angulation is clearly marked, but not too strongly. Sometimes Finnish Lapphunds can be 'over angulated', but now a days it is more common to see dogs that have very poor, almost non-existent angulation. Front angulation especially should be paid more attention. The shoulder blade and upper arm must be equally long, and the angle that they form must be clearly marked. A common fault is for the dog to have a short, upright upper arm, which is why the forelimbs are set too far in front instead of being underneath the body where they support the weight of the chest. Additionally, a short upper arm leads to short and ineffective or hackneyed movement. Pasterns are slightly oblique and flexible. An upright pastern cannot function properly as a "shock absorber", and the same goes for an overly bent, weak pastern. A correctly angulated front is of utmost importance; it is the front that is strained most, especially on the move.

This dog has a good rear, but the upper arm is upright, which is why the forelimbs are set in front of the line going down from the withers.



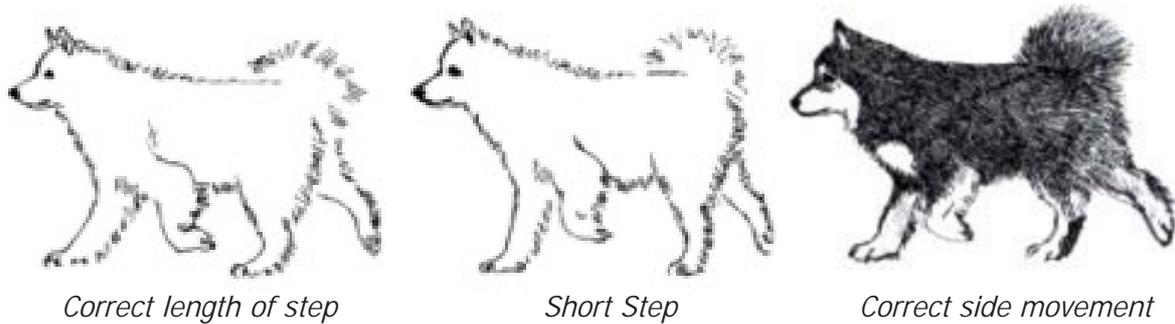
In order to achieve the proper strength on the move, a dog must have correct rear angulation – clearly marked but not exaggerated. It is a good idea to feel the hind angulation with your hands, especially on heavily coated Lapphunds. The surprisingly long hair on the front of the thighs and on the back of the pasterns can be misleading (see illustration)

Furthermore, in order to achieve powerful, effective movement, a dog must also have broad, muscular thighs and a low hock. There are Lapphunds with too high a hock. Seen from the rear, the pads on the hind limbs must be entirely visible on the move. Poorly angulated, distinctly cow-hocked hind limbs are a common fault. Such a dog moves inefficiently in the rear, and the risk for patella luxation is higher, so this fault must be penalised in the show ring.



This dog has a good front but the rear angulation is far to insufficient and croup too short.

At shows, movement is judged while the dog is trotting. The correct Lapphund movement is sound and effortless. Even though the Finnish Lapphund is strongly built, it should never be so heavy that its movement lacks effortlessness. When you look at a Finnish Lapphund move, you should be able to imagine it working for days on end on the fells in Lapland. When running freely, the Finnish Lapphund changes relatively easily from a trot to a gallop, but nevertheless, it has to have a long enough step; a short stepping dog does not possess sufficient endurance, nor is it, in all likelihood, well enough constructed in order to gallop efficiently either.



! TAIL

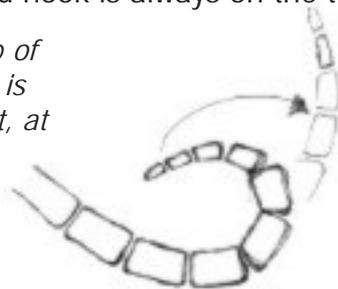
Set rather high, medium in length, covered with profuse and long hair. The tip of the tail may have a J-formed hook. In movement the tail is curved over the back or side; at rest it may hang down.

The tail is relatively high set. On the move it is curled over the back or side, whereas at rest it is often hanging down. A too tightly curled tail is not desirable on a Lapphund; instead it should be 'lively' and indicate the dog's mood, as well as balance its movement. Bitches especially (with a typical Lapphund temperament) are only too willing to drop their tails when standing still. If judges require the tail to be over the back at all times in the show ring, it results in favouring dogs who are too dominant. The tail is correctly set when you are able to bend it over the back by hand – if it is too low set, this is not possible. If a dog is excellent in every other way, a loosely curved tail alone should not affect its judgment.

Kinks and 'J' Shaped hooks.

Some Lapphunds have a 'J' shaped hook on the tip of the tail, which might be curved even to great extent, but it is always possible to straighten it by hand. A hook of this type is entirely acceptable. However, a kink, i.e. vertebrae grown together, is a disqualifying fault. A kink can appear in any part of the tail (in the spine at its worst), whereas the 'J' shaped hook is always on the tip of the tail.

'J' shaped hook; the tip of the tail is curved, but it is possible to straighten it, at least to some extent.



Kink; vertebrae grown together.



! COAT

Skin – Tight overall without wrinkles.

Hair – Profuse, the males especially have an abundant mane. The outer coat is long, straight and harsh. On the head and on the front of the legs, the coat is shorter. There must be a soft and dense undercoat.

The coat is thick and profuse. The outer coat is straight and it absolutely has to be harsh so that it does not gather snow. What is more, a harsh coat does not get wet in a similar way to a soft coat; it is water-resistant. The outer coat is not shiny; it should be matt. The undercoat is soft, very dense and plentiful, so that it makes the outer coat stand erect. Judges should pay attention to the undercoat to make sure that it is very profuse. The outer coat may sometimes be a bit wavy (on youngsters in particular), which is not a fault, provided that it is still harsh. Curls and soft coats do not always go hand in hand; even a straight coat might be too soft. A harsh, wavy coat is much better than a straight and soft coat. The outer coat should not be so long that it 'hangs'. A flat coat is faulty. The coat on the head and on the front side of the legs is clearly shorter. Male Lapphunds in particular have a distinct mane, and the limbs should be properly furnished. Furthermore, furnishings on the ways (between toes) are desirable, and should never be trimmed. Also, the ears should be noticeably hairy.



! COLOUR

All colours are permitted. The basic colour must be dominant. Colours other than the basic colour can occur on head, neck, chest, underside of the body, on legs and tail.

All colours are permitted, as long as the basic colour is dominant. The most common colours are black, black & tan, brown, brown & tan, wolf sable, sable and cream. Most Lapphunds also have white markings, but parti-colours with white as the basic colour are undesirable. Brindle is not desired, nor the saddle-back colouring. These three colours must be penalised.



Black



Black with spectacles



Black & Tan



*Brown (with or without tan marks;
the nose is always brown)*



Wolf Sable



Cream



Domino (previously known as Sable)



Sable (red; black nose)



This much white is still acceptable



*Saddle-back (undesirable**)*



*Black and brindle (undesirable**)*



*Brindle (undesirable**)*

** Although not specifically listed as undesirable in the breed, the official interpretation in Finland is that these colours are undesirable in that they don't meet the description of acceptable colour in the breed standard.

! SIZE

Height at withers – Ideal height for males – 49cm (19.5 ins)

Ideal height for females – 44cm (17 ins)

With a tolerance of +/- 3cm (just over 1in)

Type is more important than size.

For dogs, the ideal height at the withers is 49cm (46-52cm) and for bitches 44cm (41-47cm). The type is definitely more important than the size, and slight deviations from the heights mentioned in the standard are acceptable if the dog is typey and its sex is apparent.

! 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.

Males not masculine and females not feminine.

Light head, insufficient stop.

Dropped ears.

Tail carriage continuously lower than the topline.

Over angulated or too straight rear angulation.

Lack of undercoat. Flat coat. Curly outer coat.

Basic colour indistinct.

! DISQUALIFICATIONS

Over or undershot mouth.

Kinky tail.

! NOTE

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Acknowledgements

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Working Dog Group

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