

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



## Extended Breed Standard of **THE WHIPPET**

Produced by  
The National Whippet Council (Australia)  
in conjunction with  
The Australian National Kennel Council

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## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BREED**

The Phoenicians brought sight hounds into Cornwall as early as 1,000 B.C. The Phoenicians were desperate for tin and copper, and the Cornish were equally anxious for, amongst other things, fast dogs that were able to catch the rabbits and other small game which were a major source of food. Pottery from this period, now in the British Museum, show two types of dogs - one a small fox-like animal and the other looking a little larger than our own Whippets, very lightly built with long, curled, very fine tails. Some had erect ears and others the rose type (perhaps this is where our prick ear problems came from). They appeared very arched in the back with flat ribs hardly reaching their elbows.

In the Middle Ages the larger greyhounds were always owned by the nobility, and were used for hunting such game as the royal deer. Poorer people, often at considerable risk, acquired the smaller hounds which were ideal for poaching. The best dog for poachers was the fast, silent one, who didn't advertise his presence by barking, and of a dark colour, so that he was hard for the gamekeepers to see. Perhaps this is why, to this day, the blues and blacks of the Whippet and greyhound breeds tend to be very fast. One only has to look at the racetrack to see the number of blues and blacks there in comparison to the number in the show ring.

They also needed to hunt in close cooperation with their master, and this trait is still noticeable in the modern Whippet. Whereas most Hounds hunt in a pack, with man keeping up as best he can on foot or on horseback, the Whippet works closely with his master; he will chase his game but will return, unlike many hounds.

His small size also made him the ideal lady's pet or house dog, long before the more exotic toy breeds were introduced into England, and, as John Taylor, a poet, wrote in 1630: "In shapes and forms of dogges; of which there are but two sorts that are useful for man's profit, which two are the mastiff and the little whippet, or house-dogge; all the rest are for pleasure or recreation."

Probably also because of his small size and the resulting small appetite, he became the poor man's racing dog. It is quite strange however since the early Cornish tin miners' days, other miners seem to have adopted whippet racing as their sport. This was true even in the goldfields of Western Australia where whippet racing was very popular in the early days.

The first mention of the Whippet as a show dog was on July 28, 1876, at the annual exhibition of "Sporting and Other Dogs" in Woodside Park, Darlington, in the North of England, featuring classes including Whippets. It took 14 more years for the Whippet to become recognised by the Kennel Club, Herbert Vickers requesting official recognition for the Whippet breed on April 16, 1890.

## **THE WHIPPET IN AUSTRALIA**

The popularity of the breed in Australia has increased immensely over the past 50 years. Records show that this delightful breed was imported into our country as far back as the 1940's. Mrs Waddell imported several whippets during these times along with Calpin Bartic Kennels (R Cowan & P Gibson) a very active kennel and breeder of many BIS exhibits. Calpin Bartic Kennels imported from the UK 6 whippets in 1949 and these bloodlines can be found in Waddellie (M Waddell), Flashing (T McGorien), Martinique (B Doherty & T Crowley), Rosiel (D Stewart) and Amersham (I Payne & J Karas) Kennels. Marie Waddell imported 8 whippets from the UK and all of which would appear well back in most of the lines these days.

In the 1960's Briarcliffe Rameses was imported from the UK and to see a picture of this lovely fawn dog is significant of his contribution to the gene lines in Australia.

1970 through to 1980 saw several males imported from the UK to our country namely – Ch Lowglen Oakbark Masterminde (Doherty & Crowley), Eng & Ch Allgarth Envoy (B McCowrage), Eng & Ch Dondelayo Statue (B McCowrage) & Ch Solotown Simeon (Doherty & Crowley). All of these dogs were used prolifically and contributed to the already expanding gene pool.

1980-1990 the imports into the country were several but the most influential during this time being Ch Denhills Deligate (P Adam), Eng & Ch Cottonmere Personality of Oakbark (F Pieterse) and the first import from the USA by Rothbury Kennels Amer. & Ch Delacreme Dragonslayer.

From the 1990's till present there has been a steady stream of imported males & females and all too many to mention. However, along with those mentioned earlier and blended together with our Australian lines they all have been a great asset to our Australian Whippets and many would hold their own amongst the stock from other parts of the world.

### **● GENERAL APPEARANCE**

***Balanced combination of muscular power and strength with elegance and grace of outline. Built for speed and work. All forms of exaggeration should be avoided.***

***"Balanced combination of muscular power and strength with elegance and grace of outline."*** A very important point is balance. The Whippet should convey the impression of beautifully balanced muscular power and strength combined with elegance and a graceful outline. It should be muscular but not cloddy, strong but still graceful.

**“Built for speed and work”** The Whippet is not a Toy! It is a working Hound, and everything about it is built for speed and work, from its aerodynamic outlines to its super efficient combination of strength and angulations. Yet with all this it is still elegant.

**“All forms of exaggeration should be avoided.”** Every part should be in harmony, and none exaggerated, i.e. a series of graceful curves. Every part flows smoothly into the next.

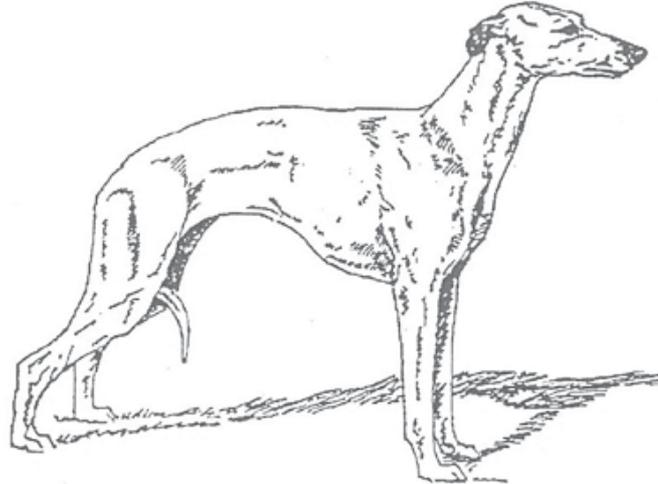


Fig. 1

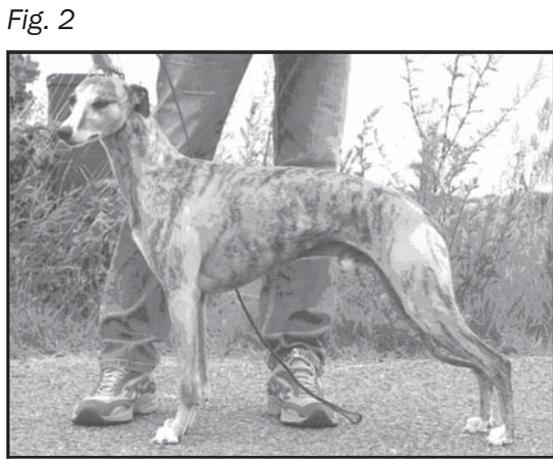


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

**Look For:** Overall balance, muscular development, great elegance and a graceful outline. He has a long lean head, small fine rose-shaped ears, a deep chest, an arched loin, a long tapering tail, a fine coat and keen sight.

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

***An ideal companion. Highly adaptable in domestic and sporting surroundings.***

**“An ideal companion.”** He is equally at home as a devoted family pet or a highly intelligent sporting dog, happy to do whatever you are doing. If you feel like lounging around at home, that is fine, he will curl up in a corner and go to sleep, always with one ear cocked to know what you may do next. If you want to go for a day in the bush, that is fine too, as he is up in a flash, ready for anything.

## ● TEMPERAMENT

***Gentle, affectionate, even disposition.***

The Whippet is one of the least aggressive of dogs, both with people and with other dogs. He is gentle and affectionate in the extreme, but will also form a very close relationship with one particular person. He is amenable to discipline and very anxious to please. Whilst all this is true, he should not be at all retiring or shy. He might not be very interested in you, as a stranger, but he most definitely should not be timid, and will, given cause, warn off intruders.

**Look For:** A relaxed but confident, even disposition. A Whippet should be neither timid nor aggressive.

## ● HEAD AND SKULL

***Long and lean, flat on top tapering to muzzle with slight stop, rather wide between the eyes. Jaws powerful and clean cut, nose black, in blues a bluish colour permitted, liver nose in creams and other dilute colours, in whites or parti-colour a butterfly nose permissible.***

Remember, balance without exaggeration. Long and lean means just that; it does not mean the longer the better. The length of skull from occiput to stop should equal the distance from stop to tip of nose; the planes of skull and muzzle should be parallel and divided by a slight stop. The head should be refined and slim, although it must be wide enough in the skull for brain development and to enable the eyes to be set rather wide apart. That is not to say that the skull should be blocky, but it should not be so refined that it resembles a Collie. Viewed from the top, the skull tapers cleanly to the muzzle and should be well filled below the eyes. The jaws must be powerful, not snippy, to enable him to grip his quarry firmly.

**“Nose black, in blues a bluish colour permitted, liver nose in creams and other dilute colours, in whites or parti-colour a butterfly nose permissible.**

Fig. 4

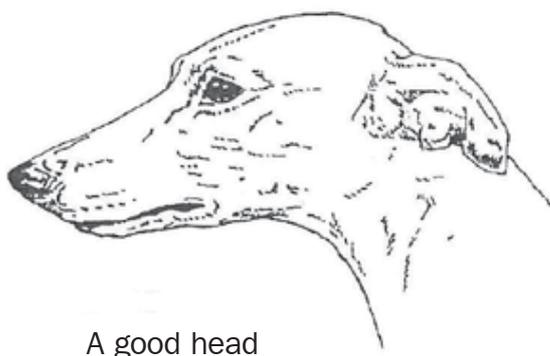


Fig. 5



**Look For:** A long, refined, balanced head with flat skull, slight stop and rather wide between the eyes.

The nose colour matches the coat colour in blues, blacks and livers, and as genetics decide this, there is not likely to be a problem here, except to be aware that a butterfly nose is perfectly acceptable in whites and parti-colours. This accepts the perfectly logical fact that the gene which dictates the colour pattern will also affect the pigmentation pattern of the nose. In all other colours, the nose must be black.

## ● EYES

***Oval, bright, expression very alert.***

A Whippet is a Sighthound; he has exceptional sight and must be very alert. From experience with Whippets in the field, they do not appear to see objects quickly until they move - but then immediately catch the slightest movement. Stand stock still in the bush and they may not see you, but flick a hand and they will certainly see it. The eyes should be of medium size and well set. If too small or deep set they give the dog a mean expression, whilst if too large and round they give the dog a starring look. Eye colour is not mentioned in the Standard, but they should harmonise with coat colour. However, a light eye tends to spoil the expression.

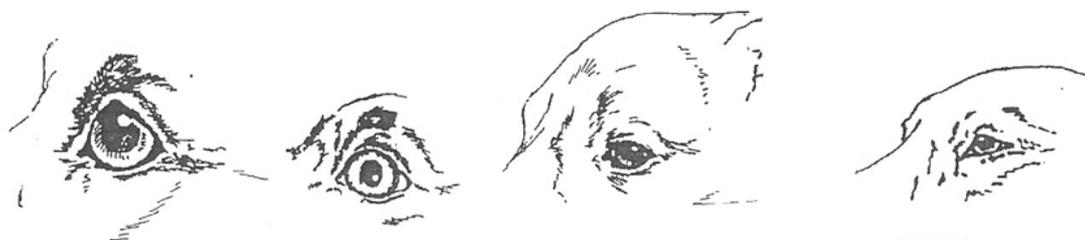
Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



*Round, prominent.  
Incorrect*

*Harsh, staring  
Incorrect*

*Too small  
Incorrect*

*Almond eyes  
Incorrect*

**Look For:** Bright, sparkling, alert, expressive eyes.

● **EARS**

**Rose shaped, small, fine in texture.**

Rose shaped means that when the ears are thrown back, they reveal the inner burr of the ear. In repose the leather of the ear should fold against the neck. When the Whippet is alert, the ears are brought forward and up in a semi erect position, retaining the rose shape with the tips pointing out and downwards. This ear carriage is essential to the correct Whippet expression. Pricked ears are incorrect & should be noted as a fault.

Fig. 9



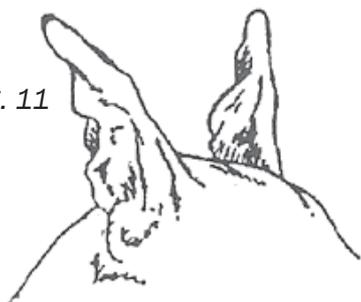
*A rose ear*

Fig. 10



*Ears may be carried semi-erect when the dog is alerted*

Fig. 11



*Fault - Flying, prick ears*

Fig. 12



*In repose or on the move the leather folds close to the neck, depicting the correct rose shape*

Fig. 13



Fig. 14



**Look For:** Small, fine rose shaped ears.

## • MOUTH

**Jaws strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.**

This is an exact description of what is required. Certainly the jaws should be strong with a correct bite for the Whippet to be able to grip and hold its quarry. It could be that if heads get too long, for instance, bad bites could creep in, even now there are signs of weak underjaws appearing; this is something to be aware of.

Fig. 15

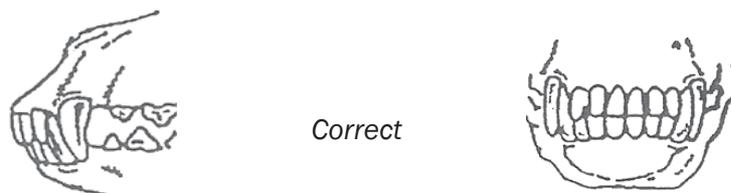
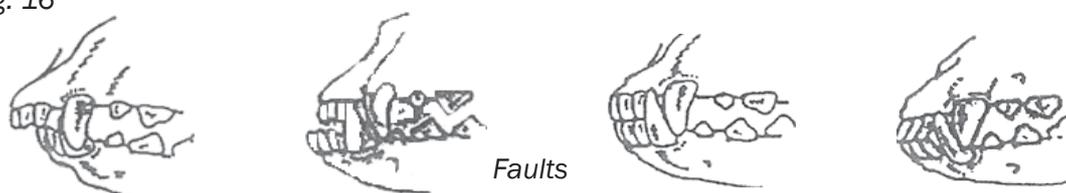


Fig. 16



**Look For:** Totally correct bites and strong jaws.

## • NECK

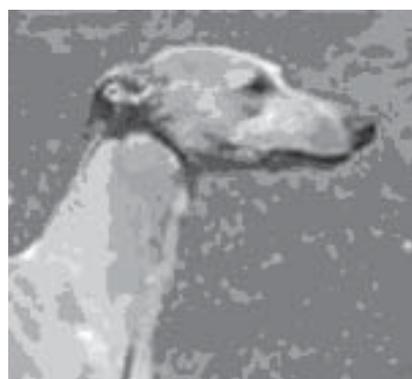
**Long, muscular, elegantly arched.**

Again, remember balance with nothing exaggerated. Fashion often seems to dictate that the longer something is the better it is; this is not necessarily so. The neck should be long, muscular and slightly arched to enable the dog to reach and grab a rabbit, which jinks from side to side in flight. The neck needs to be flexible enough for the dog to be able to make a 'side catch' if necessary. However, the neck should not be long and swan-like. To be balanced, the length of neck should be approximately the same as the length of the head. The elegant arch complements the flowing lines of the Whippet, and the neck should flow cleanly into the sloping shoulders. There should be absolutely no throatiness.

Fig. 17



Fig. 18



**Look For:** Balanced length, strength and elegance.

● **FOREQUARTERS**

**Shoulders well laid with flat muscles. Moderate space between the shoulder blades at the withers. The upper arm is approximately of equal length to the shoulder, placed so that the elbow falls directly under the withers when viewed in profile. Forearms straight and upright with moderate bladed bone. Front not too wide. Pasterns strong with slight spring.**

Possibly one of the most misunderstood points in the breed. The shoulders should be well laid back, long, and complemented by a good upper arm which also must be reasonably long and well angled; a Whippet simply would not be the efficient speed machine that he is any other way. The Standard calls for the elbows to be set directly under the withers; this does not mean straight as in a Terrier front; nor does it mean that the elbows are set in close together under the body giving it a pinched-in front. They are set well back under the body, at the end of a reasonably long upper arm. A straight or upright shoulder accompanied by an upright upper arm, both of which would be short, must always cause the dog to be restricted in movement. Watch a Whippet with ‘hackney-like’ gait moving and then examine his shoulders. A shoulder blade that is well laid back with a correct upper arm will allow the leg to swing forward in the typical ‘daisy clipping’ action, giving it the longest possible stride, so necessary to the fastest animal in the canine world.

The shoulders should be well muscled, but not loaded or ‘bossy’; muscles should be flat and firm. A loaded shoulder is caused by a short, upright shoulder-blade, which has to accommodate the same amount of muscle as the correct long, wide shoulder blade; the result is that the muscles have to bunch up instead of being able to lie smoothly along the shoulder blade. Remember the shoulders have to be as strong as the hindquarters whose thrust they must absorb.

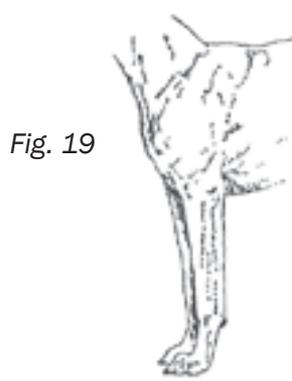


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

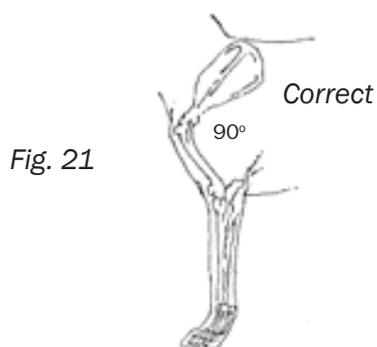
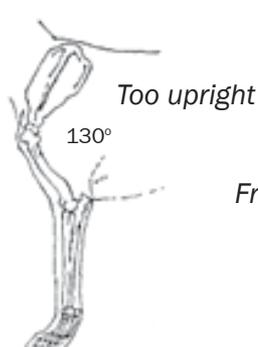


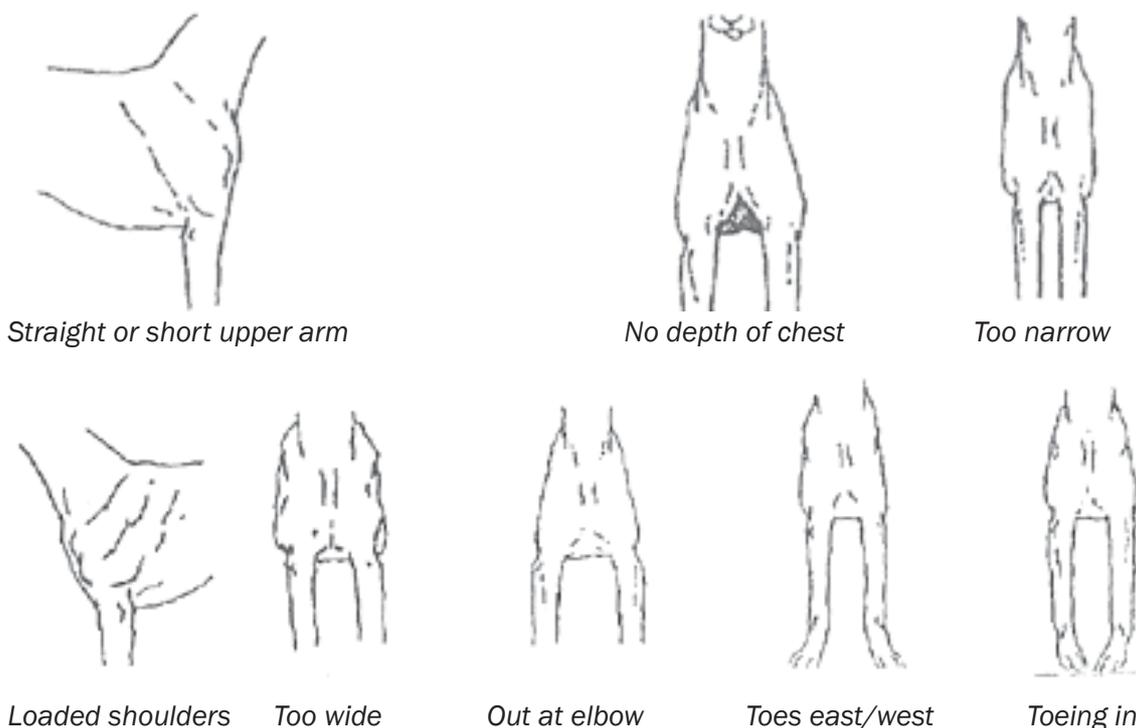
Fig. 21



Front angulation showing skeletal structure

**Faults:**

Fig. 22



**Look for:** Well angulated, smoothly muscled forequarters; clean, well defined withers; free elbows, well under the body.

● **BODY**

**Chest very deep with plenty of heart room. Well filled in front. Brisket deep. Broad, well muscled back, firm, somewhat long, showing graceful arch over loin but not humped. Ribs well sprung. Loin giving the impression of strength and power. Definite tuck up.**

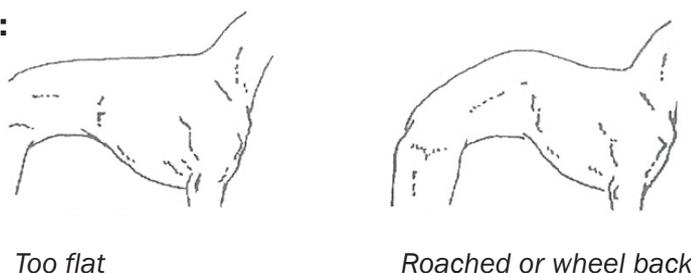


Remember balance! The deep chest should reach to the elbows. The depth of chest from withers to elbows should be approximately equal to the distance from elbows to ground. The deep, well defined brisket should be clearly visible (see diagram). The well sprung ribs, and the well muscled back and loin combine to form a firm, broad back. They must be extremely strong because they act as the coupling between the powerful fore and hindquarters. To function properly, the loin must have a definite arch and be very strong and well muscled.

The arch of the loin commences at the first of the lumbar vertebrae (not at the shoulder) and ends at the croup. The highest point of the arch is directly over the last rib, and the angle of the croup continues the smooth flowing line of the loin without noticeable change. The whole topline should be of smooth, flowing curves. The arch should not be exaggerated, or cramped. The loin should be neither too long, nor too short. The Whippet is not short coupled; it needs length combined with muscular strength to give its great galloping ability.

**Incorrect Toplines:**

Fig. 24



The chest must be fairly broad, in keeping with the general build of the dog, to allow for heart and lung room with the brisket deep and roomy for the same reason. The underline should be well cut up under, and complementary to, the firm, strong loin.

**Look for:** Balance and strength. Depth of chest, ribs well back. Fair length of back and loin. A graceful but not exaggerated arch over the loin with a smooth, flowing top line and complementary underline.

● **HINDQUARTERS**

**Strong, broad across the thighs, with well developed second thighs. Stifles well bent without exaggeration with hocks well let down. Able to stand naturally over a lot of ground.**

The Standard gives a good picture of what is required. Hindquarters are, of course, very important as they are what give the Whippet his great galloping power. Both thighs must be long, broad and well muscled. The angulations approximate those of the forequarters, and it is these angulations, combined with the length of the thighs and well let down hocks, which enable the dog to stand over a lot of ground, not the length of the body. Straight stifles and weak thighs are most undesirable. Viewed from behind, the rear pasterns should be parallel

**Correct:**

Fig. 25

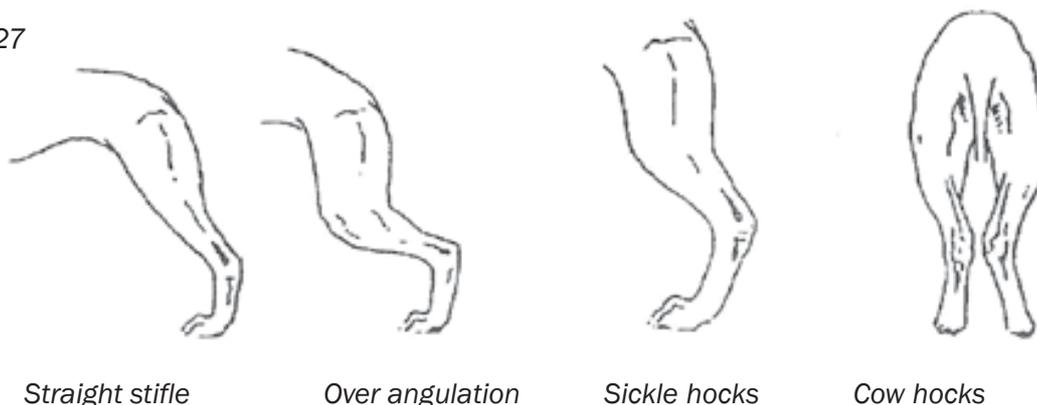


Fig. 26



## Faults:

Fig. 27



**Look for:** Long, strong thighs and second thighs which are well angulated. Short from hock joint to ground.

## ● FEET

**Oval, well split between the toes, knuckles well arched, pads thick, nails strong.**

Thick, strong pads are very important to enable the dog to do his job; they act as cushions and help absorb the shocks. Feet are oval, the two middle toes being slightly longer than the side ones. The toes are well arched and well split up between the toes to enable the dog to be able to grip the ground when galloping, twisting and turning. Splayed, flat or open feet are most undesirable.

Fig. 28



Fig. 29



**Look for:** Neat, well arched oval feet with strong nails and thick pads.

## ● TAIL

**No feathering. Long, tapering, reaching at least to the hock. When in action carried in a delicate curve not higher than the back.**

The tail should reach at least to the hock joint. It should not be kinked, twisted, ringed, gay, short or docked. The natural tail carriage when standing is between the legs; this does not indicate fear or timidity. It complements the natural, graceful, flowing outline, and remains even when the dog is alert, with ears raised. In movement, especially galloping, the tail seems to act as a balance and/or a rudder.

**Tail carriage when moving:**

**2 Tail carriages (Mary Beth Arthur)**

Fig. 30

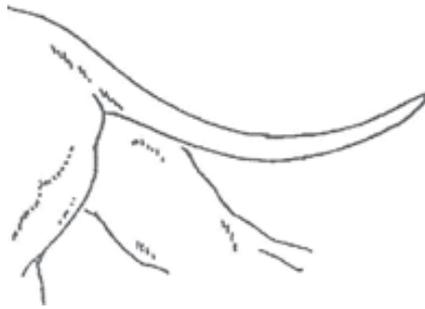


Fig. 31



Fig. 32



**Look for:** A clean, long, tapering tail, never raised over the back.

**• GAIT/MOVEMENT**

*Free, hind legs coming well under body for propulsion. Forelegs thrown well forward low over the ground, true coming and going. General movement not to look stilted, high stepping, short or mincing.*

Should possess great freedom of action. In profile should move with a long, easy stride whilst holding the topline. The forelegs should be thrown forward and low over the ground. Hind legs should come well under the body giving great propelling power. General movement not to look stilted, high stepping, short mincing. True coming and going.

**Correct – Side Gait**

Fig. 33



**Correct: Coming & Going**

Fig. 34

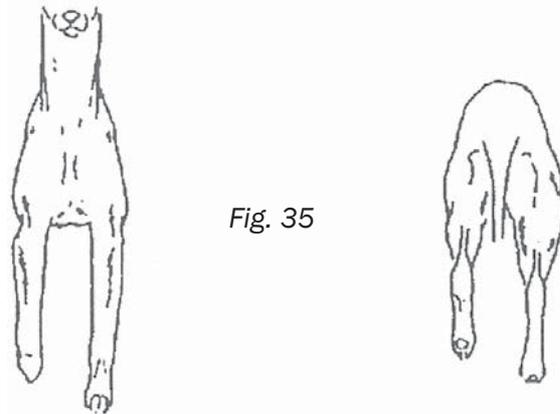


Fig. 35

**Faults – High stepping & hackney action**

Fig. 36

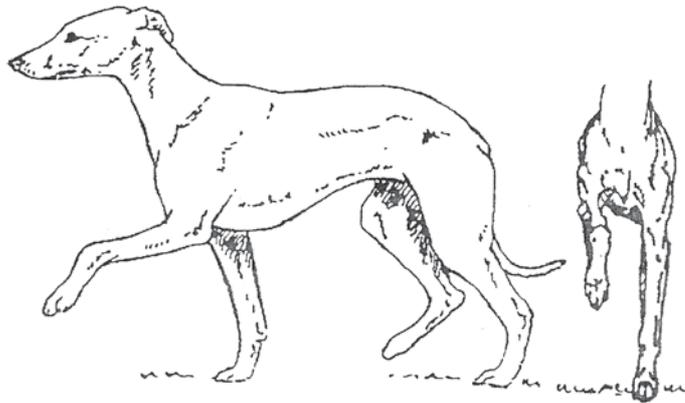
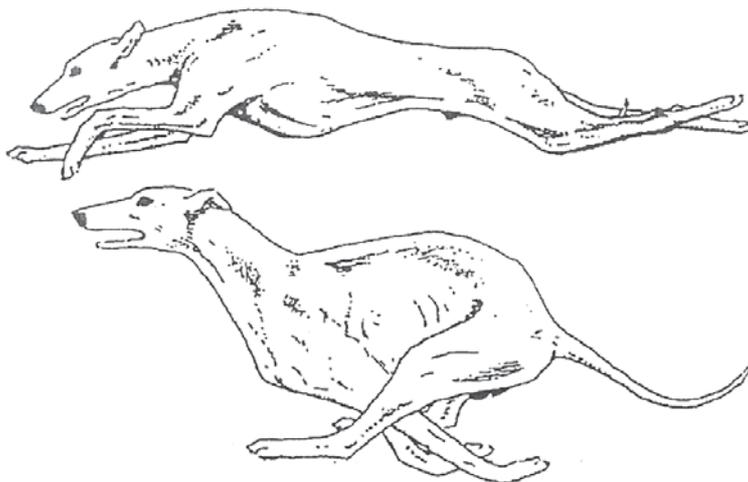


Fig. 37



**The two extreme phases of the double suspension gallop. Note the flexibility of the vertebral column, angle of shoulder blade and flexion of stifle and rear pasterns.**

Fig. 38



Fig. 39



**Look for:** Powerful, long, low, free, sound movement. Absolutely straight and true coming and going; 'daisy-cutting' from the side, the hind feet stepping into the spot vacated by the front feet.

● **COAT**

***Fine, short, close in texture.***

A very fine, short coat is required. Wire or broken, coarse or woolly coats are all undesirable. The skin should also be fine and not coarse and thick.

**Look for:** A fine, close, healthy coat.

● **COLOUR**

***Any colour or mixture of colours.***

Parti-colours and/or particular markings should not receive preference over plain colours on that score alone; although, as in many breeds, marking can deceive the eye, sometimes to their benefit, and sometimes not.

Fig. 40



A variation of common colours from black brindle parti-colour through to brindle with white trim & fawn.

Fig. 41



Red Brindle Parti-Colour

Fig. 42



Blue

Fig. 43



Black

**Look for:** The best dog! Try not to have personal preferences in colour.

● **SIZE**

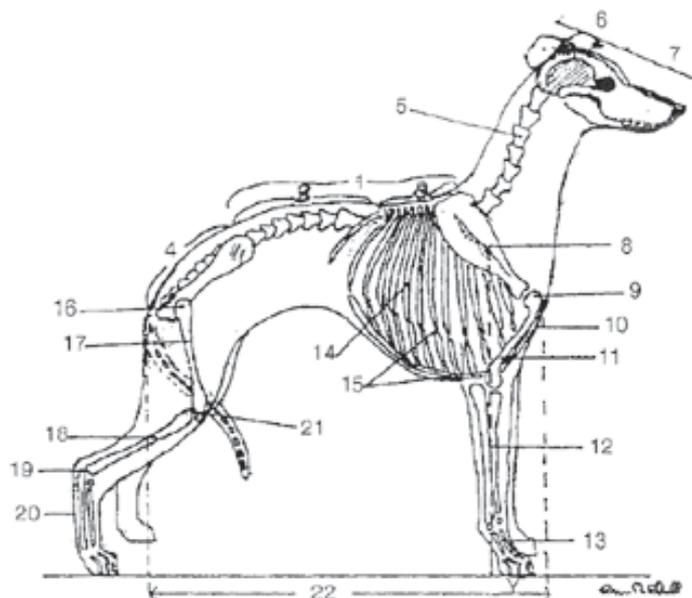
**Dogs: 47-51 cm (18½-20 ins)**  
**Bitches: 44-47 cm (17½ –18 ½ ins)**

Any height outside the prescribed range should be penalised in proportion to its degree of variation. The old adage of a judge not unduly penalising an otherwise good dog remains, but when doing this, the main thing to keep in mind is type. Anything bordering on the Italian Greyhound on the one hand or the Greyhound on the other, should be heavily penalised. It must be realised that the Whippet, Greyhound and Italian Greyhound all have common ancestors, and the Whippet is in the middle of the picture, both in size and in conformation. The Italian Greyhound is typical of any breed that has been bred down to a very small size, and many of its desired features are serious faults in the Whippet. Similarly the Greyhound as the foundation source for its smaller cousins is a large, strong, more angular breed. The Whippet when bred small simply for size's sake, definitely tends towards the Italian Greyhound type. The Whippet, when it gets too big, tends very much to the Greyhound in type.

**Look for:** Correct size, but always keep Type in mind.

**SKELETAL STRUCTURE OF THE WHIPPET**

Fig. 44



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1 The back region as a whole, consisting of both thoracic &amp; lumbar vertebrae<br/>         2 The anatomical back, formed by the thoracic vertebrae; includes the withers (13)<br/>         3 The loin, formed by the lumbar vertebrae (7).<br/>         4 The croup, formed by the pelvic bones and the sacrum (fused vertebrae).<br/>         5 The neck, formed by the cervical vertebrae (7).<br/>         6 The skull.<br/>         7 The Muzzle. ) Slight stop between<br/>         8 The shoulder blade or scapula<br/>         9 The point of shoulder.<br/>         10 Prosternum or breastbone.<br/>         11 Upper arm or humerus.</p> | <p>12 Forearm formed by the radius and ulna bones.<br/>         13 The pastern formed by the metacarpals.<br/>         14 The ribs.<br/>         15 The brisket. Upper line formed by the junction between each rib and the extension which is attached to the sternum.<br/>         16 Hip joint<br/>         17 Thigh formed by the femur<br/>         18 Second thigh formed by the tibia and fibula.<br/>         19 Hock joint.<br/>         20 Rear pastern, sometimes <i>incorrectly</i> called the hock, formed by the metatarsals.<br/>         21 The stifle joint at the junction of the two thighs, with patella or knee cap in front.<br/>         22 Length of body, approximately equal to, or very slightly longer than, the height at the withers.</p> |
|--|---|

## ● 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.***

The problem with this all encompassing statement is that it gives no indication of where the problems are in a breed. Knowing what the weaknesses in a breed are should mean that you look for the opposing virtue and ‘pay’ it when you see it, in the knowledge that you are helping the breed overcome one of its problem areas. This is not fault judging, rather the opposite.

## ● NOTE

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

Judges should be strict in their application of this statement. A Judge should not have to search for testicles in a mature dog; they should be fully descended into the scrotum. “Two apparently normal testicles” means they should feel normal in texture and also be similar in size. One large and one small testicle are not “normal”. Judges are not doing the breed any favours if they turn a blind eye to this fault.

## SUMMARY

**Look for:** Type, balance, correct movement. Elegance, strength, symmetry of outline and soundness.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Illustrated Standard of the Whippet Illustrated Breed Standard;

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The Whippet Breed Council, U.K.;

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