



## Official Standard of the Belgian Laekenois

**General Appearance:** The first impression of the Belgian Laekenois is that of a square, well-balanced dog, elegant in appearance, with an exceedingly proud carriage of the head and neck. He is a strong, agile, well-muscled animal, alert and full of life. His whole conformation gives the impression of depth and solidity without bulkiness. The male dog is usually somewhat more impressive and grand than his female counterpart. The bitch should have a distinctly feminine look. Both male and female should be judged equally. **Faults** - Any deviation from these specifications is a fault. In determining whether a fault is minor, serious, or major, these two factors should be used as a guide: 1. The extent to which it deviates from the standard, 2. The extent to which such deviation would actually affect the working ability of the dog.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** Males should be 24 to 26 inches in height and females 22 to 24 inches, measured at the withers. The length, measured from point of breastbone to point of rump, should equal the height. Bitches may be slightly longer. Bone structure should be moderately heavy in proportion to his height so that he is well-balanced throughout and neither spindly or leggy nor cumbersome and bulky. The Belgian Laekenois should stand squarely on all fours. From a side view the topline, front legs, and back legs should closely approximate a square. Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches shall be disqualified. Females under 20½ inches or over 25 inches shall be disqualified.

**Head:** Clean cut and strong, long without exaggeration and lean. The skull and muzzle are approximately the same length with at most a very slight advantage for the muzzle. Overall size should be in proportion to the body. **Expression** - should be intelligent and questioning, indicating alertness, attention and readiness for activity. **Eyes** - are brown, preferably dark brown, medium size, slightly almond shaped and not protruding. **Ears** - are triangular in shape, stiff, erect, and in proportion to the head in size. Base of the ear should not come below the center of the eye. Drooping or hanging ears are disqualifications. **Skull** - is flattened rather than rounded with the width approximately the same, but not wider than the length. The stop is moderate. **Muzzle** - is moderately pointed, avoiding any tendency to snipiness, and approximately equal in length to that of the top skull. The jaws should be strong and powerful. **Nose** - is black without spots or discolored areas. The lips should be tight and black, with no pink showing on the outside. **Teeth** - full complement of strong, white teeth, evenly set. **Bite** - should be even or scissors. An overshot or undershot bite is a fault. An undershot or overshot bite in which two or more of the upper incisors lose contact with two or more of the lower incisors is a disqualification. (Note: loss of contact caused by short center incisors shall not be judged as undershot in an otherwise correct bite.) The absence of two premolars or molars is a serious fault. The absence of one premolar (PMI) is not to be penalized. Four or more missing teeth is a disqualification.

**Neck, Topline, Body:** **Neck** - is round and rather outstretched, tapered from head to body, well muscled, with tight skin. **Topline** - the withers are slightly higher and slope into the back, which must be level, straight, and firm from withers to hip joints. **Body** - Chest - is not broad, but deep. The lowest point should reach the elbow, forming a smooth ascendant curve to the abdomen. Abdomen is of moderate development, neither tucked up nor paunchy. **Loin** - loin section when viewed from above is relatively short, broad and strong, and blends smoothly into the back. **Croup** - is very slightly sloped, broad, but not excessively so. **Tail** - is strong at the base with the last vertebra reaching the hock. At rest the dog holds it low, the tip bent back level with the hock.



When in action he raises it and gives it a slight curve, which is strongest towards the tip, without forming a hook. Cropped or stump tail are disqualifications.

**Forequarters:** Shoulders - are long and oblique, laid flat against the body, forming a sharp angle (approximately 90 degrees) with the upper arm. Legs - are straight, strong and parallel to each other with bone oval rather than round. Development (length and substance) should be well proportioned to the size of the dog. Pasterns - are short, strong and very slightly sloped. Feet - are round (cat footed). Toes - curved close together, well padded. Nails - strong and black, except that they may be white to match white toe tips. Dewclaws - are permissible.

**Hindquarters:** Legs - are in length and substance well proportioned to the size of the dog with the bone oval rather than round. Legs are parallel to each other. Thighs - are broad and heavily muscled. The upper and lower thigh bones approximately parallel the shoulder blade and upper arm respectively, forming a relatively sharp angle at stifle joint. The angle at the hock is relatively sharp, although the Belgian Laekenois does not have extreme angulation. Metatarsus - is medium length, strong and slightly sloped. Feet - are slightly elongated. Toes - curved close together, well padded. Nails - strong and black, except that they may be white to match white toe tips. Dewclaws - if any, should be removed.

**Coat:** The coat must have a texture which is rough and coarse giving a disorderly, tousled look. The coat should be severely penalized if silky or soft or lacking a double coat. The length of the hair should be approximately 2½ inches over the body. A beard must be present on the muzzle and hair on the head should not be in excess so as to hide the eyes nor the lines of the head and skull and make the head appear square or heavy. The tail should not form a plume.

**Color:** All shades of red or fawn to grayish tones are acceptable with traces of black appearing principally on the muzzle and tail. The degree of blackening varies considerably from dog to dog with all variations being equally acceptable. A small to moderate white patch is permitted on the chest and the tips of the toes may be white. White or gray frosting on the chin and muzzle is normal and acceptable. Solid white markings elsewhere than on tips of toes, chest, or frosting on muzzle is a disqualification.

**Gait:** Motion should be smooth, free and easy, seemingly never tiring, exhibiting facility of movement rather than hard driving action. The Belgian Laekenois tends to single track at a fast gait; the legs, both front and rear, converging toward the center line of gravity of the dog. The backline should remain firm and level, parallel to the center of motion, with no crabbing. The dog shows a marked tendency to move in a circle or curve rather than a straight line.

**Temperament:** The Belgian Laekenois should reflect the qualities of intelligence, courage, alertness and devotion to master. Protectiveness of the person and property of his master is added to his inherent aptitude as a guardian of flocks and fields. He should be watchful, attentive and always in motion when not under command. He should be observant and vigilant with strangers, but not apprehensive in his relationship with humans. He should not show fear or shyness nor viciousness by unwarranted or unprovoked attack. With those he knows well, he is most affectionate and friendly, zealous of their attention, and very possessive. Extreme shyness is not desirable in the Belgian Laekenois and should be severely penalized. Viciousness is a disqualification.



**Disqualifications:**

Males under 23 inches or over 27 inches. Females under 20½ inches or over 25 inches.

Drooping or hanging ears.

Undershot or overshot bite such that contact with two incisors is lost. (Note: loss of contact caused by short center incisors shall not be judged as undershot in an otherwise correct bite.)

Four or more missing teeth.

Cropped or stump tail.

Solid white markings elsewhere than on tips of toes, chest, or frosting on muzzle.

Viciousness.

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