

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD



Extended Breed Standard of  
**THE GERMAN SPITZ**  
**(Mittel and Klein)**

Produced by  
The Australian National Kennel Council Ltd

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*Fig. 1 – Typical of the Breed*

## **HISTORY OF THE BREED**

They are one of the most ancient of dog breeds; various depictions of them occur on many artifacts from Central and Eastern Europe. In 1450 Count Ederhard Zu Sayne made the first documented reference to the term "spitz" as a valiant defender of the home and fields. The province of Pomerania was the home of many of the early members of this breed, hence the early name of Pomeranian. Some of these dogs were frequently taken on boats used for fishing and trade as people took the spitz along as protection for their goods for they were very good alert watchdogs. On the farms, these dogs, as they have very acute hearing were used for "early warning" of any intruder. The little dogs sat up on anything high little hillocks, old pieces of wood, tree trunks etc. At the first sign of anything strange they would immediately get going with their high-pitched "alarm bark", this alerted the bigger dogs (shepherds etc). In Germany they are known sometimes as "Mistbellen" or dung-hill barkers.

It is quite remarkable how a dog that had essentially been a peasant's dog became so popular with royalty and the upper class in England. The breed started to gain popularity during the 18th century when George 1 came to the throne with his German wife. Many German visitors came to the court, and brought their dogs with them. By the late 1700's George 111's German wife, had many white German Spitz weighing around 20 to 30 pounds.

Queen Victoria was another totally devoted to the breed but favoured the smaller dogs. The name Victorian Poms became fashionable around this time. However, the onset of the First World War saw a rapid decline in the popularity and numbers of the breed and it wasn't until 1975 that several "kleine keeshonds" were imported from Holland and bred to some of the larger Pomeranians in England and the breed was under way again as Victorian Pomeranian. There was a lot of opposition from the "toy" Pomeranian breeders but eventually the German Spitz Club was formed in 1982 and in 1985 as a result of a final meeting between the Club and the Kennel Club, the breed was reborn under its proper name of German Spitz in the two sizes, Klein and Mittel, to fit neatly between the toy Pomeranian and the Keeshond as the Wolfspitz is known in England. It was only in 1995 that Challenge Certificate status was awarded the breed in England.

The first German Mittel Spitz arrived in Australia at the end of July 1987, a black male, followed by two more six months later. These three dogs were the basis of ALL German Spitz in Australia and indeed there have only been about six or so further imports so breeders have had to work within a very small gene pool



*Fig. 2 – Well coated dog, with excellent tail*

## **! GENERAL APPEARANCE**

***Compact, short coupled and well knit with an almost square outline. Firm condition, the profuse coat not disguising any lack of substance.***

This is a compact breed, with an almost square (almost is the operative word a ratio of 1:1 approximately) outline and carries a profuse coat and should have adequate substance and firm condition. Small triangular pricked ears are carried high on the head. Well ribbed up and rounded body. Small rounded cat-like feet with arched toes. Well-feathered tail carried curled up over the back. It should be happy and confident, showing no sign of nervousness or aggression.

## **! CHARACTERISTICS**

***The German Spitz is intelligent, active and alert. Its buoyancy, independence and devotion to the family are the breed characteristics.***

The German Spitz should be a bright confident and lively little dog and is very intelligent. It is a wonderful family dog and totally devoted to its family. However it is highly suspicious of strangers and this can make it a difficult to show. They may withdraw as the judge approaches, but should allow themselves to be handled with no sign of aggression. The tail may be dropped. They are shown "free-standing" and should never be handled or touched on the ground as it is seen as intimidation by the dog. Even those well socialised will sometimes take aversion to the shows, an odd person or strange noise and refuse to behave. Whilst waiting in a line up they quickly become bored and will let you know and more than likely embarrass the handler into the bargain.

## **! TEMPERAMENT**

***Happy, equable disposition, showing confidence, with no sign of nervousness or aggression.***

A nervous or an aggressive dog is unacceptable. However closely an animal fits the Standard unless the temperament is happy and confident it should never be in the winners.

A judge should use discretion with puppies that may find the show atmosphere intimidating but there should be no exception made for older animals.

## **! HEAD & SKULL**

***Medium large, broad and nearly flat skull when viewed from above and narrowing in a wedge shape to the nose. Stop moderately defined; muzzle approximately half length of head. Cheeks clean. Flews tight, no trace of lippiness.***



*Fig.3 – Beautifully balanced specimen.*

The breed Standard requires the head of the German Spitz to be medium large and the skull should be broad and nearly flat. This breadth across the skull narrows to the nose forming a wedge shape and the muzzle is about half the length of the head with a moderate stop. The muzzle should not be so short as to look somewhat similar to the Pomeranians.

Incorrect apple heads, often found in the smaller specimens, is something out of keeping with the fox-like head requirement of the breed.

To achieve the correct shape there should be reasonable fill under the eye. Skull shape and the way the skull meets the muzzle need to be felt since coat growth or colour and markings can mislead the eye

## **! NOSE**

***Black in blacks, whites, black & white parti-colours, black & tan bi-colours. Self-coloured as compatible with coat colour in other colour varieties. Never parti-colour or pink.***

Pigmentation can be a problem in this breed, and pink eye rims and noses or butterfly noses are not permissible no matter what the colour of the coat. Compatible does not mean matching exactly, but rather toning in with, or complementary. This does not preclude the sepia colour, which may be found in the dilute-coat colours. Slate/dark grey pigmentation will be found in the blues, and brown pigmentation colour will vary according to the coat colour. Don't forget to add in allowances for a winter-nose, which causes noses to temporarily lose some of the darker pigment usually in a centre strip. It occurs in mostly lighter colour dogs – dogs with liver genes. Black pigment naturally must accompany blacks, pure white and black/white partis, also the black and tans. Don't confuse the whites with the creams or partial creams.

## **! EYES**

***Medium size, oval shaped and obliquely set. Not too wide apart. Always dark with black rims in blacks, whites black/white parti-colours, black/tan bi-colours. As dark as compatible with coat colour in other colour varieties.***

Colour of the eye should be compatible with the coat colour, but a dark eye (not black) is required in the blacks, whites, black & white parti-colours and black & tans. Eyes are of medium size, oval (not round) and obliquely set. Not too wide apart. A round staring pop-eye should be avoided.

The eye and it's setting provide much of the typical expression of a breed. Miniaturisation often produces a round, staring pop eye which is to be avoided. Size, shape, colour and placement are detailed above.

*Fig. 4a – Eyes  
Eyes too round and staring. Facing the front*



*Fig. 4b – Eyes  
Correct medium oval eyes*



## **EARS**

***Small, triangular and set rather high. Perfectly erect.***

Ears are small triangular and pricked, sitting high on the head covered in short soft fur. A "slightly" rounded tip not to be penalised, but any low set ears should be penalised.



*Fig. 5 (a) Ears  
Correct with slightly rounded tips*



*Fig.5 (b) Ears.  
Correct, small and erect and set high on head*



*Fig.5 (c) Incorrect ears, too large*



*Fig.5 (d) Incorrect ears, set too low, wide and too big*



*Fig.5 (e) Incorrect ears, too big, too widely placed and too rounded*



*Fig. 5 (f) Lop ear. Incorrect*

## ! MOUTH

*A perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Black lips in black, white, black/white in parti-colours, black/tan bi-colours. Colour as compatible with coat colour in other colour varieties*

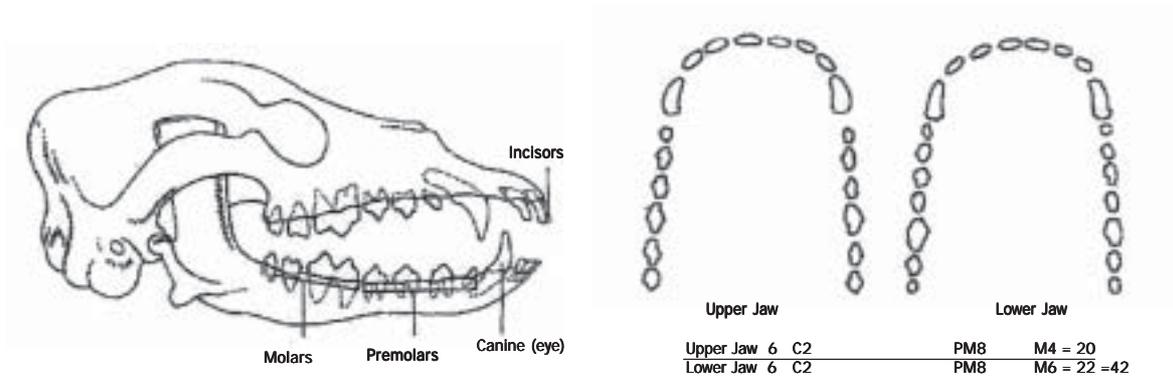


Fig.7 – Teeth formation

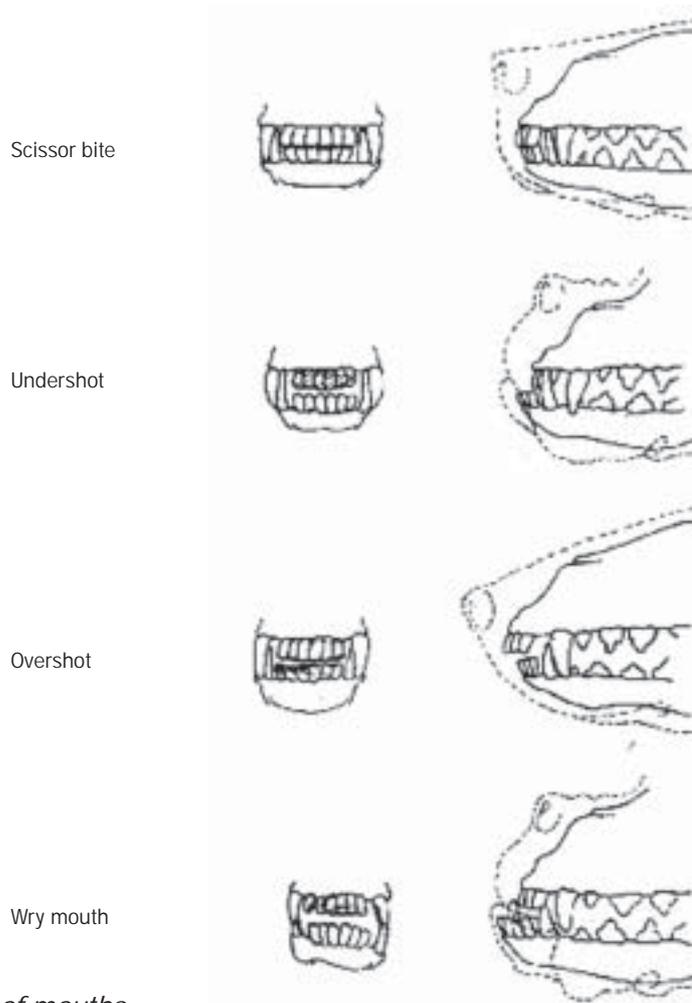


Fig .8 – Type of mouths

By kind permission of Malcolm Wills

Scissor bite although in Europe the pincer bite is permissible in Germany, and sometimes it does creep into the dogs in England and Australia, A pincer bite does wear and is certainly not as serviceable bite as the scissor bite, or in the best interest of the individual dog. An undershot jaw cannot be accepted. The exception is a puppy – up until it gets its adult teeth, the jaw varies greatly going from under to overshot until it finally settles down into the correct bite.

This does not mean the problem can be excused and the dog must be judged as it appears on the day.



*Fig. 9 – Excellent head*



*Fig. 10 – Showing head shapes...correct wedge proportions*



*Fig. 11 (a) showing correct amount of stop*



*Fig. 11(b) Illustrating too much stop*

## **! NECK**

***Clean, moderately short and well set into the shoulders.***

Moderately short and well set into the shoulders, but never too short a neck so that the head sits on the shoulders.

The cervical vertebrae in the neck provide the attachment point for many of the major muscles that assist in lifting the forequarters of the dog in movement. This means that a moderately short neck with no loose skin must also be fairly thick and muscular

to assist the movement of so buoyant a breed. Since the neck is covered with a profuse ruff it has to be felt under the coat. The neck is carried well up, an advantage to a watchdog and a vermin killer which has to see the slightest flicker of rodent life.



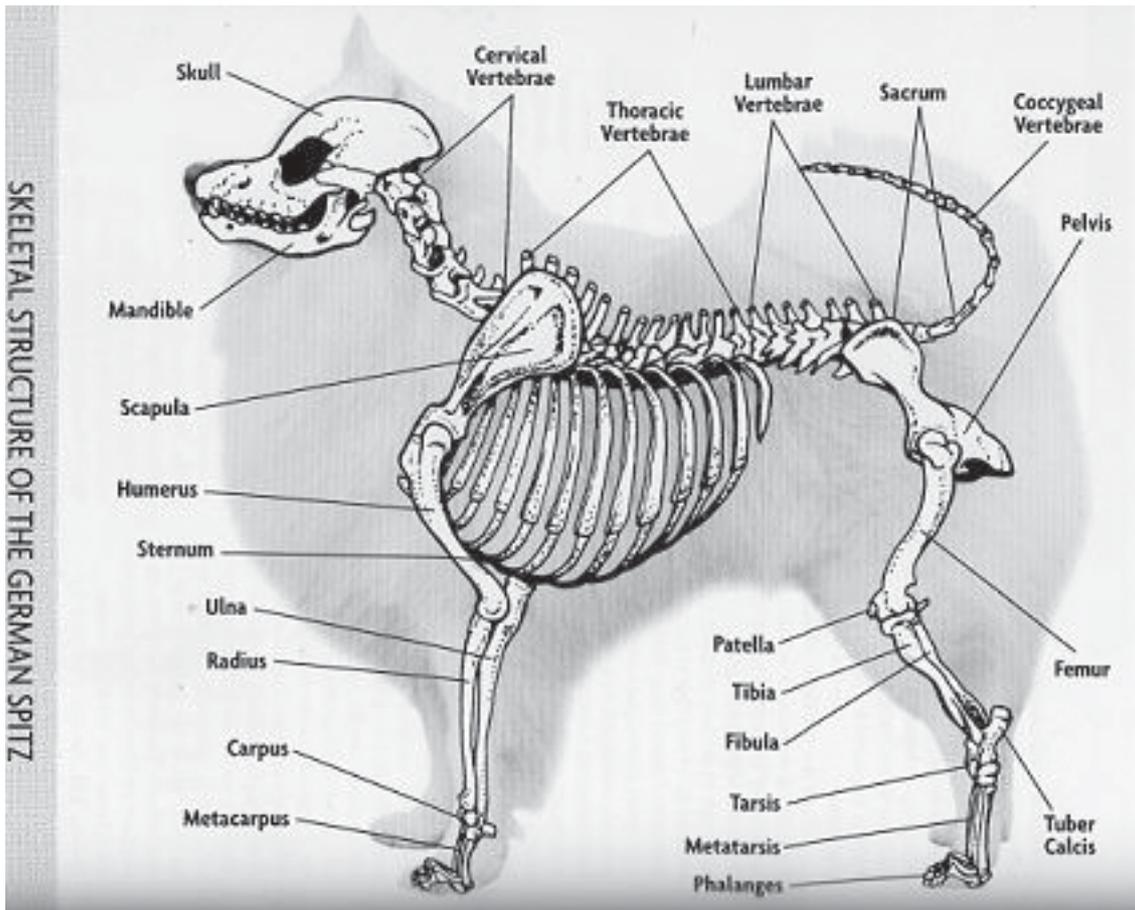
*Fig.12 – Correct length of neck*

## **! FOREQUARTERS**

***Moderately sloping shoulder; upper arm of sufficient length to ensure elbow is vertically below point of withers. Moderate fore chest. Elbows equidistant between ground and withers, turning neither in nor out. Well-boned, straight legs. Pasterns strong and flexible.***

The front legs should move forward in a parallel plane like the piston rod of a locomotive. The strong bone should go right down into the feet. No appreciable pastern is wanted and viewed from the side should only be very slightly sloping. The flexibility of the pastern can be watched when the dog is moving and is a necessity as a shock absorber for a dog that is so active. Elbows that stick out are not only ugly, but are a fault.

An animal cannot move correctly without good shoulders and remember these dogs, although not working dogs were required to run alongside the wagons and horses, and keep up. They cannot do this without correct reach. A straight shoulder does not give the direct forward movement and the feet strike the ground rather more frequently and are tiring to the dog. The dog with correct angulation can move over the ground effortlessly for a long time. The steep shouldered dog has a short stride, choppy gait and a high stepping prancing action, which is often considered "cute". A judge who only looks at the dog going away and coming back misses the most important detail of gait as well as a structural feature. The side action is paramount and should reflect the moderate angulation and correct length of upper arm as required by the Standard.



*Fig. 13 – Skeletal structural of the breed.  
Note correct shoulder angulation and required length of upper arm.*



*Fig. 14 – Showing incorrect short forelegs*



*Fig. 15 Showing incorrect, forward placed shoulders and short upper arm.*

## ! BODY

***Length from point of shoulder to point of buttock equal to height at withers; short, well-developed loin. Moderate tuck-up. Well ribbed-up and rounded. Distance from brisket to ground not less than half the height from ground to withers. Topline level.***

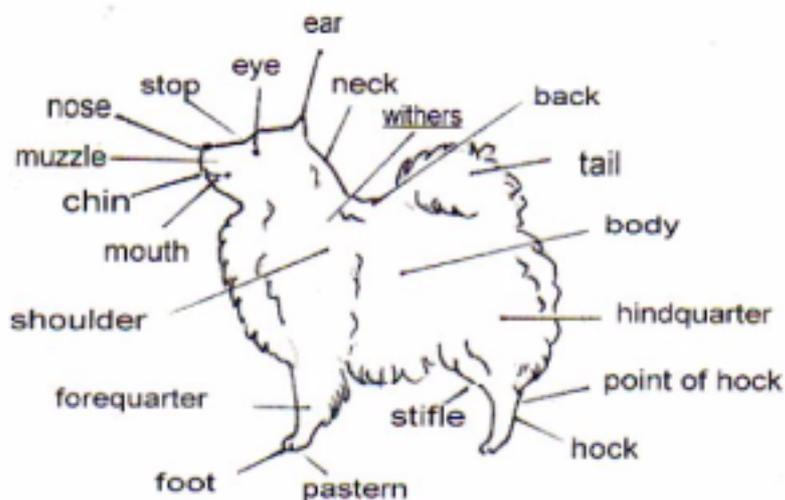
A short body, a short loin with a level topline is required, but not so short that the dog will overreach from behind if correctly angulated.

The body proportions are easily understood but have to be hands on experience for the judge since the coat conceals all. There is another mention of a well-developed muscular loin, which must be short. The measurements for the loin are from the last rib to the pin bone (the iliac crest of the pelvis). Leg length which, is also concealed by coat, should be at least as long as the depth of the ribcage. The ribcage itself should be well rounded and capacious since it houses and protects the lungs and the heart. Some ribcages seem to end underneath just below the elbow leaving the lung and heart much more exposed to damage than they should be. The desired level top line and the moderate tuck-up of the abdomen are essentials in the breed.



*Fig.16 – Too long in body*

**Klein & Mittel both the same only difference is size**



*Fig. 17*

1. Skull
2. Atlas
3. Axis
4. Cervical Vertebrae
5. Thoracic Vertebrae
6. Scapula
7. Lumbar Vertebrae
8. Coccygeal Vertebrae
9. Pelvis
10. Femur
11. Tibia
12. Fibula
13. Tarsus
14. Phalanges
15. Hip Joint
16. Ulna
17. Radius
18. Humerus
19. Sternum

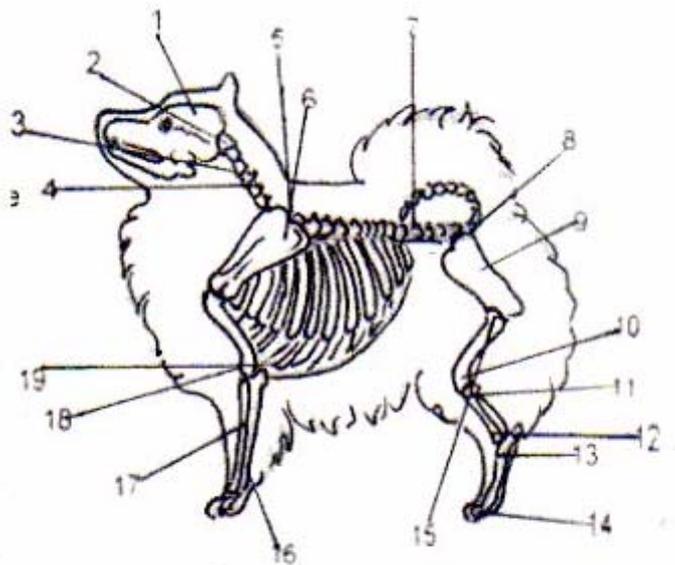


Fig. 18

## ! HINDQUARTERS

***Moderate angulation with hocks moderately well let down. Neither cow hocked nor wide behind.***

The Standard calls for moderate angulation. Ample bone, with moderately short rear pasterns that are strong and flexible, are all important requirements. Lack of sufficient rear angulation will result in a short choppy stride and often a bouncy topline. The rear pastern should be vertical when viewed from both the side and from behind, neither turning in or out. There should be little deviation from this when the dog is on the move. A shortening of the lower thigh compensates long rear pasterns, and frequently the dog is very narrow behind as well. Barrel hocks, sickle hocks and cow hocks are objectionable.

## ! FEET

***Small, rounded, cat like, with well arched toes.***

Self-explanatory... but add with thick and firm pads, and nails short. You can always tell a good foot in that the nails grow downward and not out. The feet should turn neither in nor out. Weak pasterns and splayed feet are all faulty.

## ! TAIL

***High set, curled right up from root, lying curled over back.***

A high set tail can only come from a flattish croup, which stems from the requirement for a level topline,

An important characteristic of all spitz breeds is that the tail is carried over the back. The German Spitz's tail should be high set and curled right up from the root, lying curled over the back and putting a lovely finishing touch to this attractive breed. It should be covered with long spreading hair that is profuse.



*Fig. 19 An excellent tail set*



*Fig. 20 Poor tail set, not curling over back*

## **! GAIT/MOVEMENT**

***Moving without exaggeration from any angle. Straight coming and going. Viewed from side, effortless, brisk action, retaining topline.***

The German moves with a brisk and effortless action, retaining its topline not bouncing. If the front and rear assembly is correct and striding out this dog can move quite fast for a long time. Remember this is not a pretty little lap dog.

Sickle hocks can cause an action that is stiff with almost no use of the hock joint to provide propulsion. As a result the action is short stepping and the dog looks like it is almost bobbing up and down on the one spot.

Diagram 2. Gait/Movement

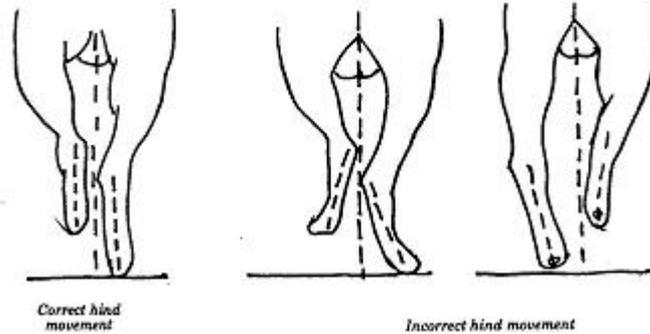


Fig.21(a) Correct

Fig.21(b) Cow hocked

Fig.21(c) Bow hocks

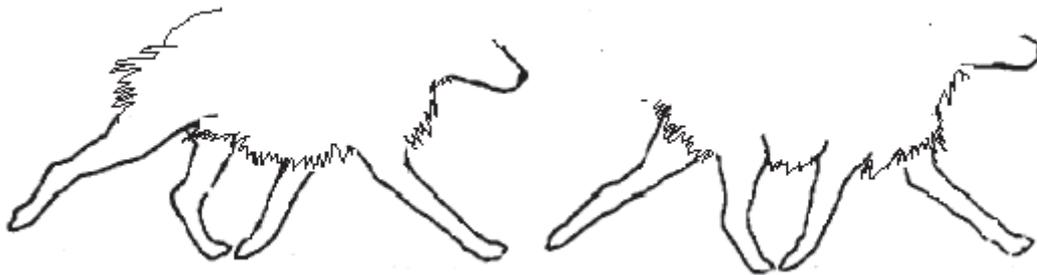
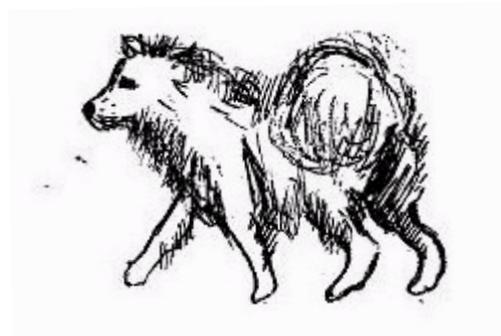


Fig. 22a Correct side action.



Good stride with good rear extension

Fig. 22 (b) Side action.



Sickie hocks, this action is stiff with almost no use of the hock joint to provide propulsion. As a result the action is short stepping and the dog bobs up and down on the spot.

Fig. 22 (c) Sickie hocks



*Fig. 22(d) Traditional movement*

*Fig.22(e) Correct free flowing unexaggerated movement*



*Fig. 22(f) Incorrect goose step*



*Fig. 22(g) Incorrect hackney action*

## **! COAT**

***Double coat consisting of a soft woolly undercoat and a long harsh textured perfectly straight top coat covering the whole of the body. Abundant around neck and forequarters with a frill of profuse, but not excessive, off-standing straight hair extending over the shoulders. Forelimbs well feathered tapering from elbows to pasterns. Hind limbs feathered to hocks. Ears covered with soft short hair. Hair on the face smooth and short. Tail profusely covered with long spreading hair. This is not a trimmed breed and evidence of trimming and shaping, other than tidying of the feet, anal area and legs below the hocks, unacceptable.***

Coat is the highlight of these dogs. Thick or profuse with some length. It has a double coat, short and woolly underneath with long harsh perfectly straight off standing outer coat. Never curly or wavy. This should be an all-weather coat...dogs are out in all weather and if it is cold or wet or snowing, the dogs must have insulation.... basically give themselves a good shake and the water should fall off. The hair tends to be more abundant around the neck giving a ruff of off standing hair. The legs are well covered in hair tapering from the elbows to the pasterns. Hind limbs are similarly feathered. Ears are covered in shorter, softer hair. This is definitely not a trimmed or sculpted breed and any evidence of such is frowned upon. Clipping a coat causes it to lose its insulating properties, so a clipped coat may have the opposite effect to that which is required. Tidying of the feet and pads and around the anal area is the exception. Further, as the German Spitz have a double coat, they do shed! Particularly the females. The average bitch will cast her coat with each heat cycle, twice a year, and her best attempt during this time may be her tail feathers and britches or skirt and far less of her ruff and body coat. The bitch may also shed with the advent of warm weather and it is rare to find a bitch in full heavy coat such as the males exhibit. The males are of course, luckier in this department in that they MAY shed once a year, others can hold coat for two or three years and then drop it all. Others may be casting coat and growing it all at the same time so they do not appear to lose much coat at all. Bear this in mind when judging the females and give them "marks" for their correct anatomy and the indications of what would perhaps be a good coat.



*Fig. 23– Typical of the breed.*

## **! COLOURS**

***All colour varieties and markings acceptable, with the exception of merle. Butterfly pigment not permitted with any colour.***

The Standard allows all colours and various markings are acceptable. This ranges through from proper black (black skin, pigmentation and a dark black coat), a silver black, that is a black which has silver coloured hair coming through in the tail and ruff, but with black pigmentation still, but not necessarily a black skin.

Blues (a dilute of black). The browns (light and chocolate brown), with brown pigmentation, whites and creams, the dilute chocolates which often start out as a cream with fawn or sepia pigmentation, the orange and the parti-colours. Pure white should be more plentiful on the parti-colour dog than the colour be it black or brown or anything else. There is also a wolf-colour, almost the same as the colour of the Keeshond. And sables. That is black ticking on any colour... And any variation of all of these.

Human nature suggests that judges will have their own preferred colour outside the ring, but these should be firmly put aside when judging.

## **! SIZES**

**Height:**                      *Klein 23-29cms (9-11.5ins)*  
                                      *Mittel 30-38cms (12-15 ins)*  
                                      *Dogs masculine, bitches feminine.*

This is the deciding factor between the two breeds. The Klein should be 23-29cms, and the Mittels 30-38cm. Just by looking at them you should know whether you are looking at a dog or a bitch. It should be understood that the two sizes have only been treated as different sized varieties since fairly recently, and as such sizes have not yet stabilised. It is by no means unknown for a Klein to develop to the size of a Mittel and for a Mittel to end up the size of a Klein. Preference for most breeders is for the German Spitz to be at the higher end of the scale rather than the lower, but bitches may be smaller than the males. In Europe they were until just recently registered by size. If a big one, it was registered a Mittel, if its brother was small it was registered as a Klein. Then there is the 8cms size variance in the Standard, which again makes it essential that judges carefully assess this aspect of the breed. .

## **! 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.***

This breed is generally unaffected by health problems, but one which is of concern is the luxating patella. Judges are able to see a problem if the dog is hopping on three legs, particularly at turning a corner.

## **! NOTE**

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

## JUDGING THE GERMAN SPITZ

**"It is the duty of all who profess to be dog breeders to strive to produce animals which, quite apart from conforming to the breed Standard, are able to move freely without discomfort, can breath without difficulty, can reproduce naturally both in conception and at parturition, and can fit temperamentally into the social order of modern society".**

*Mike Stockman*

Bearing the above statement in mind places a heavy responsibility on judges for they are the people whose decisions shape the future of every breed. All breed standards are only sketches of the vital characteristics, which distinguish one breed from another. They have to be fleshed out with other knowledge, that of anatomy, an understanding of soundness as outlined in the quotation above and an appreciation of the breed's original function. Many of the spitz breeds are non-specialists i.e. capable of tackling a number of jobs with equal enthusiasm. The German Spitz seems to have been small watchdogs letting everyone know of the approach of strangers, travelling on the carts of produce going to market to prevent pilfering, and being quick to note the unusual. They were also an all purpose vermin killer an occupation which requires an alert, inquisitive nature and quick reaction.

A judge must be able to clearly assess type, characteristics, balance and conformation in each dog over which they are required to pass judgement

To elaborate the correct type and breed character is of the utmost importance. There can only be one correct type within a breed and that is, that which conforms most closely to the Standard. Type is not just balance, flashy style or sound movement. A dog lacking type is a common dog even though he is well balanced, sound and beautifully presented. Without TYPE it just isn't a German Spitz. Of course, there are variations with the breed, but these do not make the dog of a different type. The fact that the dog is small, or large, heavily boned, or light, extremely muscular or overly refined does not make a different type.

Differences in individual features and conformation are exactly that. These features and the dogs general conformation must be evaluated point by point. A dog to be of correct type must be strong in those points considered by the Standard to be characteristics. In all breeds, type is never a matter of personal preference, but an adherence to the breed characteristics. Recognition and appreciation of the correct type are prime requisites in judging. BALANCE - means proportions... a well balanced dog possesses neither glaring faults nor outstanding features. He pleases the eye with his various features in correct relation one to the other, height to length, neck to back, head to neck and body. All fitting attractively together as required by the Standard.

A balanced dog attracts instantly by its look of rightness. The different parts of him must belong together and be in proportion one with another. The Klein (the smaller of the two breeds) is exactly the same as the Mittel in physical appearance, with the exception of size.

Moderate angulation dictates that German Spitz movement does not include an over long stride. That apart, the requirements of a good mover are the same as for many other breeds. The brisk action indicates quick and light footed rather than bouncy or jerky. The top line should remain level rather than bobbing up and down in an inefficient way. Lameness, an irregular footfall at the walk or trot, should always be penalised. It is the responsibility of the judge to detect such unsoundness, but it is not part of the judge's duty to diagnose or excuse it.

The amount of space in the Standard devoted to coat suggests that unless judges are careful this will become a breed judged solely on this feature alone. A full coat beautifully prepared is a magnificent sight but without the framework underneath, which only the judge can find, it may be very misleading. Since coat is a seasonal feature judges should not be afraid to reward out of coat dogs whose structure is preferable to more heavily coated animals in the same class.

The head should be fox like and sharp (the word "Spitz" means pointed or sharp). The ears should be on the small side, erect and well carried on top of the head. The proportions of the head should be approximately 1 1. Broad skull with well padded cheeks and strong jaws. A full complement of teeth is desirable multiple missing premolars and/or molars lead to a narrowing of cheeks and some distortion.

The head should be carried well in front of the fore paws. An imaginary line dropped from the ear should hit the ground well in front of the fore paws. A line that travels from the top of the ears, in a straight line down the forelegs, is indicative of a forward placed shoulder and short upper arm. The point of wither should be immediately above the dog's elbows, in a good, well angled forehead.

The middle piece should be equal in proportion to the fore and hindquarters. The latter should have well let down hocks; good broad thighs rear metatarsals should be in a perpendicular line to the floor. They also are immediately below the ischium bone, not extended beyond the rear of the dog. This is unsightly and incorrect.

Movement should be straight coming and going, brisk from the side that is covering the ground with an enduring fast trot. Economical and effortless, with a forward going stride.

To sum up. A correctly made dog will hold himself in a certain manner. He is harmoniously proportioned and pleasing to the eye, with his balance and square appearance.

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