

CAROLINA DOG

Official U.K.C. Breed Standard*

Sighthounds Group

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HISTORY

When the first primitive humans crossed the Bering landbridge into North America from Asia, they were accompanied by a primitive form of dogs that resulted from the domestication of southwest Asian wolves in the region of Iraq a few thousand years earlier.

These small, nondescript dogs moved quickly with their human companions down through the western part of North America. Skeletal remains and mummified bodies of these dogs have been found along with the artifacts of the Basket Maker culture of the primitive Southwest Indians. From here, these primitive dogs moved into the eastern United States. Archeological investigations have documented ceremonial burials of these dogs, an indication their presence in the southeastern forested woodlands as companions of the Indians of that region, long before the arrival of the white man on this continent.

Recently, studies of the free-ranging dogs of certain regions of South Carolina and Georgia have disclosed the continuing existence of small primitive dogs whose appearance, as well as behavior and general ecology, suggest a close ancestry (if not direct descent) of type from those first primitive dogs. Called the "Carolina Dog," these animals most closely resemble the Dingo of Australia, which may indeed be among their closest living relatives. The striking resemblance between these dogs and the Dingo, half a world apart, is likely due to the way in which both animals have filled a free-living, or as it is known-pariah, niche on the fringe of human civilization and culture.

The Carolina Dog was recognized by the United Kennel Club on January 1, 1995.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Carolina Dog is a dog of medium build, possessing the general appearance of a small jackal or wolf in combination with many features of a small Sighthound. The distinctive features of the breed are those which confer survival advantages under free-living conditions in tallgrass savannah and bottomland swamp forest habitats of the southeastern United States. The dog typically has a medium-length straight back, with a distinctive waist which sets-off a deep brisket from a highly tucked-up loin. The tail is distinctive in both its fish-hook-like configuration and its variable carriage, depending on mood. The large, upright ears and long, graceful neck are also distinctive and suggest the appearance of a small, versatile and resourceful predator well-adapted to surviving on its own in a natural habitat. In ideal conditions, a Carolina should appear thin and "tight." It is permissible, for example, for the ribs to show slightly as in a well-conditioned racing sighthound. Individuals that are greatly overweight should be severely penalized. The dog is to be shown in a natural condition, with little or no evidence of grooming

or scissoring. Whiskers are not to be removed.

CHARACTERISTICS

A generally shy and suspicious nature may be characteristic, but excessive fear and any resistance to examination is not desirable.

Very serious fault - Outward aggression.

HEAD & SKULL

The skull is strong and impressive. It is broad between the ears and moderately rounded, and has ample muscle. There is a distinct furrow extending down between the eyes. The forehead is slightly rounded. There is a distinct occiput. The stop is slight, but distinct. Younger dogs often show a distinctive, fine wrinkling on the forehead, giving a frown effect.

Viewed from above, the head forms a wide triangle; the tapering of the muzzle being accentuated by the highly-developed jaw muscles.

The skull tapers to a strong, distinctively pointed muzzle. The length of the muzzle is approximately equal to the length of the cranial portion of the skull. The jaws are powerful, clean and deep. The tight-fitting lips are predominately black.

TEETH

A full complement of white, well-developed, even teeth meet in a scissors or level bite.

Serious faults - Undershot bite. Overshot bite.

EYES

The almond-shaped eyes are dark brown in color. They are set obliquely. Eye rims are black and unbroken. Overall expression is one of softness and intelligence, but highly cautious. Blue or orange flacks in eyes are permitted. Blue eyes are a minor fault.

NOSE

The nose is black and has large, well-opened nostrils. Minor faults - Liver-colored nose. Dudley nose. Butterfly nose.

EARS

The ears are distinctive and expressive, and versatile in carriage. They are slightly rounded at the tip, and fine in texture. The ideal ear is shaped like an equilateral triangle, although the base may be slightly shorter than the ascending edges. They are carried erect when alerted, but can be folded carried back along the neck. The ears are set well on top of the head, slightly pointing forward. Ear placement is more important than size, but it is essential that they be forward-pointed and set on top of the head.

A characteristic position is for one ear to be firmly pricked, and the other to rotate sensitively to pick up sounds.

Semi-prick ears are permitted, but are to be penalized according to the degree of deviation from a full, upright configuration. Drop ears are a major fault.

TONGUE

Solid pink. Dark spots or pigmentation on tongue is a disqualification.

NECK

The neck is notable in its strength and development. It is strongly crested, fitting well into the shoulders, thus accentuating the crest to give the head a lofty carriage. The neck is graceful and swanlike, yet muscular and well-arched, providing the animal with a means of making rapid and effective downward stabbing movements with the head when hunting in tall grass. Serious faults - Short neck. Throaty neck.

FOREQUARTERS

The long shoulders are laid back.

FORELEGS

The forelegs are straight. The forearms have good length, moderate bone and distinctive musculature. The moderately straight, flexible pasterns are of good length.

BODY

The chest cavity is well-sprung, and is deep, with plenty of lung and heart room. The chest is narrow-to-medium in width. The deep brisket reaches to the elbows in mature specimens. The deep brisket ends in a definite waist with a well-defined tuckup. The back is strong and straight. It may be moderately long, but must have no suggestion of slackness. There is a slight rise over the loin.

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarters are strong, powerful and muscular. They are set under the body. They are well-angulated and exhibit tremendous drive and agility, enabling the dog to turn quickly while moving forward. The hindquarters are parallel when in full gait.

HIND LEGS

The thighs are thick, strong and well-muscled, almost as in a well-conditioned racing sighthound. Dewclaws are not desirable.

FEET

While standing, the forefeet may be slightly turned out, but equally so. The moderately small feet are compact, never splayed. The toes are well-arched. The pads are hard. The nails are strong.

TAIL

Like the ears, the tail is a most expressive and characteristic feature of this breed. It is set on as a continuation of the spine. It has a moderate brush, but is most heavily haired on the underside, which is light-colored or at least paler than the upper surface, which may show some dark sabling.

When the dog is alert, the tail is held in a characteristic "fish hook" carriage, usually at about a 45-degree angle from the horizontal. When the dog is gaiting at a trot, the tail is usually carried in a downward "pump handle" configuration. At other times, especially when the dog is being approached by stranger, the tail may be held low or tucked between the rear legs, but it must never be slack or loose in its hang.

Serious faults - Any tail which twists, curls or in a tight roll over the back

COAT & SKIN

This is a distinguishing feature of the breed. Its appearance is affected by the seasons. The winter coat is distinctly heavier than the summer coat. In the cooler months, there should be a wealth of undercoat. Animals showing shedding at appropriate times of the year are not to be penalized.

On the head, the ears, and front legs, the hair is short and smooth. Coarse, longer guard hairs (longer than the undercoat) extend over the neck, withers and back. When aroused, this hair stands erect. The coat behind the shoulder blades is often lighter in color.

The skin is pliant, but not flabby or loose.

Faults -Long, curly, wavy, or broken coats.

COLOR

Preferred color: a deep red ginger with pale buff markings over the shoulders and along the muzzle. Acceptable colors: variations in color, grading from straw-colored through wheaten to pale cream buff

The preferred and acceptable colors usually include lighter colors on the underside, chest and throat, sometimes being nearly white on the throat. Some white on the toes is common and not to be penalized. Dark sabling over the back, loins and tail is permissible. Dogs less than two years of age often have all-black muzzles, but this is not required.

The following color patterns are permitted: piebald spotting; and black blanket back.

HEIGHT & WEIGHT

The average height, measured at the withers, generally ranges from 17 to 24 inches, but can vary according to build. Type and symmetry are more important than size. Weight is dependent on the overall size and build of the individual, and varies from approximately 30 to 55 pounds.

Bitches are generally lighter in build than dogs, but the sexes overlap broadly in both size and weight. At no time should the breed appear heavy-bodied.

GAIT & MOVEMENT

Gait is low, free-moving, effortless and smooth. There is a suggestion of flexibility in the back, as would be expected for a small sighthound capable of a double suspension gallop. Serious faults - High, choppy, or hackneyed gaits. Toeing-in. Toeing-out. Moving too close behind.

DISQUALIFICATIONS Viciousness or extreme shyness. Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid.

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