



Official Standard of the Parson Russell Terrier

General Appearance: The Parson Russell Terrier was developed in the south of England in the 1800's as a white terrier to work European red fox both above and below ground. The terrier was named for the Reverend John Russell, whose terriers trailed hounds and bolted foxes from dens so the hunt could ride on. To function as a working terrier, he must possess certain characteristics: a ready attitude, alert and confident; balance in height and length; medium in size and bone, suggesting strength and endurance. Important to breed type is a natural appearance: harsh, weatherproof coat with a compact construction and clean silhouette. The coat is broken or smooth. He has a small, flexible chest to enable him to pursue his quarry underground and sufficient length of leg to follow the hounds. Old scars and injuries, the result of honorable work or accident, should not be allowed to prejudice a terrier's chance in the show ring, unless they interfere with movement or utility for work or breeding.

Size, Substance, Proportion: *Size* -The ideal height of a mature dog is 14 inches at the highest point of the shoulder blade, and bitches 13 inches. Terriers whose heights measure either slightly larger or smaller than the ideal are not to be penalized in the show ring provided other points of their conformation, especially balance, are consistent with the working aspects of the standard. Larger dogs must remain spannable and smaller dogs must continue to exhibit breed type and sufficient bone to allow them to work successfully. The weight of a terrier in hard working condition is usually between 13 to 17 pounds. *Proportion* - Balance is the keystone of the terrier's anatomy. The chief points of consideration are the relative proportions of skull and foreface, head and frame, height at withers and length of body. The height at withers is slightly greater than the distance from the withers to tail, i.e. by possibly 1 to 1½ inches on a 14 inch dog. The measurement will vary according to height. *Substance* - The terrier is of medium bone, not so heavy as to appear coarse or so light as to appear racy. The conformation of the whole frame is indicative of strength and endurance. **Disqualification** - Height under 12 inches or over 15 inches.

Head: *Head* - Strong and in good proportion to the rest of the body, so the appearance of balance is maintained. *Expression* - Keen, direct, full of life and intelligence. *Eyes* - Almond shaped, dark in color, moderate in size, not protruding. Dark rims are desirable, however where the coat surrounding the eye is white, the eye rim may be pink. *Ears* - Small "V"- shaped drop ears of moderate thickness carried forward close to the head with the tip so as to cover the orifice and pointing toward the eye. Fold is level with the top of the skull or slightly above. When alert, ear tips do not extend below the corner of the eye. *Skull* - Flat with muzzle and back skull in parallel planes. Fairly broad between the ears, narrowing slightly to the eyes. The stop is well defined but not prominent. *Muzzle* - Length from nose to stop is slightly shorter than the distance from stop to occiput. Strong and rectangular, measuring in width approximately 2/3 that of the backskull between the ears. *Jaws* - Upper and lower are of fair and punishing strength. *Nose* - Must be black and fully pigmented. *Bite* - Teeth are large with complete dentition in a perfect scissors bite, i.e., upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and teeth set square to the jaws.



Faults - Snipey muzzle, weak or coarse head. Light or yellow eye, round eye. Hound ear, fleshy ear, rounded tips. Level bite, missing teeth. Four or more missing pre-molars, incisors or canines is a fault. Disqualifications - Prick ears. Liver color nose. Overshot, undershot or wry mouth.

Neck, Topline, Body: *Neck* - Clean and muscular, moderately arched, of fair length, gradually widening so as to blend well into the shoulders. *Topline* - Strong, straight, and level in motion, the loin of moderate length. *Body* - In overall length to height proportion, the dog appears approximately square and balanced. The back is neither short nor long. The back gives no appearance of slackness but is laterally flexible, so that he may turn around in an earth. Tuck-up is moderate. Chest: Narrow and of moderate depth, giving an athletic rather than heavily-chested appearance; must be flexible and compressible. The ribs are fairly well sprung, oval rather than round, not extending past the level of the elbow. *Tail* - Docked so the tip is approximately level to the skull. Set on not too high, but so that a level topline, with a very slight arch over the loin, is maintained. Carried gaily when in motion, but when baiting or at rest may be held level but not below the horizontal. Faults - Chest not spannable or shallow; barrel ribs. Tail set low or carried low to or over the back, i.e. squirrel tail.

Forequarters: Shoulders - Long and sloping, well laid back, cleanly cut at the withers. Point of shoulder sits in a plane behind the point of the prosternum. The shoulder blade and upper arm are of approximately the same length; forelegs are placed well under the dog. Elbows hang perpendicular to the body, working free of the sides. Legs are strong and straight with good bone. Joints turn neither in nor out. Pasterns firm and nearly straight. Feet - Round, cat-like, very compact, the pads thick and tough, the toes moderately arched pointing forward, turned neither in nor out. Fault - Hare feet.

Hindquarters: Strong and muscular, smoothly molded, with good angulation and bend of stifle. Hocks near the ground, parallel, and driving in action. Feet as in front.

Coat: Smooth and Broken: Whether smooth or broken, a double coat of good sheen, naturally harsh, close and dense, straight with no suggestion of kink. There is a clear outline with only a hint of eyebrows and beard if natural to the coat. No sculptured furnishings. The terrier is shown in his natural appearance not excessively groomed. Sculpturing is to be severely penalized. Faults - Soft, silky, woolly, or curly topcoat. Lacking undercoat. Excessive grooming and sculpturing.

Color: White, white with black or tan markings, or a combination of these, tri-color. Colors are clear. As long as the terrier is predominantly white, moderate body markings are not to be faulted. Grizzle is acceptable and should not be confused with brindle. Disqualification - Brindle markings.

Gait: Movement or action is the crucial test of conformation. A tireless ground covering trot displaying good reach in front with the hindquarters providing plenty of drive. Pasterns break lightly on forward motion with no hint of hackney-like action or goose-stepping. The action is straight in front and rear.



Temperament: Bold and friendly. Athletic and clever. At work he is a game hunter, tenacious, courageous, and single minded. At home he is playful, exuberant and overwhelmingly affectionate. He is an independent and energetic terrier and requires his due portion of attention. He should not be quarrelsome. Shyness should not be confused with submissiveness. Submissiveness is not a fault. Sparring is not acceptable. Fault: Shyness. Disqualification - Overt aggression toward another dog.

Spanning: To measure a terrier's chest, span from behind, raising only the front feet from the ground, and compress gently. Directly behind the elbows is the smaller, firm part of the chest. The central part is usually larger but should feel rather elastic. Span with hands tightly behind the elbows on the forward portion of the chest. The chest must be easily spanned by average size hands. Thumbs should meet at the spine and fingers should meet under the chest. This is a significant factor and a critical part of the judging process. The dog cannot be correctly judged without this procedure.

Disqualifications: *Height under 12 inches or over 15 inches. Prick ears, liver nose. Overshot, undershot or wry mouth. Brindle markings. Overt aggression toward another dog.*

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