

**Illustrated Standard  
of the  
Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog  
with **Judging Seminar Notes****



Updated August 2018

Before getting into the breed standard, it is important that we discuss some of the distinguishing hallmarks of the breed. The ASTCD standard will appear in Black type and the notes will be in Red.

## **History**

The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog and the Australian Cattle Dog share the same early ancestry. Both breeds were developed from the Halls Heeler and it is thought that Thomas Hall's imported Drovers Dogs carried the gene for tailless-ness if, indeed, they were not stumpy-tailed themselves. The later development of the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog, however, diverged from that of the Australian Cattle Dog.

Thomas Hall's developmental breeding was carried out on Dartbrook and Hall is understood to have been satisfied with the result by c.1840. No records survive but it is unrealistic to suppose that Hall retained direct and personal control of all later breeding. The size of the properties operated by the Hall family, and their distance from the Sydney markets had driven the development of the Halls Heeler. Similar factors would have persuaded decentralized breeding. It is thought that, after c.1840, the stockmen on the various Hall properties bred their own dogs, with interchange of breeding-stock between one property and another.

As a result of decentralized breeding, the Halls Heeler seems to have developed two strains: those bred on properties in northern New South Wales and Queensland, and those bred in the Upper Hunter Valley (Dartbrook) and further south. It would appear the incidence of stumpy-tailed Halls Heelers was greater in the northern strain than in the southern strain. Emphasis was on breeding for working ability and stamina and, if the stumpy-tailed Halls Heelers were workers of excellence, their lack of tail would have been disregarded.

After Thomas Hall's death in 1870, the Hall cattle empire came to an end. The runs in northern New South Wales and Queensland went to auction with the stock on them. Halls Heelers from the postulated northern (stumpy-tailed) strain were already in Queensland and northern New South Wales, and generally available to stockmen from the early 1870s.

By the 1890s, the Cattle Dog was an exhibited breed in Queensland. Although separate classes were not scheduled at Brisbane's National Agricultural and Industrial Association shows until 1917, it is evident that the earlier Cattle Dog classes attracted both long-tailed and stumpy-tailed entrants, and that some of the entrants were related. In some shows, Stumpy Tail Cattle Dogs comprised 50% of the Cattle Dog entry.

Stumpy Tail Cattle Dogs were evidently taken for granted in Queensland; a Stumpy-tailed Cattle Dog illustrated an article on the Cattle Dog in *The Courier-mail Dog Book* (1938).

During the years following World War I, the popularity of the Stumpy Tail Cattle as a benched breed began a decline. The period saw a corresponding increase in the popularity of long-tailed Cattle Dogs with Sydney breeding behind them. A change in the regulations governing litter registrations, during the 1950s, accelerated the decline. By the 1960s, only one registered breeder of Stumpy Tail Cattle Dogs remained: Mrs Iris Heale of Glen Iris Kennels.

By the 1980s, it became apparent that the Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog, as a registered breed, was approaching extinction. In 1988, the Australian National Kennel Council announced the Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Redevelopment Scheme. The Upgrade Program, subsequently implemented, has been successful in its basic aim: that of preserving the bench breed.

The name of the breed was changed to Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog on 1 January 2002 and in December 2002 the Breed Standards Commission of the Federation Internationale Cynologique accepted the Country of Origin Breed Standard for the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog. The breed is also recognized in Canada. In the United States, the United Kennel Club recognizes them under the original moniker of 'Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog'.

In type, the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog has remained more faithful to the inferred Halls Heeler type, as expressed by Nipper, than has the Australian Cattle Dog. The onus rests with judges and breeders, to ensure that the Stumpy's distinctive type does not degrade.



# **The Standard of the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog**

**Australian National Kennel Council 1988**

**Country of Origin - Australia**

**Amended October 2001**

**Name changed effective 1 January 2002**

**Amended May 2005**

**Amended October 2006**

**Amended July 2009**

## **General Appearance:**

Shall be that of a well proportioned working dog, rather square in profile with a hard-bitten, rugged appearance, and sufficient substance to convey the impression of the ability to endure long periods of arduous work under whatsoever conditions may prevail.



## **Characteristics:**

The "Stumpy" possesses a natural aptitude in the working and control of cattle, with a loyal, courageous and devoted disposition.

## Temperament:

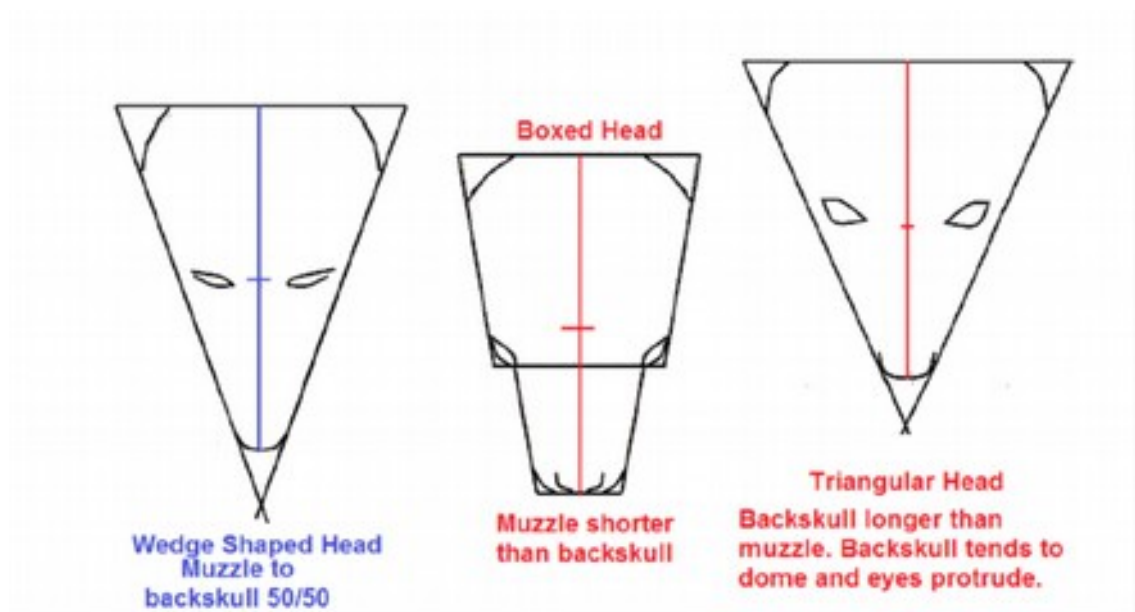
The “Stumpy” is ever alert, watchful and obedient, affectionate and responsive to its owner, but reserved towards strangers. At all times it must be amenable to handling in the Show ring.

Being reserved or suspicious does not imply the dog is shy. Most show ring dogs are socialized to the point of approaching any individual who may be a source of treats. Most typical ranch working dogs will be more standoffish.

## Head and Skull:

The skull is broad between the ears and flat, narrowing slightly to the eyes with a slight but definite stop. Cheeks are muscular without coarseness. The foreface is of moderate length, well filled up under the eye, the deep powerful jaws tapering to a blunt strong muzzle. Nose is black, irrespective of the colour of the dog.

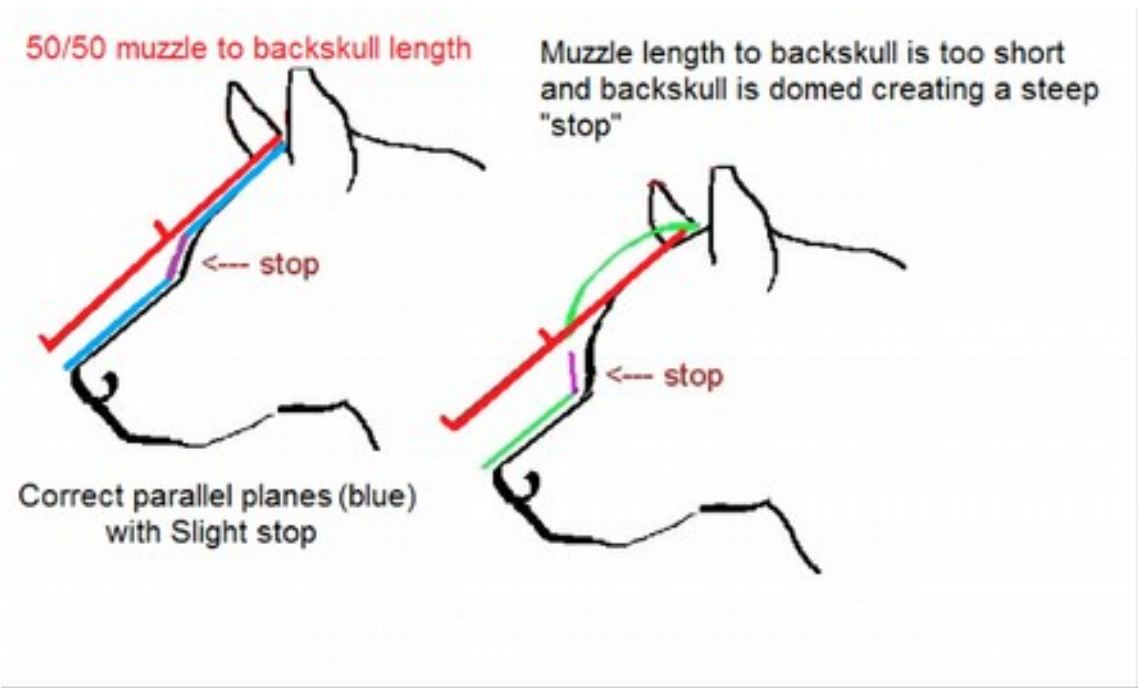
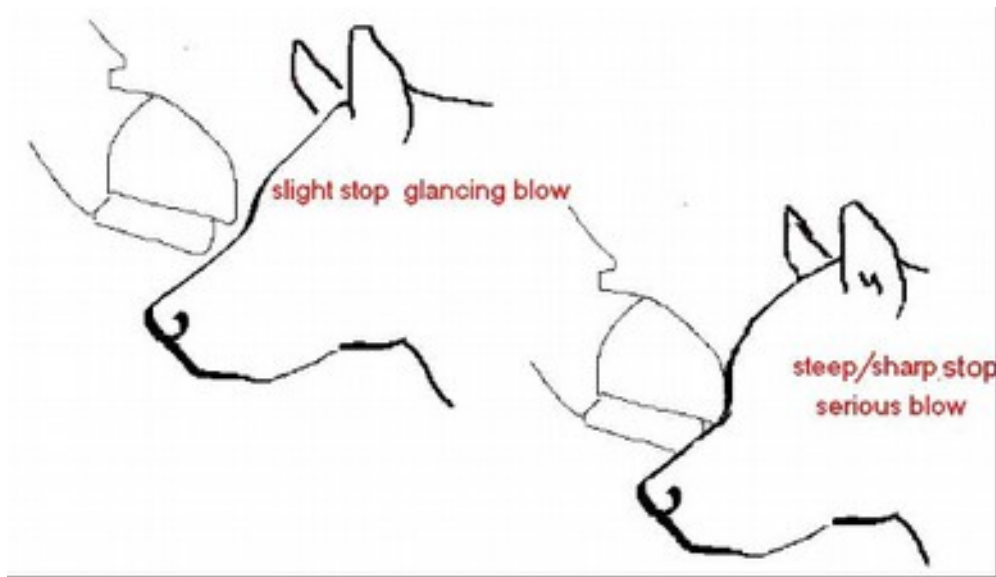
The head **will be more chiseled** than that of the ACD and should be in balance with the dog. NOT a big head. The head must be balanced, wedge shaped with skull and muzzle planes parallel. The approximate muzzle to backskull ratio should be 55 to 50 percent backskull to 45 to 50 percent muzzle. Wedge does not mean a triangle in this explanation.



Reasons for the head shape include prevention of eye damage and serious injury in the event of taking a blow to the head.



Any shorter measurement on the muzzle tends to lead to missing teeth, and protruding eyes.





Another general measurement is head length in ratio to shoulder length. They are approximately equal.

Triangular head shapes will be accompanied by prominent stops, domed skulls and bulging or “bug eyed” appearance.

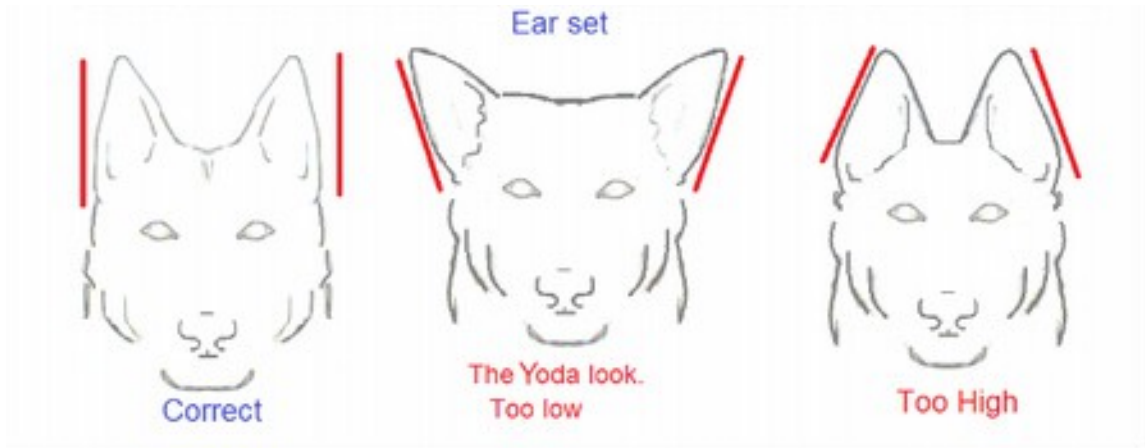
### **Eyes:**

The eyes should be almond in shape, of moderate size, neither full nor prominent, with alert and intelligent expression, and of dark brown colour.

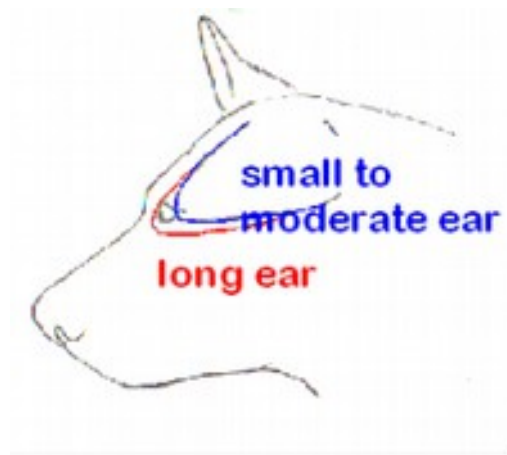
Round or protruding eyes with the shorter muzzles and domed skulls are not acceptable. Penalize light eyes.

## Ears:

The ears are moderately small, pricked and almost pointed. Set on high yet well apart. Leather moderately thick. Inside the ears should be well furnished with hair.



Problems with the ears are that of being too big, weak, incorrectly set, and of poor leather quality. An ear that is too big or too heavy makes for weak ears that may break over at the tips, or refuse to stand at all.



How long is "too big"? Pull the ear to the eye. A small ear will come close to the outer edge. An ear that is too big will exceed the edge of the eye. The preference is to small ear. The term "Inclined outward" has long been a debated subject. No one likes the "yoda" look, and pictures of the early dogs here and through out Australia do not show dogs with the ear on the side of the head.



## **Mouth:**

The teeth are strong, sound and regularly spaced. The lower incisors close behind and just touching the upper. Not to be undershot or overshot.

42 teeth. Although the standard does not mention missing teeth, most breeders will agree that 4 or more missing teeth should be heavily penalized. Lips and flews should be clean and tight. It should be noted that older dogs (veterans) may become looser as they age. That's just aging.

## **Neck:**

The neck is arched, sinewy, of exceptional strength, and muscular. Neck of medium length, broadening to blend into the body, free from throatiness.

When viewing the Stumpy in profile and standing in a natural attentive stance, the head should ALWAYS be above his topline. A neck too short will give the impression of his head coming out of his shoulders. Nor should the dog's eyes and ears be over his withers due to a straight shoulder.

## **Forequarters:**

The shoulders are clean, muscular and sloping with elbows parallel to the body. The forelegs are well boned, muscular and straight when viewed from either the side or front, with very strong flexible pasterns.

Most commonly seen problems are too short an upper arm which restricts extension while moving as well as incorrect proportion of leg to body. The distance of leg to body depth should be more than the distance of the withers to the elbow. This gives them the 'leggier' look than seen in the ACD

**Body:**

The length of the body from the point of the breast-bone to the buttocks should be equal to the height of the withers, ensuring the dog is square in profile. The back is level, broad and strong with deep and muscular loins, the well sprung ribs tapering, to a deep moderately broad chest that flows into a slightly tucked up flank.



The term “tucked up flank” should not be confused with “herring gutted” as is shown here.



The Stumpy is **as long as he is tall**. He is a square dog. This should not mean short in the loin. “Level topline” means level. A sloping topline is incorrect. The dog in the photo below is not a Stumpy, but is a photographic example of an incorrect topline even for its breed.



## Hindquarters:

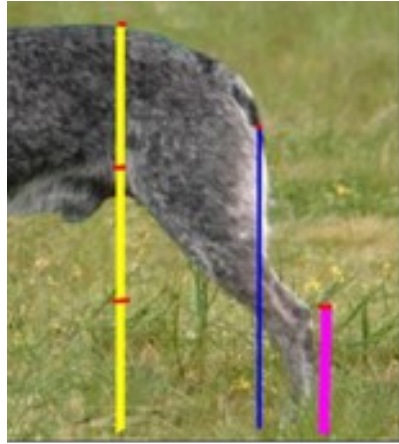
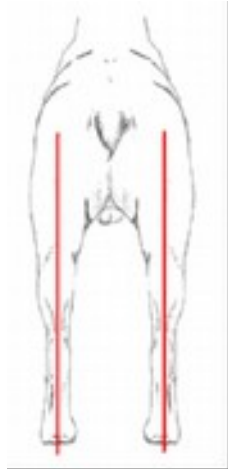
The hindquarters are broad, powerful and muscular, with well developed thighs, stifles moderately turned. Rear pasterns are strong, moderately let down with moderate angle of hock. When viewed from behind the hind legs from hock to feet are straight, and placed neither close not too wide apart.

When viewed from the rear the hocks should be parallel to each other and set directly in line with the ischium, neither narrower nor wider. The biggest problem we see in the rear assembly has been straight stifles. The Stumpy should be balanced with MODERATE angulation.

The standard does not mention the croup, yet it calls for a 'high' tail set. However because the structures of the vertebrae and the musculature that supports the tail help to create the croup, many Stumpies tend to look steep or 'goose rumped'. If the dog has a tail that is several inches long and has a goose rump, then indeed it has a steep croup. If it is a "rumpy" that has a goose rumped appearance, it is most likely from the lack of vertebrae. See more on the description of the tail.

This dog is an Extreme Rumpy and has no palpable vertebrae from the sacrum to the tuft of tail hair. Thus, there are no attachments for a flat croup and the appearance is that of a steep croup. It is relatively rare





When viewed from the side, the hock should be no more than 1/3 total rear height.

### **Feet:**

The feet should be round, strong, deep in pads with well arched toes, closely knit. Nails strong, short and of dark colour.



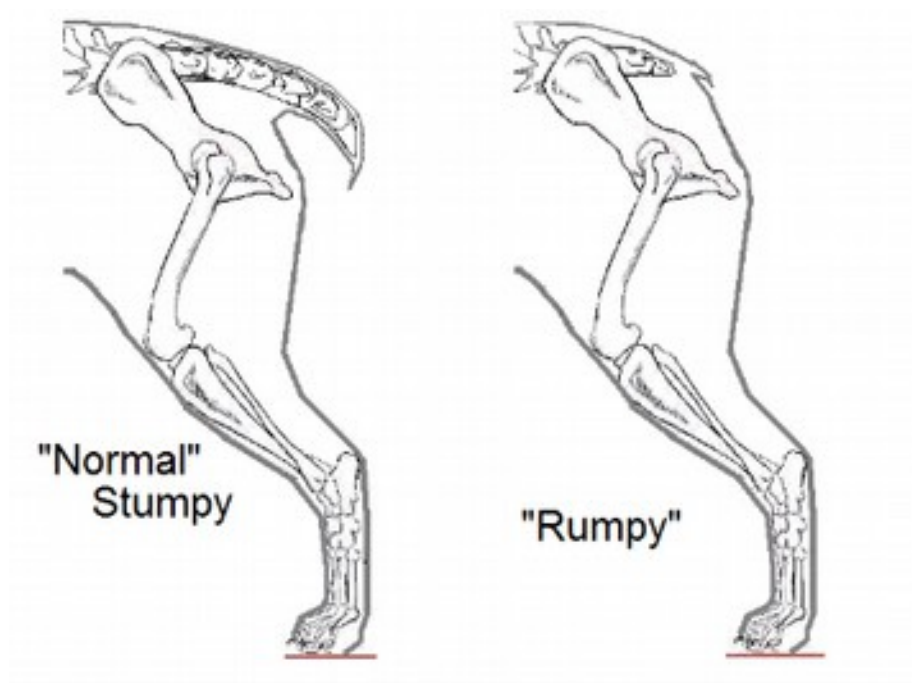
Flat feet should be heavily penalized. The breed should be able to travel all day on those feet. No feet, no dog.



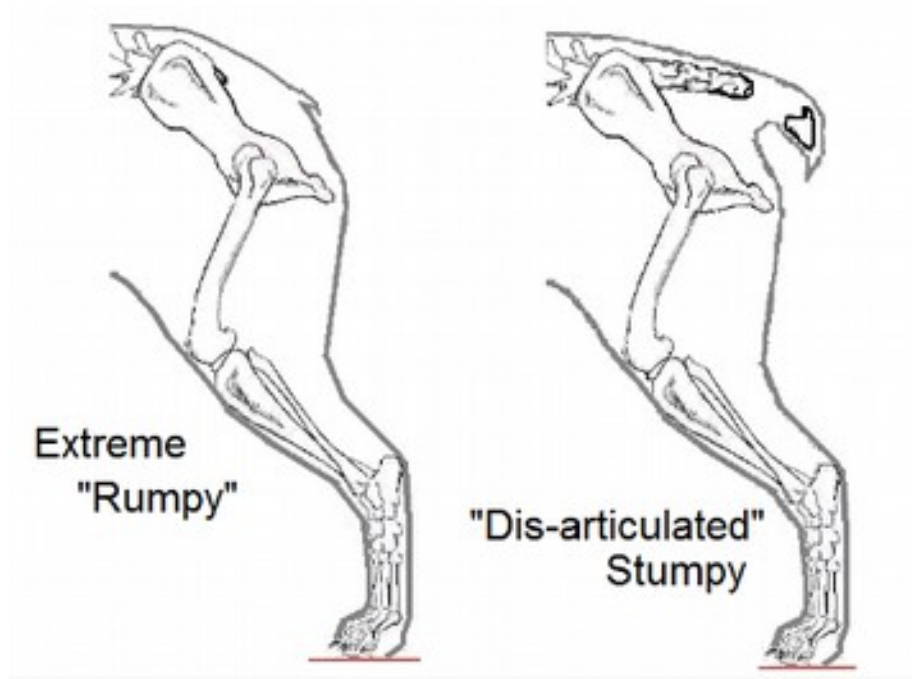
## Tail:

The tail is undocked, of a natural length not exceeding 10 centimetres (four inches), set on high but not carried much above the level of the back.

The tail (or lack of tail) comes in several types. Stumpies can be born with full length tails. The usual docked dog can sometimes be identified by the bluntness to the end of the tail. But the Stumpy has several types of NBT (natural bob tail) that make it difficult to identify if the dog has been docked or is an NBT. Most Stumpies will have a 'fat pad' at the end of the tail. Although four inches is the maximum allowed, the usual Stumpy may have a tail only one or two vertebrae long or it may be long enough to reach halfway to his hock. It usually tapers to a point. A "Rumpy" is usually a dog whose vertebrae are so absent that only a tuft of hair identifies where his caudal vertebrae end. Sometimes on palpation, the end of the vertebrae can be felt. Very rarely you will find a "disarticulated stumpy." On palpation of the tail, a separation may be felt in the bones between the rump and the end of the tail.



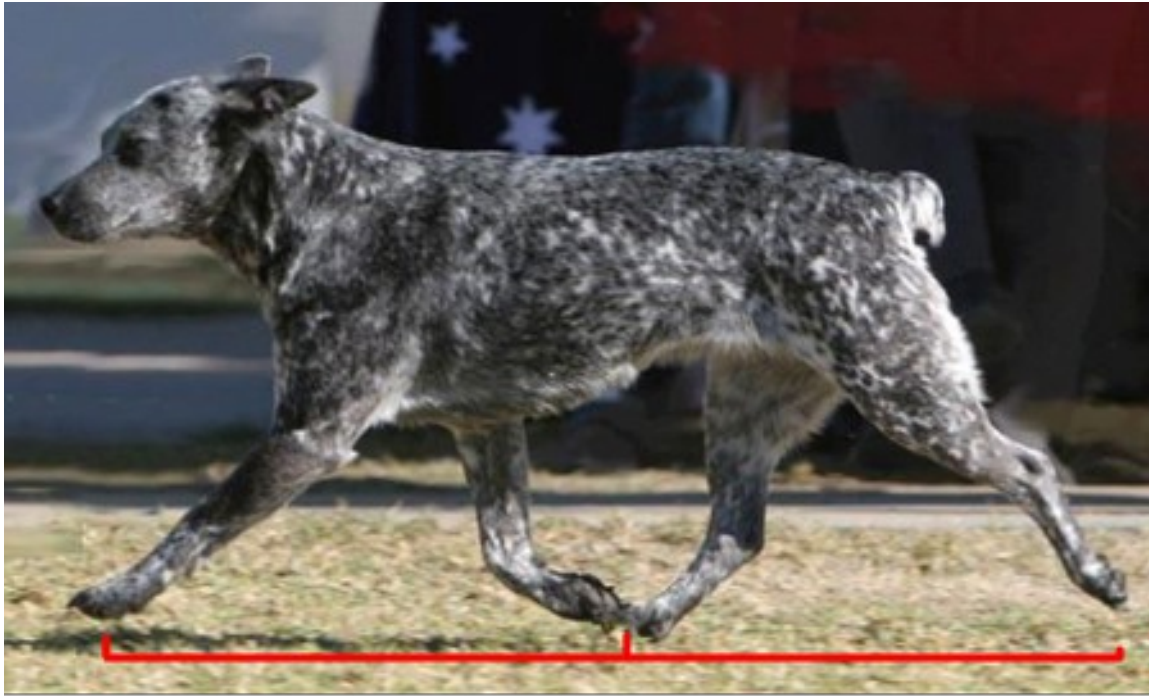




### **Gait/Movement:**

Soundness is of paramount importance. The action is true, free, supple and tireless, the movement of the shoulders and forelegs in unison with the powerful thrust of the hindquarters. Capability of quick and sudden movement is essential.

### Balanced reach and drive



As a whole, the breed tends to suffer from straight shoulders. But a balanced front and rear is preferred over the unbalanced.



### Unbalanced reach and drive

Penalize for choppy, stilted, hackneyed and unbalanced movement

## Coat:

The outer coat is moderately short, straight, dense and of medium harsh texture. The undercoat is short, dense and soft. The coat around the neck is longer, forming mild ruff. The hair on the head, legs and feet, is short.

Not widely known, the Stumpy comes in two coat lengths. These are-

**CLOSE** - There is almost no undercoat if any, the coat lies close and is often thought of as a “dog out of coat”. In actuality, that is as long as it ever gets. It is incorrect.

**NORMAL** – The coat will average 1 to 1 ½ inches and have an undercoat that may be slate grey or black. Texture will be moderately hard but not harsh or coarse.

Curly or wavy coats are incorrect for this breed and is considered a minor fault.

## Colors:

**Blue** - The colour should be a good even Blue Mottle or Blue Speckle, with or without black markings on the head and body. Blues should not have a red undercoat or any appearance of red throughout the coat.



Black markings (ie spots, patches) on a blue dog are common. Any head markings are acceptable with no preference to uniformity.



**Red** - The colour should be a good even Red Mottle or Red Speckle, with or without red markings on head and body. Reds should not have a blue undercoat or any appearance of blue throughout the coat or head.

Red markings (ie spots, patches) on a red dog are common. Any head markings are acceptable with no preference to uniformity.



**TAN** - Irrespective of the colour of the dog, **TAN** markings are **not permissible in either the Blue or Red dogs**, under any circumstances.

### **Color Definitions:**

Though not necessarily in the standard, explanations are warranted and may be helpful to those who have never seen an ASTCD or an ACD.

**ROAN** – a mixture of black and white hairs Or red and white mixed together to give the impression of the color blue or red. Common and acceptable.

**SPECKLE** – fingertip sized **WHITE** spots against a dark background. Common and acceptable

**MOTTLE** – fingertip sized dark (black or red) spots against a roan or white background. In some breeds this is called “Belton”. Common and acceptable.

**DOUBLE MOTTLE** – Refers to a mottled dog that is more white than color. Undesirable .

**PURPLE** – a red dog with a blue overcast most often over the head, neck, shoulders and topline. Called sable or agouti in some breeds. Undesirable and **UNACCEPTABLE**.

**BODY SPOTS** – are most commonly seen as black patches on a blue dog or red patches

on a red dog. Patches of color on the head around eyes or ears and at the base of the tail are acceptable and very common.

Blue dogs lacking white hair will appear to be nearly black. A red dog lacking white will not be as obvious since there is not the strong contrast of color like that of white against black. Solid color dogs are undesirable.

Structural faults are serious. Color does not affect structure or work ethic. Consider it a minor fault and penalize accordingly.

### **Size:**

Height: Dogs 46-51 cms (18-20 ins) at withers

Bitches 43-48 cms (17-19 ins) at withers

Dogs or bitches over or under these specified sizes are undesirable.

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 appearance.

Cream or white undercoat.

Any colour other than black on nose or toenails.

### **Serious Faults:**

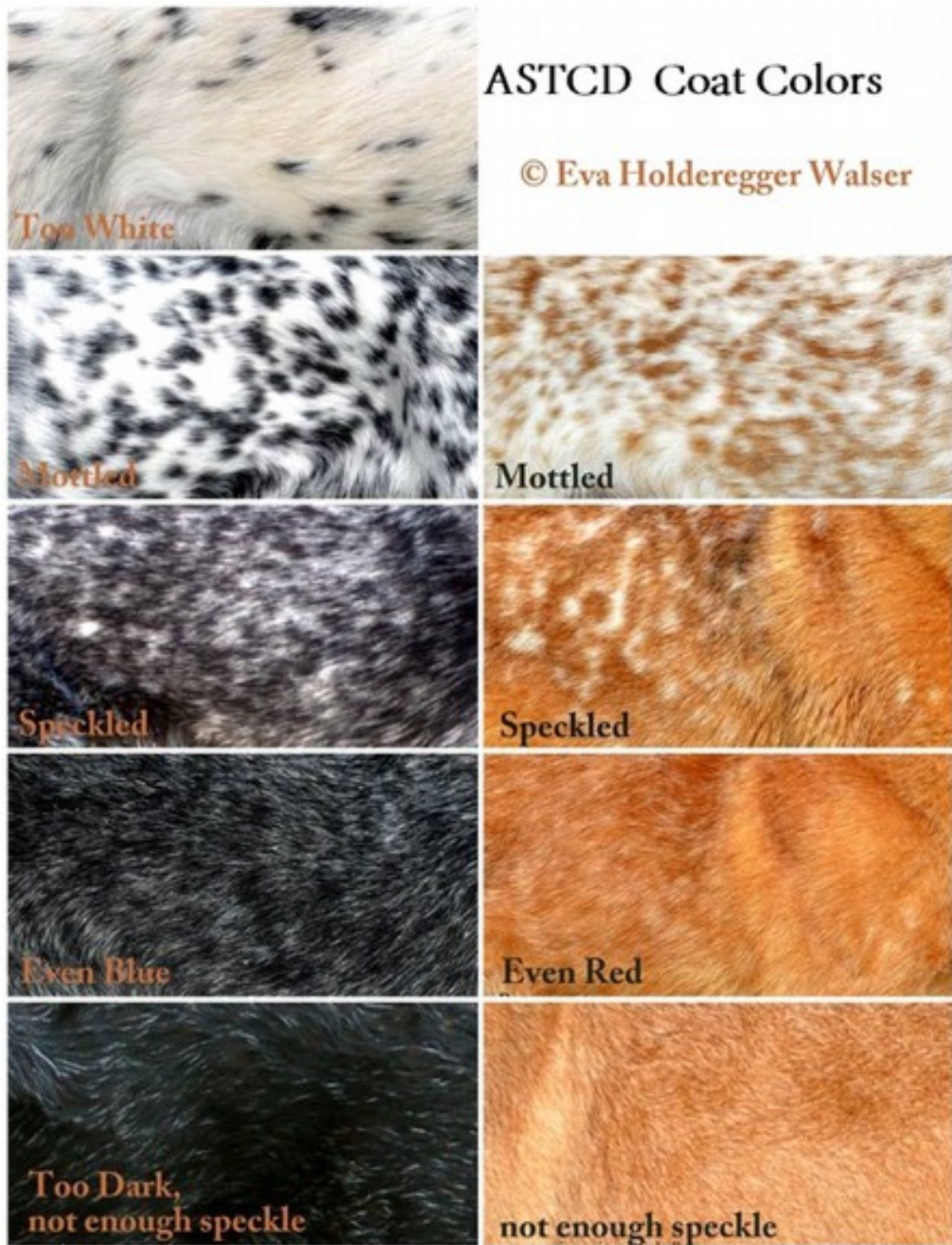
- Tan markings.
- Tan/red overlay on head and/or body in blue dogs.
- Blue muzzle and/or blue overlay on head and/or body in red dogs.
- Stilted movement.
- Cow or bow hocks.
- Loaded or slack shoulders or straight shoulder placement.
- Weakness at elbows, pasterns or feet.

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

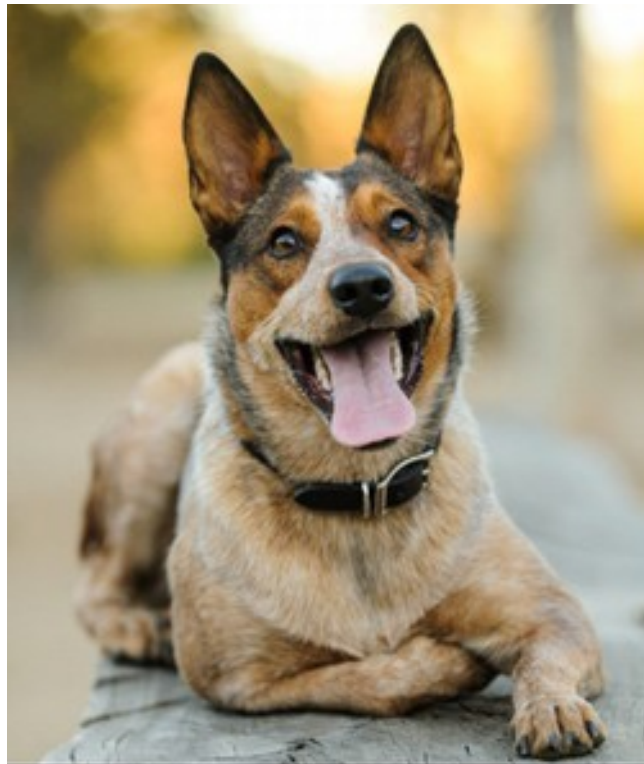
Working Dog Group - ANKC © January 1998



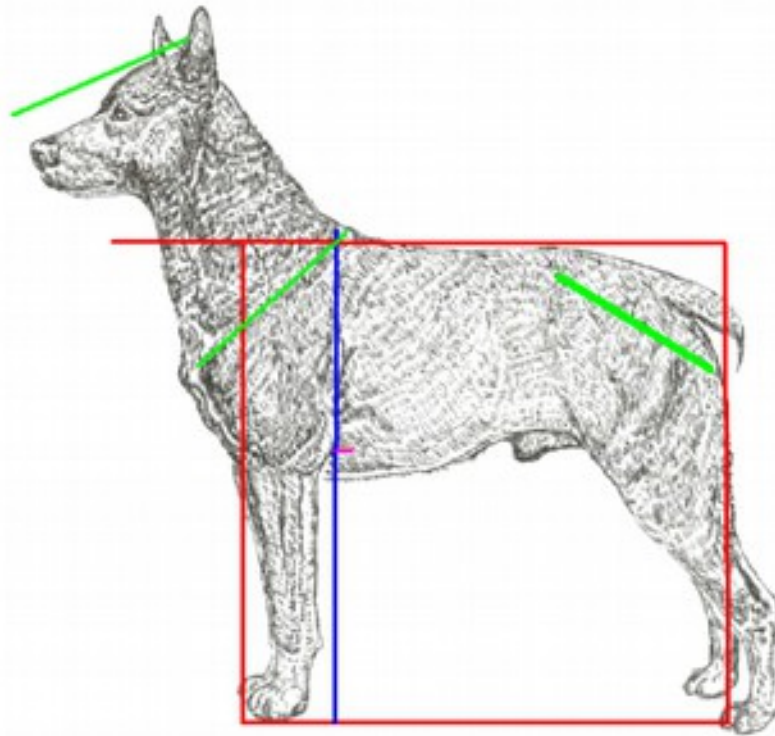
**Color Examples:**



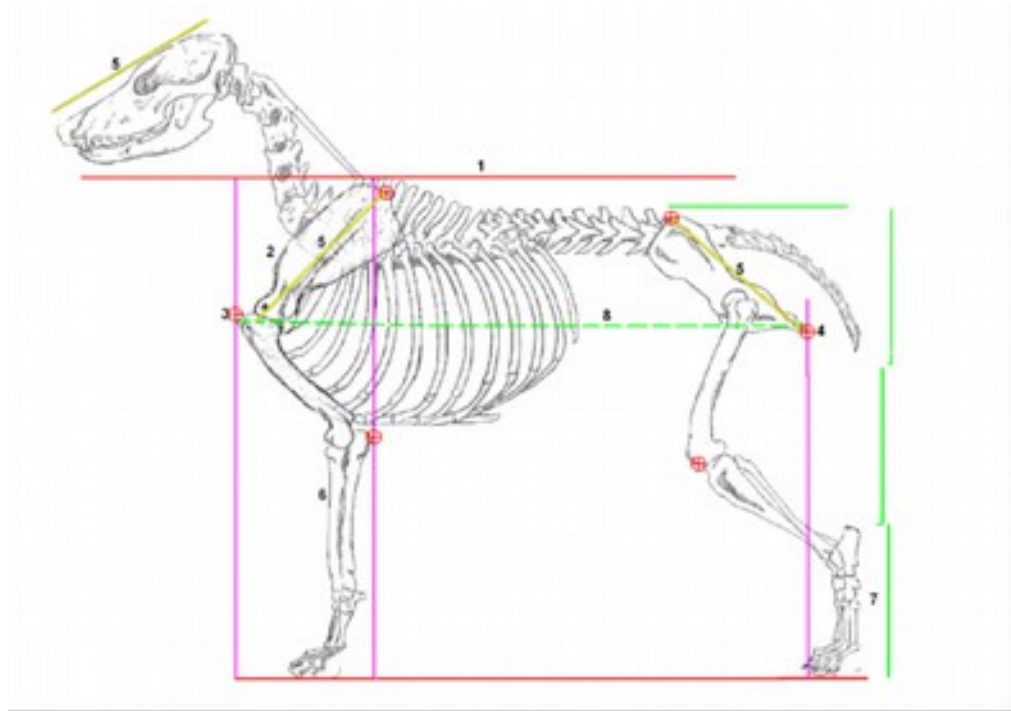
**Examples of Incorrect Red (Purple):**



## General Proportions:



- The head should be ABOVE a level topline
- Muzzle to stop / stop to occiput 45% to 55% (or 50/50)
- The Back – 1/3 loin to 2/3 ribcage
- Hock – Approx. 1/3 height
- Ground to elbow 55 to 60% ratio. Elbow to withers 45 to 40% The dog MUST be taller than he is long.
- Head length will be nearly equal to the length of the shoulder and hip.



As compiled and presented by:

Grace Harper (Jan 1948 - Nov 2018), 45 year veteran breeder of the Australian Cattle Dog and the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog

For the  
Canadian Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Society  
and  
Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Society of the U.S.

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