



Official Standard of the Otterhound

General Appearance: The Otterhound is a large, rough-coated hound with an imposing head showing great strength and dignity, and the strong body and long striding action fit for a long day's work. It has an extremely sensitive nose, and is inquisitive and perseverant in investigating scents. The Otterhound hunts its quarry on land and water and requires a combination of characteristics unique among hounds—most notably a rough, double coat; and substantial webbed feet. Otterhounds should not be penalized for being shown in working condition (lean, well muscled, with a naturally stripped coat). Any departure from the following points should be considered a fault; its seriousness should be regarded in exact proportion to its degree.

Size, Proportion, Substance: Males are approximately 27 inches at the withers, and weigh approximately 115 pounds. Bitches are approximately 24 inches at the withers, and weigh approximately 80 pounds. This is not an absolute, but rather a guideline. The Otterhound is slightly rectangular in body; the length from point of shoulder to buttocks is slightly greater than the height at the withers. The Otterhound has good *substance* with strongly boned legs and broad muscles, without being coarse. Balance, soundness and type are of greater importance than size.

Head: The *head* is large, fairly narrow, and well covered with hair. The head should measure 11 to 12 inches from tip of nose to occiput in a hound 26 inches at the withers, with the muzzle and skull approximately equal in length. This proportion should be maintained in larger and smaller hounds. The *expression* is open and amiable. The *eyes* are deeply set. The haw shows only slightly. The eyes are dark, but eye color and eye rim pigment will complement the color of the hound. Dogs with black pigmented noses and eye rims should have darker eyes, while those with liver or slate pigment may have hazel eyes. The *ears*, an essential feature of this breed, are long, pendulous, and folded (the leading edge folds or rolls to give a draped appearance). They are set low, at or below eye level, and hang close to the head, with the leather reaching at least to the tip of the nose. They are well covered with hair. The *skull* (cranium) is long, fairly narrow under the hair, and only slightly domed. The stop is not pronounced. The *muzzle* is square, with no hint of snipiness; the jaws are powerful with deep flews. From the side, the planes of the muzzle and skull should be parallel. The nose is large, dark, and completely pigmented, with wide nostrils. The jaws are powerful and capable of a crushing grip. A scissors *bite* is preferred.

Neck, Topline, Body: The *neck* is powerful and blends smoothly into well laid back, clean shoulders, and should be of sufficient length to allow the dog to follow a trail. It has an abundance of hair; a slight dewlap is permissible. The *topline* is level from the withers to the base of tail. The chest is deep reaching at least to the elbows on a mature hound. Forechest is evident, there is sufficient width to impart strength and endurance. There should be no indication of narrowness or weakness. The well sprung, oval rib cage extends well towards the rear of the body. The loin is short, broad and strong. The *tail* is set high, and is long reaching at least to the hock. The tail is thicker at the base, tapers to a point, and is feathered (covered and fringed with hair). It is carried saber fashion (not forward over the back) when the dog is moving or alert, but may droop when the dog is at rest.

Forequarters: Shoulders are clean, powerful, and well sloped with moderate angulation at shoulders and elbows. Legs are strongly boned and straight, with strong, slightly sprung pasterns. Dewclaws on the forelegs may be removed. Feet - Both front and rear feet are large, broad, compact when standing, but capable of spreading. They have thick, deep pads, with arched toes; they are web-footed (membranes connecting the toes allow the foot to spread).



Hindquarters: Thighs and second thighs are large, broad, and well muscled. Legs have moderately bent stifles with well-defined hocks. Hocks are well let down, turning neither in nor out. Legs on a standing hound are parallel when viewed from the rear. Angulation front and rear must be balanced and adequate to give forward reach and rear drive. Dewclaws, if any, on the hind legs are generally removed. Feet are as previously described.

Coat: The coat is an essential feature of the Otterhound. Coat texture and quality are more important than the length. The outer coat is dense, rough, coarse and crisp, of broken appearance. Softer hair on the head and lower legs is natural. The outer coat is two to four inches long on the back and shorter on the extremities. A water-resistant undercoat of short wooly, slightly oily hair is essential, but in the summer months may be hard to find except on the thighs and shoulders. The ears are well covered with hair, and the tail is feathered (covered and fringed with hair). A naturally stripped coat lacking length and fringes is correct for an Otterhound that is being worked. A proper hunting coat will show a hard outer coat and wooly undercoat. The Otterhound is shown in a natural coat, with no sculpturing or shaping of the coat. Faults - A soft outer coat is a very serious fault as is a wooly textured outer coat. Lack of undercoat is a serious fault. An outer coat much longer than six inches becomes heavy when wet and is a fault. Any evidence of stripping or scissoring of coat to shape or stylize should be strongly penalized as a fault.

Color: Any color or combination of colors is acceptable. There should be no discrimination on the basis of color. The nose should be dark and fully pigmented, black, liver, or slate, depending on the color of the hound. Eye rim pigment should match the nose.

Gait: The Otterhound moves freely with forward reach and rear drive. The gait is smooth, effortless, and capable of being maintained for many miles. Characteristic of the Otterhound gait is a very loose, shambling walk, which springs immediately into a loose and very long striding, sound, active trot with natural extension of the head. The gallop is smooth and exceptionally long striding. Otterhounds single track at slow speeds. Otterhounds do not lift their feet high off the ground and may shuffle when they walk or move at a slow trot. The Otterhound should be shown on a loose lead.

Temperament: The Otterhound is amiable, boisterous and even-tempered.

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