

Official Standard for the Rhodesian Ridgeback

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Ridgeback represents a strong, muscular and active dog, symmetrical and balanced in outline. A mature Ridgeback is a handsome, upstanding and athletic dog, capable of great endurance with a fair (good) amount of speed. Of even, dignified temperament, the Ridgeback is devoted and affectionate to his master, reserved with strangers. The peculiarity of this breed is the ridge on the back. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

A mature Ridgeback should be symmetrical in outline, slightly longer than tall but well balanced. Dogs - 25 to 27 inches in height; Bitches - 24 to 26 inches in height. Desirable weight: Dogs - 85 pounds; Bitches - 70 pounds.

HEAD

Should be of fair length, the skull flat and rather broad between the ears and should be free from wrinkles when in repose. The stop should be reasonably well defined. Eyes-should be moderately well apart and should be round, bright and sparkling with intelligent expression, their color harmonizing with the color of the dog. Ears-should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at the base and tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head. Muzzle-should be long, deep and powerful. The lips clean, closely fitting the jaws. Nose-should be black, brown or liver, in keeping with the color of the dog. No other colored nose is permissible. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown or liver nose with amber eyes. Bite-jaws level and strong with well-developed teeth, especially the canines or holders. Scissors bite preferred.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

The neck should be fairly strong and free from throatiness. The chest should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious, ribs moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel hoops (which would indicate want of speed). The back is powerful and firm with strong loins which are muscular and slightly arched. The tail should be strong at the insertion and generally tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should not be inserted too high or too low and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled or gay.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed. Elbows close to the body. The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong, and heavy in bone. The feet should be compact with well-arched toes, round, tough, elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads. Dewclaws may be removed.

HINDQUARTERS

In the hind legs, the muscles should be clean, well defined and hocks well down. Feet as in front.

COAT

Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance but neither woolly nor silky.

COLOR

Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes permissible but excessive white there, on the belly or above the toes is undesirable.

RIDGE

The hallmark of this breed is the ridge on the back which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed. The ridge should be clearly defined, tapering and symmetrical. It should start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to a point between the prominence of the hips and should contain two identical crowns (whorls) directly opposite each other. The lower edge of the crowns (whorls) should not extend further down the ridge than one third of the ridge. Disqualification: Ridgelessness. Serious Fault: One crown (whorl) or more than two crowns (whorls).

GAIT

At the trot, the back is held level and the stride is efficient, long, free and unrestricted. Reach and drive expressing a perfect balance between power and elegance. At the chase, the Ridgeback demonstrates great coursing ability and endurance.

TEMPERAMENT

Dignified and even tempered. Reserved with strangers.

SCALE OF POINTS

General appearance, size, symmetry and balance 20

Ridge 20

Head 15

Legs and feet 15

Neck and shoulders 10

Body, back, chest, and loin 10

Coat and color 5

Tail 5

TOTAL 100

DISQUALIFICATION: Ridgelessness

Approved by The American Kennel Club on August 11, 1992 and effective September 30, 1992