



Welcome to the Rottweiler Education Seminar

“A Study Guide for Rottweiler Structure”

American Rottweiler Club Breeders Education Committee



It all starts with responsible breeding

As Breeders, it is our responsibility to strive for total soundness and remember that we are breeding as much for the quality of each dog's life as for the future integrity of the Rottweiler.

All championship and show points are meaningless if we breed structural faults into our dogs.

Even worse, if we ignore the fact that working, and performance dogs require the soundest possible structure.

Fault judging your own dogs

You must be very severe!

A show dog may be a great dog with a failing or two and you recognize it to be the best despite these. But in your own kennel these failings if ignored will crop up time and again and drive you to desperation.

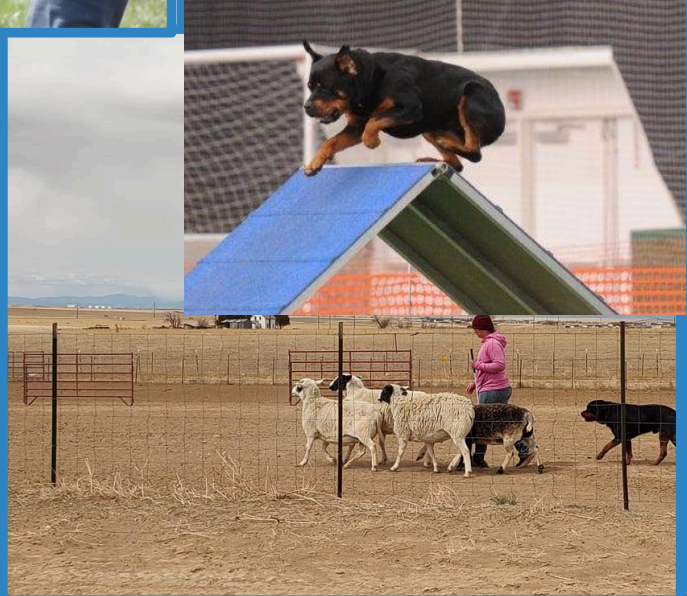
A bad fault must be penalized either in the ring or at home, because however good the dog that carries it, when used a stud the resulting puppies will nearly always be slightly less good than the dog.

In your kennel you can breed out a failing very easily, darkening your eye color or getting smaller ears, but the very real fault will set you back for years. So, at home you must always fault-judge and must also recognize the failings and get them out.

- To be a good breeder it is important to understand form and function, meaning the structure of the dog.
- You must know how the parts of the dog work together to create good movement as described in the Rottweiler standard.
- Dogs will move how they are built. Structural faults will show up in the dog's movement.
- You also need to understand the functions or purposes that the Rottweiler breed was originally meant to perform.



Lindsay Photography



The Rottweiler

- The American Rottweiler Club standard describes the Rottweiler as: Robust and powerful. The Rottweiler is happiest when given a job to perform. His intelligence, endurance and willingness to work make him suitable as a police dog, herding, service dog, therapy dog, obedience competitor and devoted companion.
- The Rottweiler is a medium large, robust and powerful dog.
- According to generally accepted principles, an inherent protector, the Rottweiler is self-confident and responds quietly and with a wait-and-see attitude to influences in his environment.
- A Rottweiler fits that image while remaining an athletic, and all purpose and loyal companion.

Rottweiler Proportions

Dogs 24 inches to 27 inches. Bitches 22 inches to 25 inches, with preferred size being mid-range of each sex.

The length of body, from prosternum to the rearmost projection of the rump, is slightly longer than the height of the dog at the withers, the most desirable proportion of the height to length being 9 to 10. The Rottweiler is neither coarse nor shelly. His bone and muscle mass must be sufficient to balance his frame, giving a compact and very powerful appearance.

The 9 to 10 length of the body from the point of shoulder to the rear point of the croup is slightly longer than the height of the body from the ground to the top of the withers.

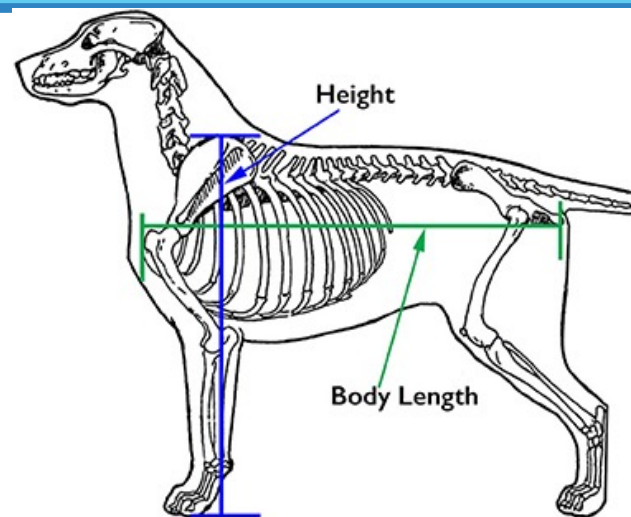
The desirable slightly longer proportion is not derived from a long back, but from overall length which in relation to height is achieved by length of forequarter, length of withers and hindquarters viewed from the side.

Rottweiler Proportions

9 to 10

The minimal increase in length allows more freedom of movement because of less interference between the front and rear feet when the dog moves.

The Rottweiler is neither a tall nor short legged dog. A short-legged, heavy boned dog is not desired. The chest should reach the elbows, and the chest depth and leg length proportion should be about 50/50.





Correct



long



Short on leg

The Rottweiler Head

- The head carriage is erect, held slightly ahead of the body when the dog is standing.
- The head is of normal proportions relative to the size of the dog. It is also a normal shape for dogs, neither long and narrow, nor short and wide overall.
- A Rottweiler should have a strong, powerful head with broad jaws.
- In proportions, the skull is slightly longer than the muzzle, almost flat on top.
- The nose and lips must be black.
- The Rottweiler nose is well developed, broader than round, with relatively large nostrils and always black. The muzzle should appear neither elongated nor shortened in relation to the cranial region. The nasal bridge is broad at the base and moderately tapered.

The Rottweiler Head

Of medium length, broad between the ears; forehead line seen in profile is moderately arched; zygomatic arch and stop well developed with strong broad upper and lower jaws.

The desired ratio of back skull to muzzle is 3 to 2. Forehead is preferred dry; however, some wrinkling may occur when the dog is alert. Expression is noble, alert and self-assured.

The Rottweiler is not a “Head Breed”!

The importance of the Rottweiler head is to identify the Rottweiler as a Rottweiler. One should put head conformation in proper perspective. The head is important...and essential to breed type.

A head breed is a breed that has let the head become the most defining part of breed type. When a breed concentrates on heads to the exclusion of other qualities, those other qualities suffer. What results is a breed with a beautiful head, which his body usually has poor structure, proportions, and movement. Observe other breeds; it will become obvious which ones are “head breeds”.

It is easier to correct head type in a breeding program than it is to correct structural faults.

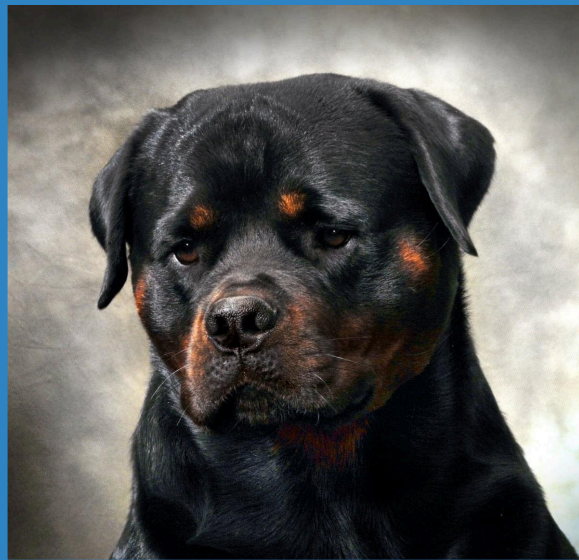
Head Type: Puppies



Correct Bitch Heads



Correct Dog Heads



Head Type: Incorrect



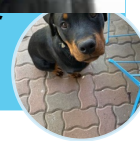
Overdone



Lacks fill



Snipy, poor ear set, light eye

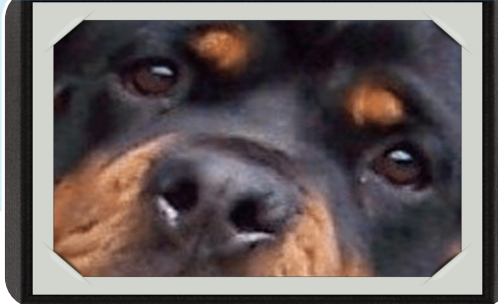


Eyes

The eyes are almond shaped, dark, set facing normally forward

Eyes should be in proportion to the head, not too large- but not too small. The shape of an almond is pointed at each end and rising in the middle - NOT ROUND!

Correct



Medium Brown



Dark brown, almond shaped

Round Eye
(Undesirable)





Hairless Eye Rim



Yellow (Bird of Prey) eye



Different color eye



Faults

Ears

The ears are medium-sized pendant, triangular, wide apart, and not set high on the head.

Ears are triangular, hanging down, close to the cheek; not too small so as to be light and flyaway but not too large and heavy; they are set in line with the top of the skull, giving the appearance of broadening the skull; if set too high they give a comical expression; they should hang flat with no creases, not stand away from the head and there should be no daylight between the inner edge of the ear and the face. Neither should they be low set which gives an impression of houndiness.

Ears



Correct ear set



High ear set



Low ear set



Teeth

Rottweilers should have strong and complete dentition (42 teeth) with a scissor bite. The upper incisors closely overlapping the lower incisors.

Serious Fault: level bite; any missing tooth.

Disqualifications: Overshot, undershot, wry mouth; two or more missing teeth.



The normal bite of dogs with muzzles of medium length and width is a scissors bite

The dog's bite is also determined by the shape of its head.

Occlusion is controlled by genetics, nutrition, the environment and mechanical forces generated by the interlock of upper and lower teeth.

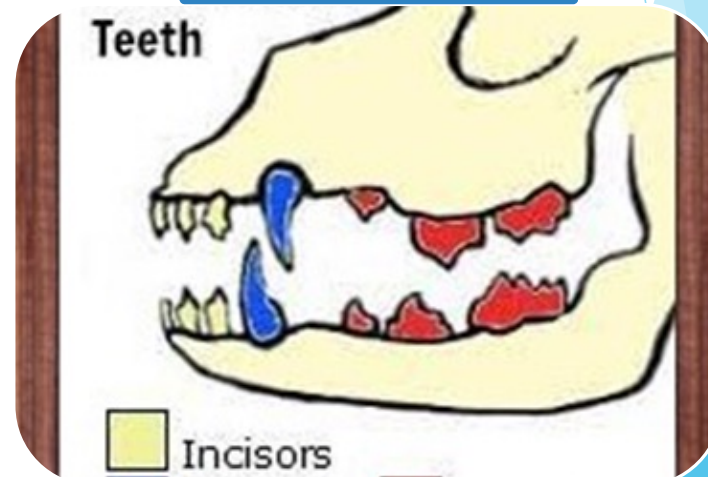
Malocclusions and missing teeth have been proven to be genetic.

Teeth



Adult: 42
teeth

The puppy
dentition contains
a total of 28 baby
teeth



Examples of abnormal bites



Overshot



Wry



Undershot



Puppy/Overshot



Malocclusion

Mouth Pigment

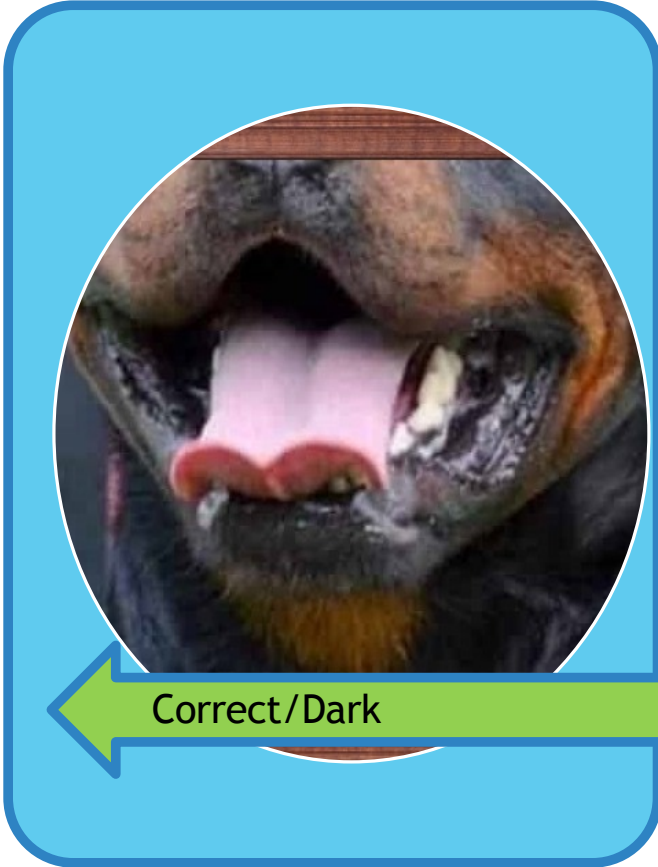
The inner mouth pigment is preferred dark.

Serious Faults - Total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth).

Flews are the upper and lower lips culminating in the corners of the mouth; they should be tight without openness, in combination with the overall dryness of the head. Ideally mouth pigment should be dark with little, or no, pink pigment visible.

Undesired: Loose Flews





Correct/Dark



Pink gums

Underjaw

The power of the jaws and strength of grip come from the lower jaw, since that is the jaw that moves

Many breeds are losing their underjaw since breeders are not selecting for it.

Teeth are getting smaller. If we breed for the correct length of underjaw, we will retain correct sized teeth.

Correct Underjaw



Coat

Outer coat is straight, coarse, dense, of medium length and lying flat. Undercoat should be present on neck and thighs, but the amount is influenced by climatic conditions. Undercoat should not show through outer coat.

The coat is shortest on head, ears and legs, longest on breeching.

The Rottweiler is to be exhibited in the natural condition with no trimming.

Fault: Wavy coat.

Serious fault: open coat, excessively short, or curly coat; total lack of undercoat; any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat. **Disqualification** Long coat

Correct Coat





Wavy coat on puppy, will usually go away



Serious fault:
Open coat

Disqualification:
Long coat



Serious fault: Any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat

Color

Always black with rust to mahogany markings.

The demarcation between black and rust is to be clearly defined. The markings should be located as follows: a spot over each eye; on cheeks; as a strip around each side of muzzle, but not on the bridge of the nose; on throat; triangular mark on both sides of prosternum; on forelegs from carpus downward to the toes; on inside of rear legs showing down the front of the stifle and broadening out to front of rear legs from hock to toes, but not eliminating black from rear of pasterns; under tail; black penciling on toes. The undercoat is gray, tan, or black. Quantity and location of rust markings is important and should not exceed ten percent of body color. **Serious Faults**-Straw-colored, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings; rust marking other than described above; white marking any place on dog (a few rust or white hairs do not constitute a marking).

Correct color



Serious Faults:



Insufficient
or sooty
markings



White
Markings

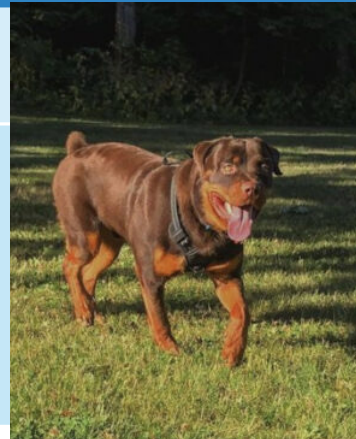


Excessive
markings

Disqualification



Absence of markings



Any base color other than black

Neck

The neck is moderate in length, moderately arched and strong.



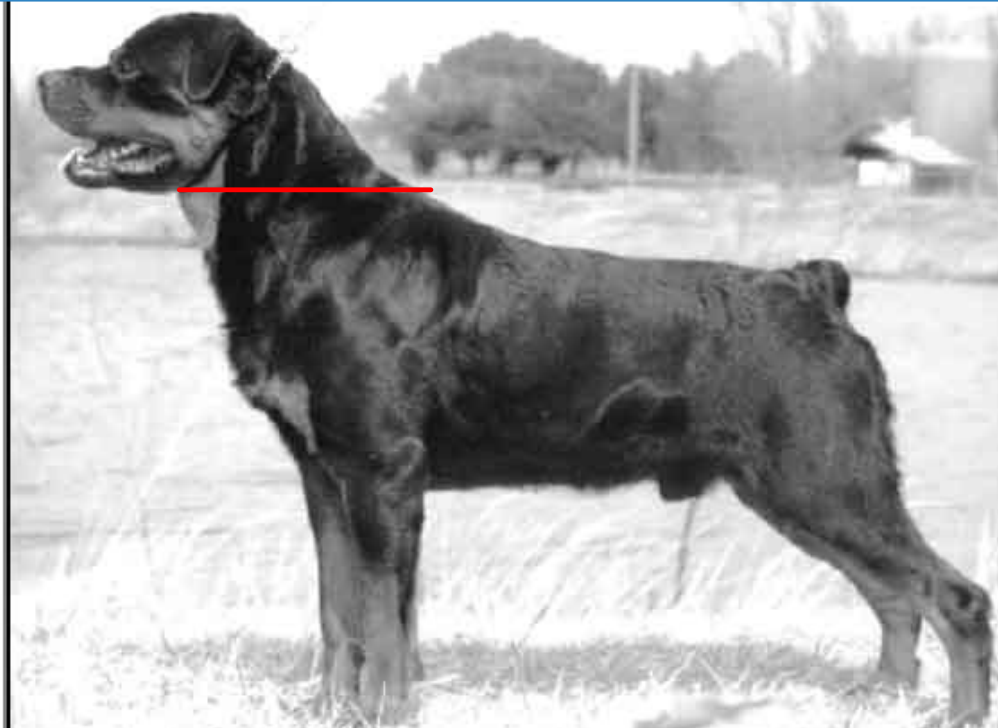
The length of neck is essential to the correct profile of the Rottweiler although “of fair length” could be misinterpreted to mean that the neck should be fairly long. ‘Moderate length’ would be a better description. There is no doubt that the neck must be slightly arched, muscular and strong to carry the noble head. Throatiness means too much skin hanging around under the neck which is not desirable. A “clean dry outline” should be aimed at.

Length of Neck

When stacked, draw a line from the lower jaw parallel to the ground along the dogs back.

This line should be well above the dogs back if the dog has a proper length of neck.

If this line runs right along the top of the back, then the neck is too short.



Forequarters

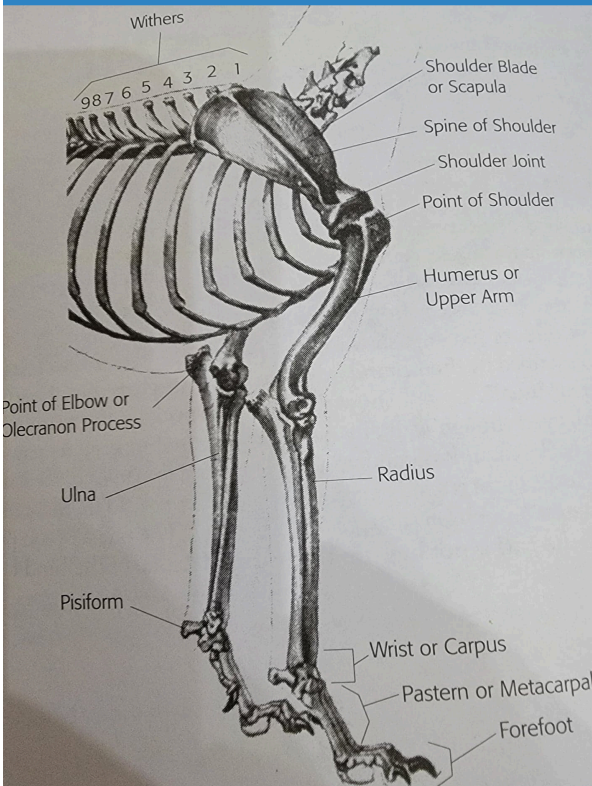
Shoulder blade is long and well laid back.

Upper arm equal in length to shoulder blade, set so elbows are well under body.

Distance from withers to elbow and elbow to ground is equal.

Legs are strongly developed with straight, heavy bone, not set close together.

The Forequarters is made up of the shoulder blade, which articulates with the upper arm at the shoulder joint; the upper arm, which articulates with the forearm; the forearm, which consists of the radius and ulna, the wrist, consisting of seven carpal bones; the pastern, consisting of five metacarpal bones; and the forefoot.

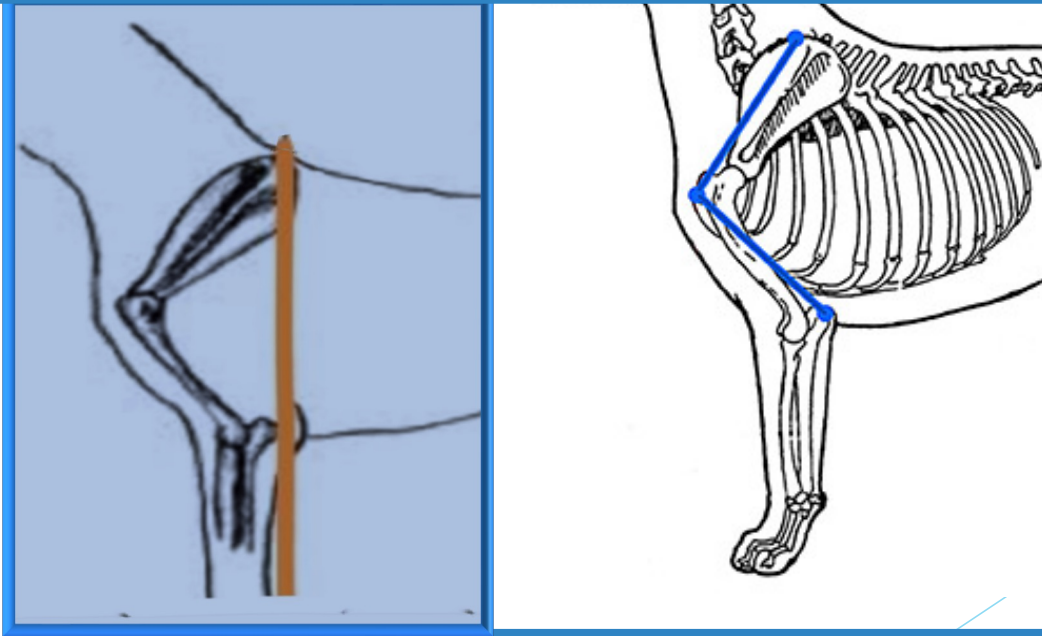


Front Angulation

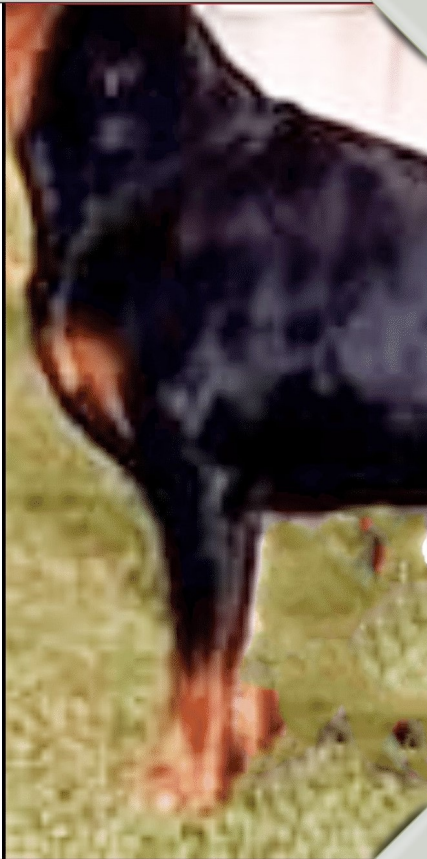
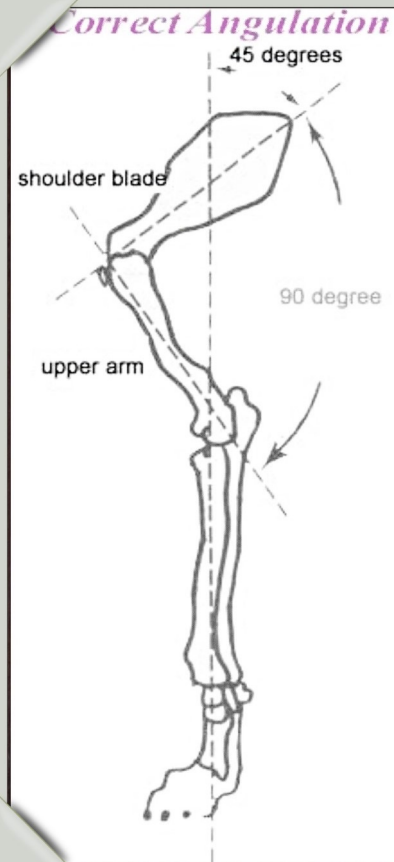
- The forearm is straight when viewed from any direction
- The pastern is also springy and strong, almost perpendicular to the ground.
- The feet are round and tight with well arched toes.
- Nails are strong, short and black.
- Viewed from the front, the Rottweiler should never be narrow. Chest must be well developed.
- Legs should not be bowed or out at the elbows.

Shoulder Angulation

- A well laid-back shoulder should form an approximate triangle.
- The distance from the withers to the point of shoulder should be approximately the same as the distance from the shoulder to the elbow.



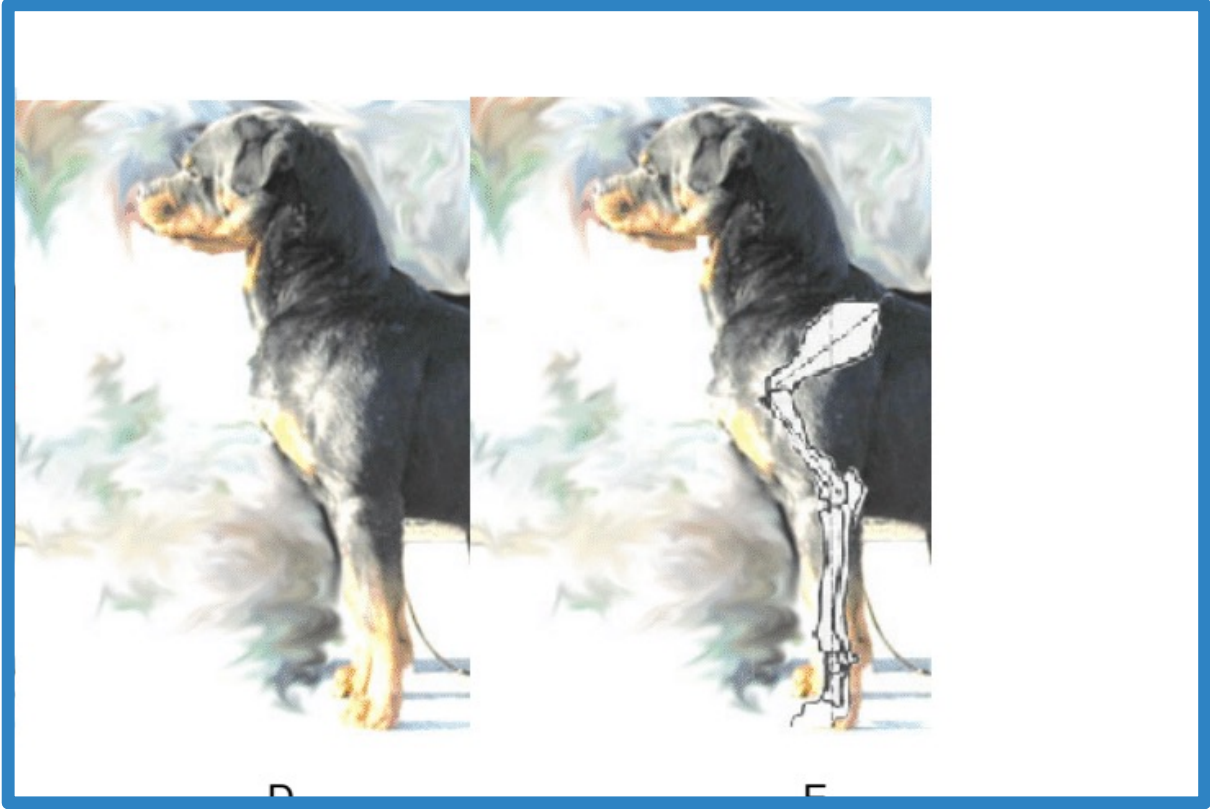
Shoulder Angulation



Shoulder blade is long and well laid back.

Upper arm equal in length to Shoulder blade, set so elbows are well underneath body.

The chest is broad and deep.





Correct Male Front



Correct Male Front



Correct Female Front

Front Assembly



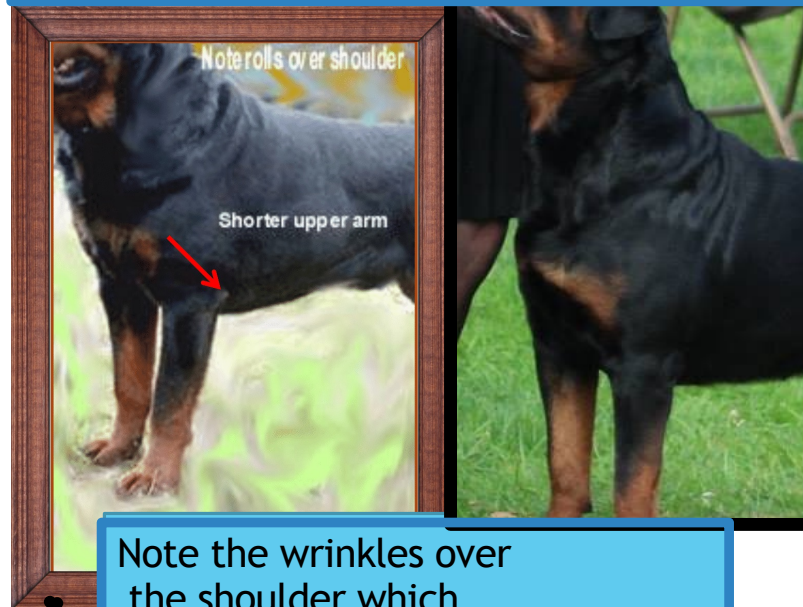
Legs perpendicular to the ground along with elbows that are tight against the body

Upper arm too far forward



Note the straight front, the upper arm is sitting in front of the rib cage.
no indentation
no forechest.

Straight Shoulders



Note the wrinkles over the shoulder which can also be caused by wide shoulders.

Wide in Front



No support

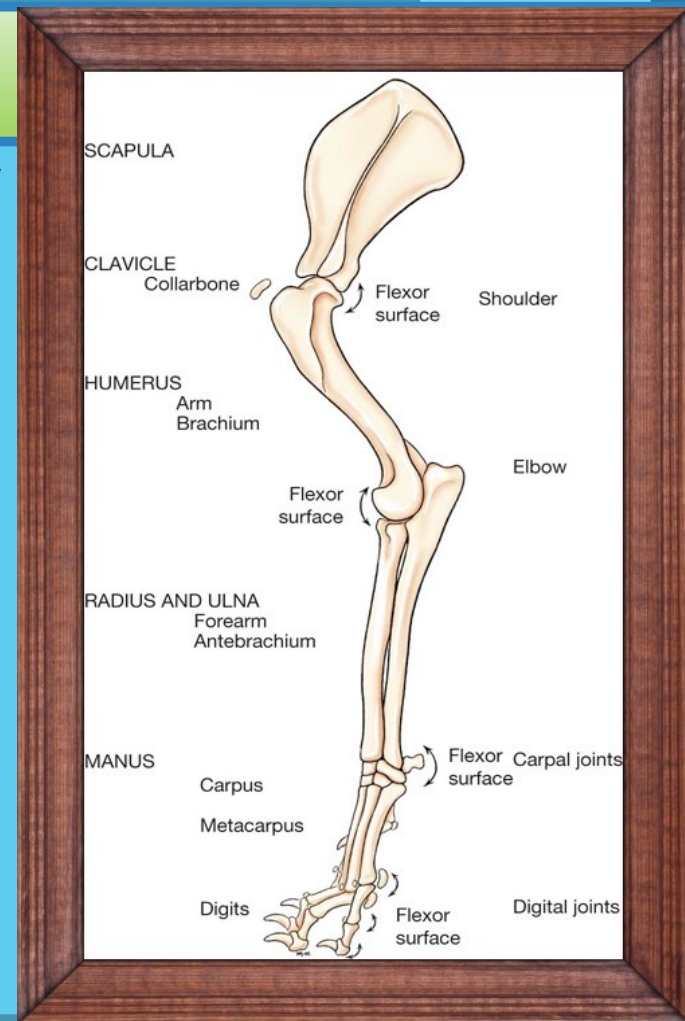
Upper Arm

Length of upper arm (humerus)—You can assess length of upper arm by using three reference points that can be easily located.

The top of the dog's shoulder,

The point of the shoulder,

And the tip of the elbow.



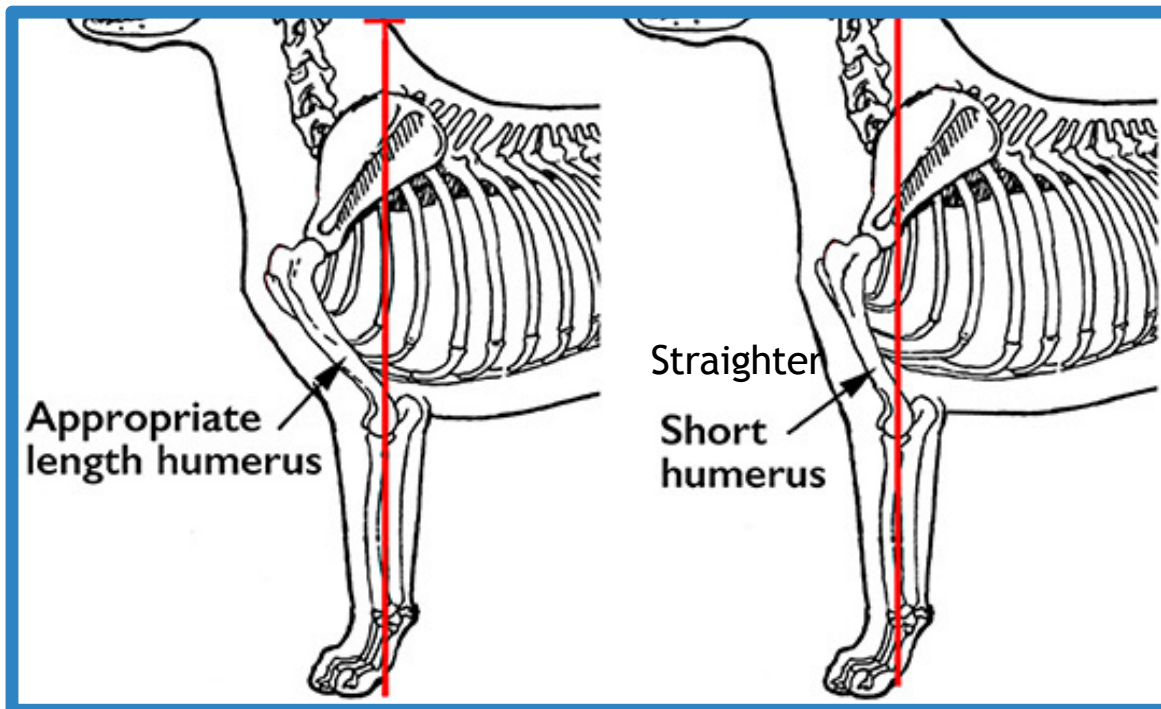
Correct upper arm



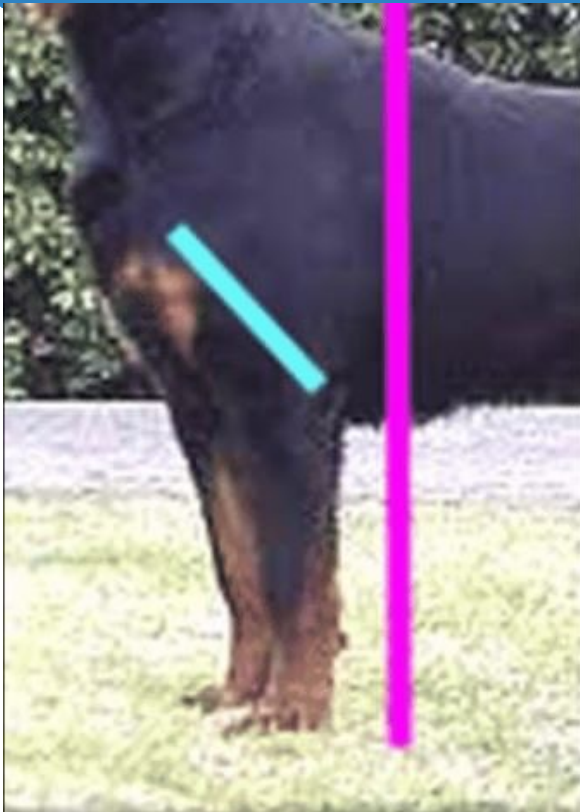
Upper Arm

A structural problem where the upper arm is shorter than the scapula is becoming common in the Rottweiler. This causes a particular movement fault, typically resulting in less-than-optimal reach when moving and less than optimal convergence toward the centerline

The upper arms are not supported properly by the body, and the lack of support causes an instability and a lack of strength in the front assembly.



Shorter Upper Arm



A short upper arm puts more impact stress on the front assembly, particularly on the pasterns and feet.

Correct upper arm



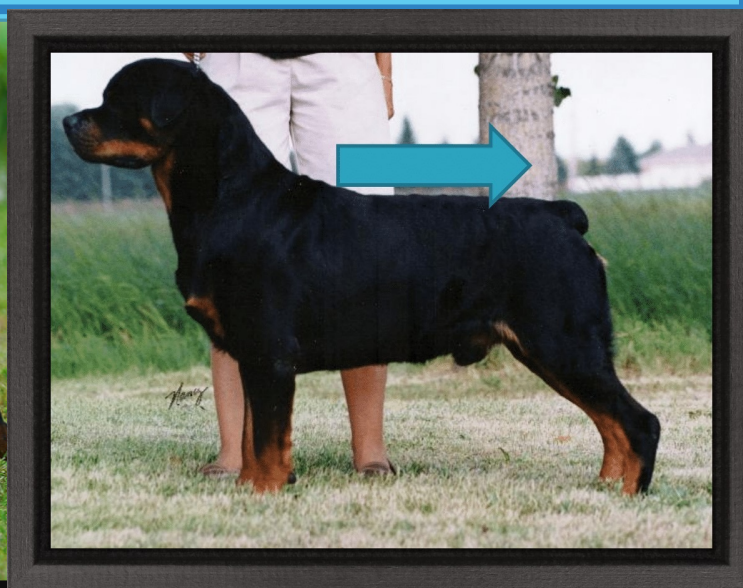
The upper arm can be too far forward and actually sit in front of the ribcage

Topline

Topline is formed by the withers, back, loin, and croup.

This is the area from the base of the neck to the base of the tail.

Preferred topline is level, meaning that this area should be flat and strong.



Topline Problems

- Dips at the withers or softness in the topline indicate there is something wrong with the structure of the front assembly.
- A rise in the rear of the topline indicates that there is something wrong with the structure of the rear assembly.
- A sloped topline indicates some type of imbalance in the structure front to rear.

Topline problems



Slope in topline:
Front angulation does not match
rear angulation



High in the rear



Roach
Low tail set

A dog too Short in back

This dog will not move correctly.
He needs to be longer in back
or he will overreach.

Too Short in Back

A square dog with a shorter back...the dog will fit a square

While this dog is nice and short back, as breeders we must be careful not to change the balance of the profile.

This dog will not move correctly. He needs to be longer in back. Otherwise, he will overreach.



Long in back

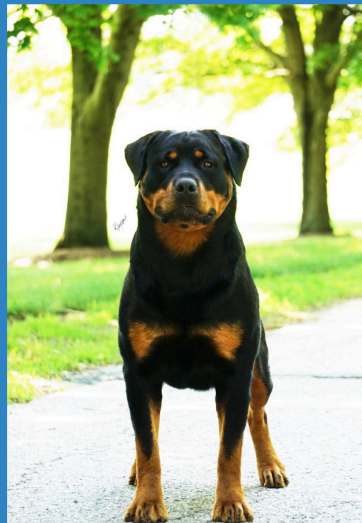
This bitch is long in back,
Low on leg...the two often go
together



Long and low decreases length of
stride and speed.

Bitch Pictures

Bitches are distinctly feminine.



Serious faults: Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized
Reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches)

Dog Pictures

Dogs 24 inches to 27 inches.

Dogs are characteristically more massive throughout with larger frame and heavier bone than bitches.

Serious Faults - Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs)



Puppy Pictures



Loin

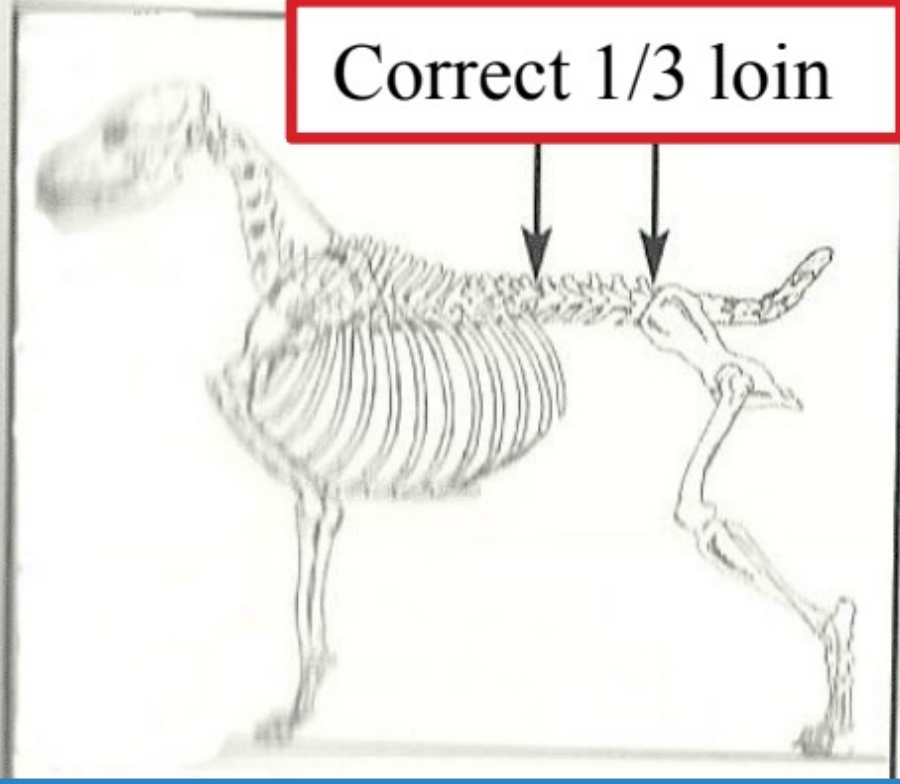
The length of a correct loin should be no more than one third the length of the ribcage.

If there is any topline issue due to the front or rear assembly, a longer loin will intensify the problem

Short loin makes the spine stiffer and less flexible.

Loin

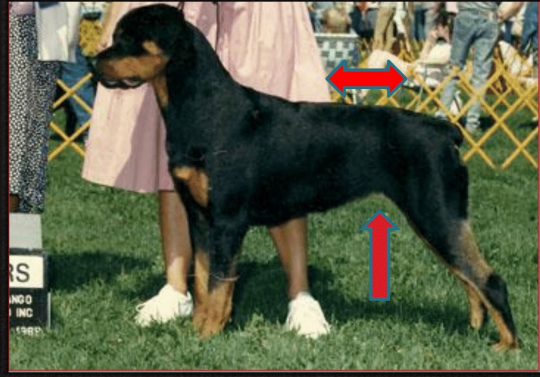
Correct 1/3 loin



Correct length of Loin



Loin Problems



Long in loin

Croup

The croup is the area from the front edge of the pelvis to the base of the tail.

The length and angle of the croup affects the eventual width of thigh as seen from the side.

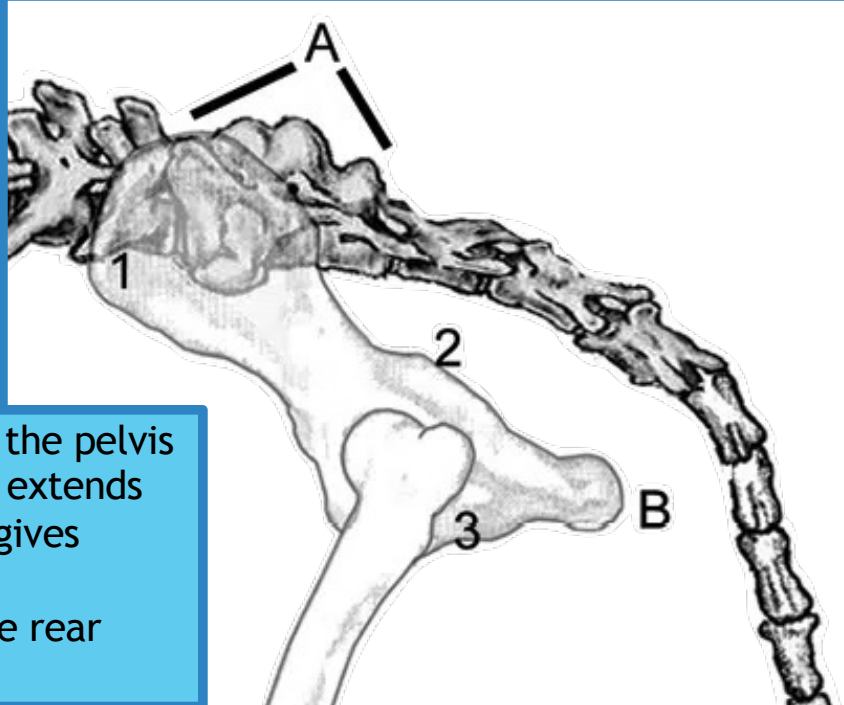
The angle of the croup affects the angle at which the hindquarter functions.

Too steep a croup, results in loss of hindquarter drive

Ideally, a croup should be of good length and laid at a gentle angle to the back so that the drive up through the hindquarter flows forward along the back without a break.

Too steep will reduce the arc of movement that is possible from the hindquarter, resulting in restrictions in drive.

On each side are (1) the ilium, (2) the ischium, and (3) the pubis bones. The pelvic bones are joined directly to the three fused sacrum vertebrae by the sacroiliac joint. The angle in which the pairs of bones are attached to the sacrum is called the pelvic girdle slope. This angle varies from dog to dog.



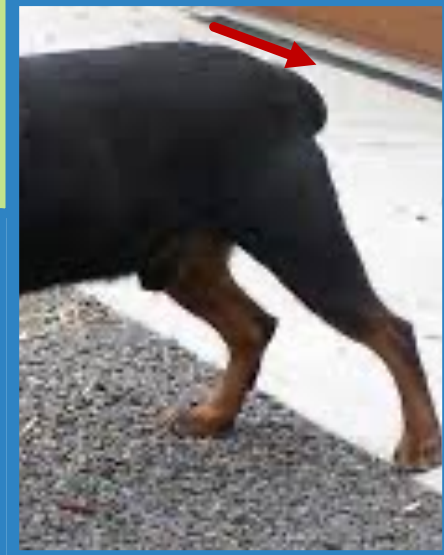
The extremity of the pelvis (ischium (2)), if it extends well to the rear, gives greater area for attachment of the rear muscle.

The function of the croup is to determine the set-on of the tail. The sacrum (sacral vertebrae) and the first several coccygeal (tail) vertebrae form the croup (see Figure A). The angulation of the croup determines the tail set. If the croup is flat (horizontal) or level, the tail set will be high. If the croup is gently rounded, it becomes a continuation of the backline and the tail usually continues on the level of the spine, carried horizontally to the ground. If the croup is angled downward, the tail set will be low. The steeper the downward angle, the lower the tail set will be on the dog. The angulation of the croup is entirely dependent upon the curvature of the individual sacral and tail vertebrae.

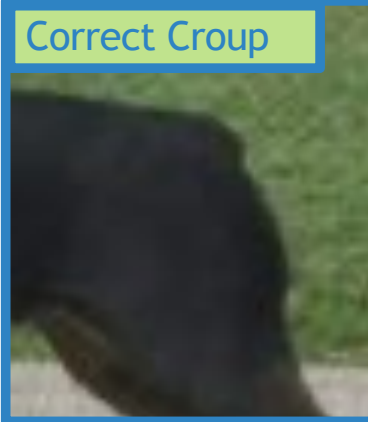
Steep Croup

Too steep or too rounded croup (and/or low tail set)

If the croup is steeper or rounder than what is required, the problems is coming from beneath it. The more dogs carry or position their rear legs under them, the more the croup will drop or round. The more structural issues a dog has with its rear legs, the more pronounced the effect of the croup.



Correct Croup



Hindquarters

Angulation of hindquarters balances that of forequarters.

Upper thigh is fairly long, very broad and well muscled.

Stifle joint is well turned. Lower thigh is long, broad and powerful with extensive muscling leading into a strong hock joint.

Rear pasterns are nearly perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, hind legs are straight, strong and wide enough apart to fit with a properly built body.

Back feet: are somewhat longer than the front feet, turning neither in nor out, equally compact with well arched toes. Pads are thick and hard. Nails short, strong, and black. Dewclaws must be removed.

Angulation of the hindquarter usually refers to the relative lengths of the upper and lower thigh, length of hock and the resultant turn of stifle.

Balance comes from equal lengths of upper and lower thigh. Stability - comes with short strong hocks combined with **equal lengths** of upper and lower thigh.

Instability comes from increasing length of lower thigh in relation to upper thigh, particularly if combined with long hocks.

Croup - length and lay of croup affects the transmission of power forwards.

Good angulation - equal lengths of upper to lower thigh, ideally with short strong hocks, good turn of stifle.

Over angulation (deep) - too long in lower thigh relative to upper thigh, often with long hocks, excessive turn of stifle.

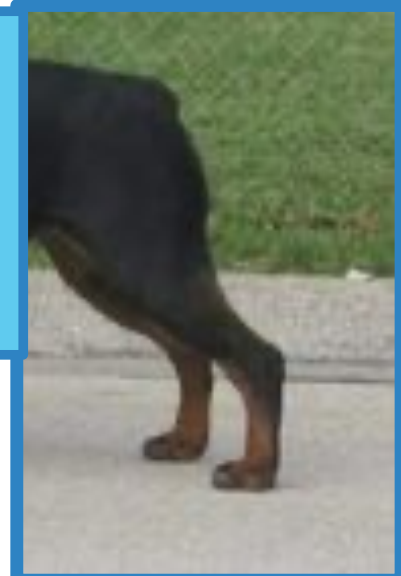
Lacking angulation - short upper thigh, longer lower thigh, slight to moderate turn of stifle; usually combined with long hocks and short steep croups.

Straight - very short upper and lower thigh, straight stifle, hocks short and very little deviation from the line of the hindquarter. May occasionally see double jointed hocks, giving forward instability of the



The ideal angulation is where the length of the femur is equal in length of tibia/fibula (lower thigh)

The longer both the femur and tibia/fibula are the greater turn of stifle.

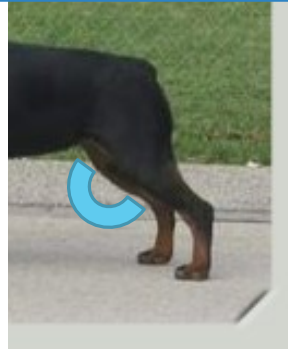


Rear Angulation

- The rear assembly is muscular and matched to it in lengths and angles.
- The thigh is well-developed, stifle well bent and hock both short and well let down.
- The rear feet are like the front feet except that they are somewhat longer than the front feet
- A Rottweiler should not be extremely angulated, appearing long-legged in the rear.
- The breed's athletic skills in jumping, as in agility competition, are dependent upon a strong rear.

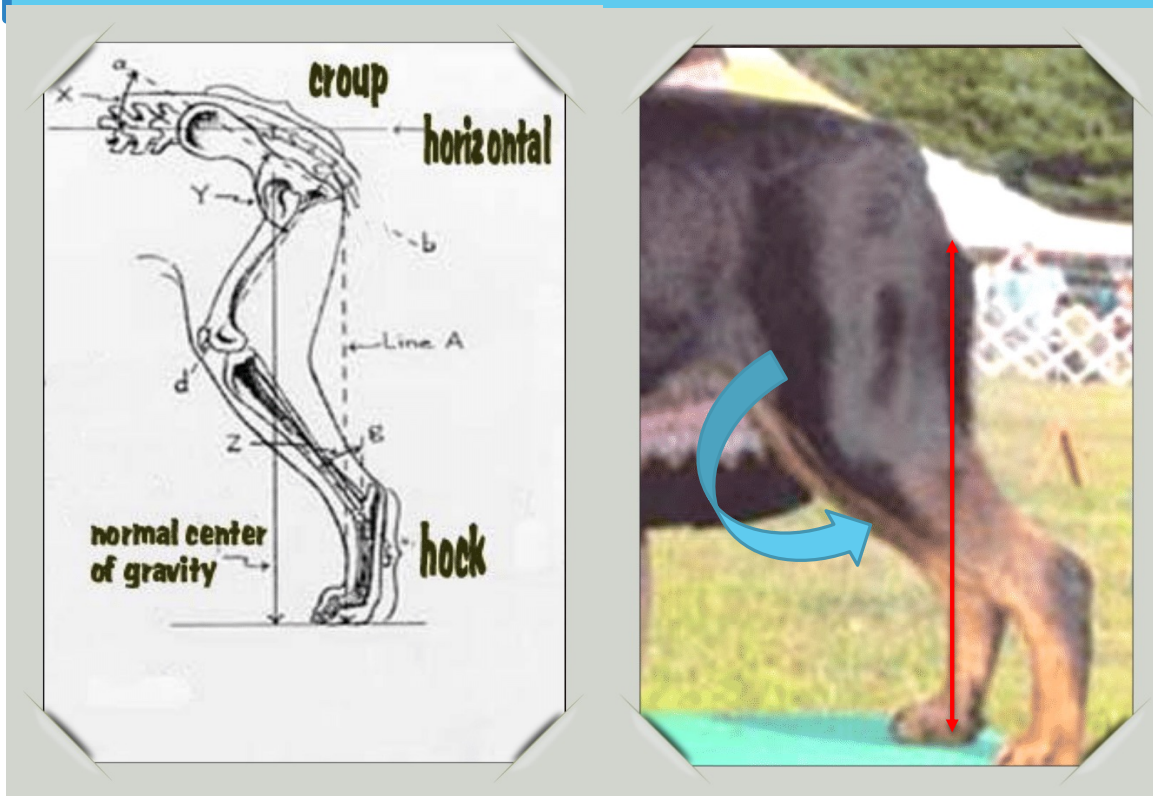
Rear Angulation

Rear angulation is a term that is misunderstood by many. It refers to the angles made by the upper thigh with the pelvis and lower thigh, and the lower thigh (below the stifle or knee) with the metatarsus, commonly called the hock. The standard calls for a “well-bent stifle”, which means there should be a noticeable change in direction (but not extreme) when your eye or hand follows the front profile of the back leg from the abdomen around the stifle to the hock.



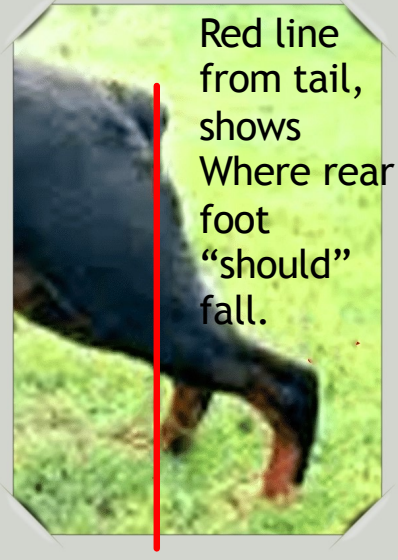
Correct Rear

When the rear is correctly angled you should be able to drop a line from the point of the buttocks to the rear toes.



Extreme rear angulation

The farther behind the line that foot is, the more stress there will be on the stifle, hock and hip joints.



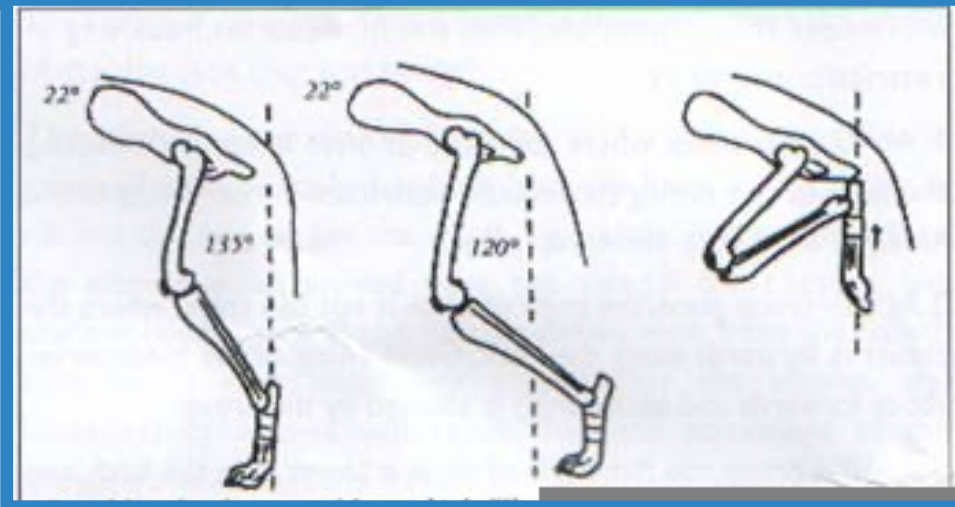
Straight in stifle



Note, high in the rear

Straight stifle causes stress in the middle of the back

The ideal angulation is one where the length of the femur is equal to the length of tibia/fibula (lower thigh). The longer both the femur and tibia/fibula are, the greater the turn of stifle for that breed. A quick way to check for equal lengths of femur and tibia is to raise the hock (perpendicularly, of course) up to the end of the pelvis. If the point of the hock extends beyond the rear edge of the pelvis, then the tibia is too long in relation to the femur. Rarely if ever is the femur too long.



Tail

Docked, the tail is short, close to the body leaving one or two tail vertebrae. Undocked, the tail is carried straight or upward curved and may hang at rest.

Faults – Tails with kinks, strong lateral deviation, or ringtails.

Docked





Feet

Feet are round, compact with well arched toes, turning neither in nor out. Pads are thick and hard.

Nails short, strong and black. Rear dewclaws must be removed.

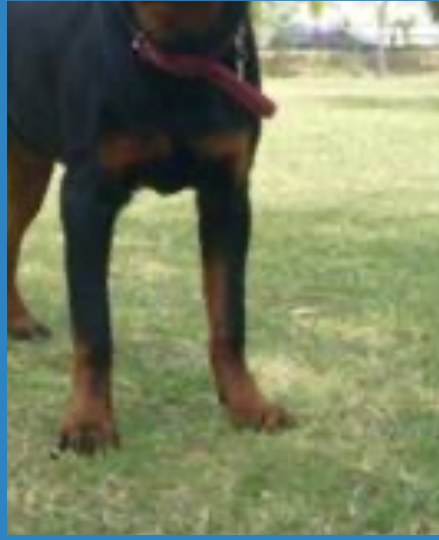
Correct Feet



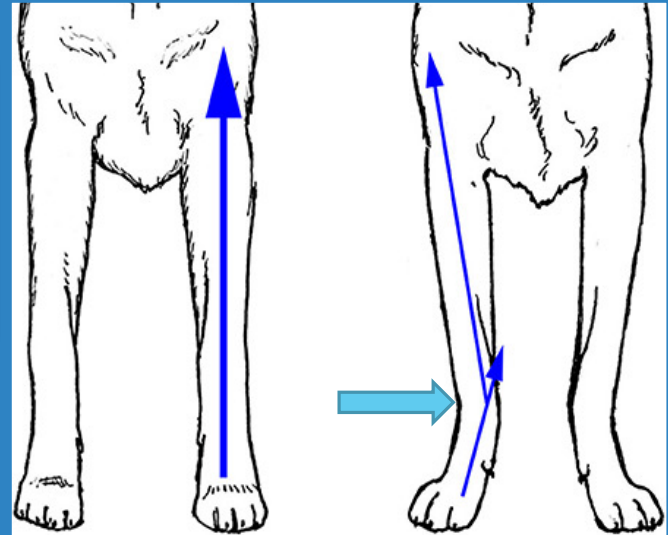
Feet: Problems



Flat feet



Toes out



Pasterns

Pasterns are strong, springy and almost perpendicular to the ground.

Pasterns

Pasterns work together with a dog's paws to "shock absorb" the impact of running and jumping while providing flexibility of movement. Those parts, however, are only as good as the rest of the dog's structure.

Pasterns bear the burden of a dog's shoulders and hindquarter assembly as he moves, and if the rest of the dog is built poorly, it's all going to make a dog tire faster.

A "straight pastern" can absorb most energy, but a small angle is desirable to ensure that the dog's joint doesn't knuckle over on impact.

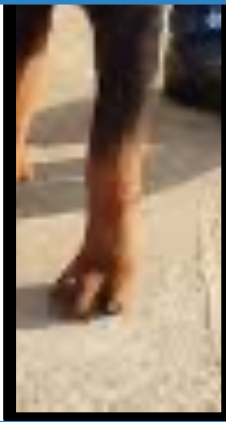
Poor pasterns can be inherited, but there may also be environmental factors: A bad diet and obesity can cause down in pasterns.

In developing puppies, teething and trauma may also come into play. Puppies raised on a concrete surface or who aren't getting enough exercise can be also be susceptible.

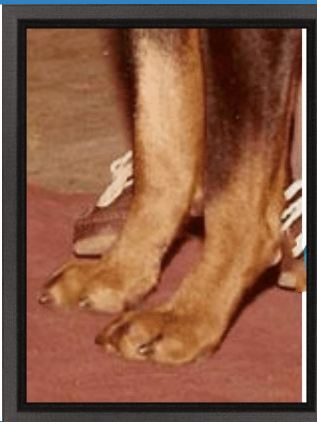
Pastern



Strong, almost perpendicular to the ground.



Straight pasterns



Weak pastern, down in pastern

Strong hock joint

Lower thigh is long, broad and powerful, with extensive muscling leading into a strong hock joint.

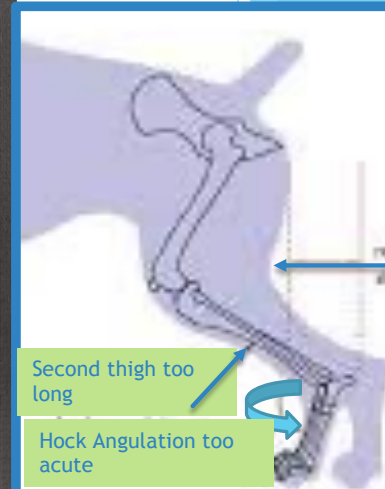
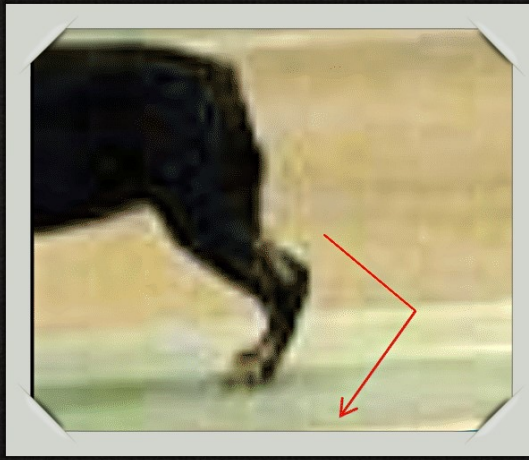
Long hocks tend to go with increased size of the dog and a straighter hindquarter.

Shorter hocks are more desirable, as they go with better turn of stifle, and greater firmness of hocks, for better transmission of drive.



Sickle Hocks

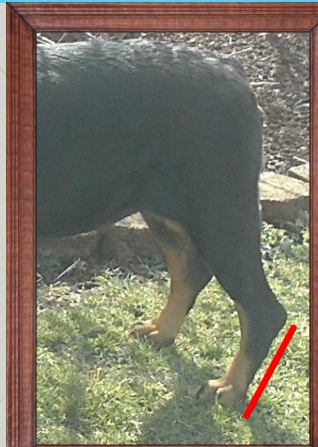
A sickle hock is one where the hock is bent at more than 90 degrees to the ground when viewed from the side. This curved hock gives the appearance of a sickle. Often this over-angulated hock cannot be flexed in action. **The hock angle does not change while the leg is moving.**



Sickle hocks are easily seen on the backward swing of the rear leg during movement. Instead of the joint between the lower thigh and the hock opening into a nearly straight extended line, where the pads on the bottom of the foot end in a position that is nearly straight up (or reaching toward the sky), the sickle hock, due to **the imbalanced length of the bones**, at fullest rearward extension ends in a shape resembling a sickle - slightly curved instead of fully extended. No glimpse of the sky for the pads on these feet. The rear movement on the sickle hocked dog looks like the swinging of an old fashioned sickle when viewing the sickle from the side.

Sickle Hock

Sickle hocks create a lack of rear power, which **impedes running and jumping** as well as a lack of rear-assembly stability for quick turns.



when a dog can't hold the hock perpendicular to the ground while stacked and always has the toes in front of the hocks no matter how far the leg is taken backwards, you have sickle hocks, and it is quite noticeable from a stacked photo.

At times you may see the handler having problems setting up the dogs rear-- because the dog does not feel comfortable standing in that position for a long period of time. Often they will try to sit.

Cow-hocks

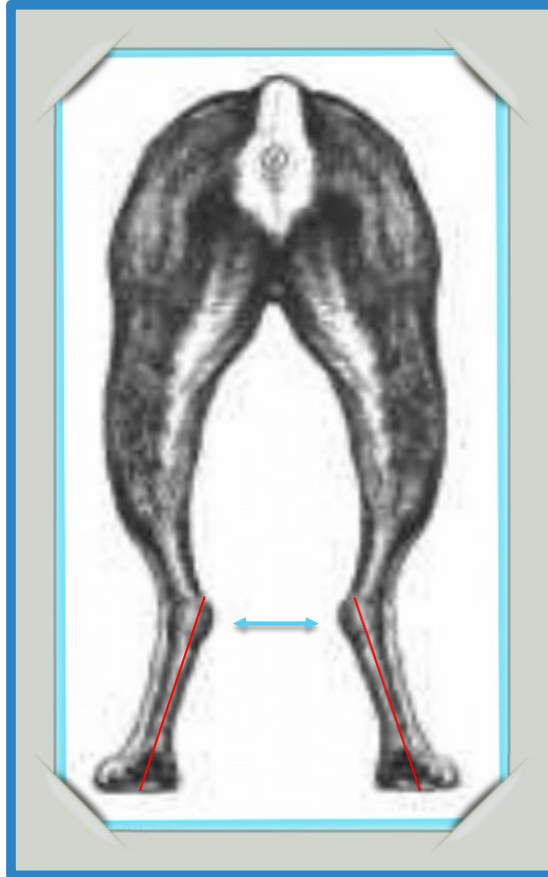
The cow-hock trait is genetic

Cow hocks are characterized by the inward rotation of the hocks, causing the points of the dog's hocks to be closer than normal.

Any puppy who is born with cow hocks, whether they be mild or severe, is automatically carrying a conformation fault with them. Deliberately breeding with this trait can exacerbate the severity and resulting health risks that come with the most severe cow hocks.

Dogs that stand but do not move cow-hocked are not actually Cow-hocked. These dogs have another issue that creates the illusion of cow-hocks (over angulation, long lower thighs, knees out, rear feet out).

Cow Hocked



Balance

Balance is always a governing principle

The efficient use of one body part to balance another minimizes the expenditure of energy and allows for an incredible variety of maneuvers in the dog in motion.

If he must, a dog will make compensatory movements in his limbs if balance is not correct, which appear wasteful of energy, but in fact, are minimizing his expenditure because of anomalies somewhere within that dog.

The best structured dogs have no need of such wasted motion.

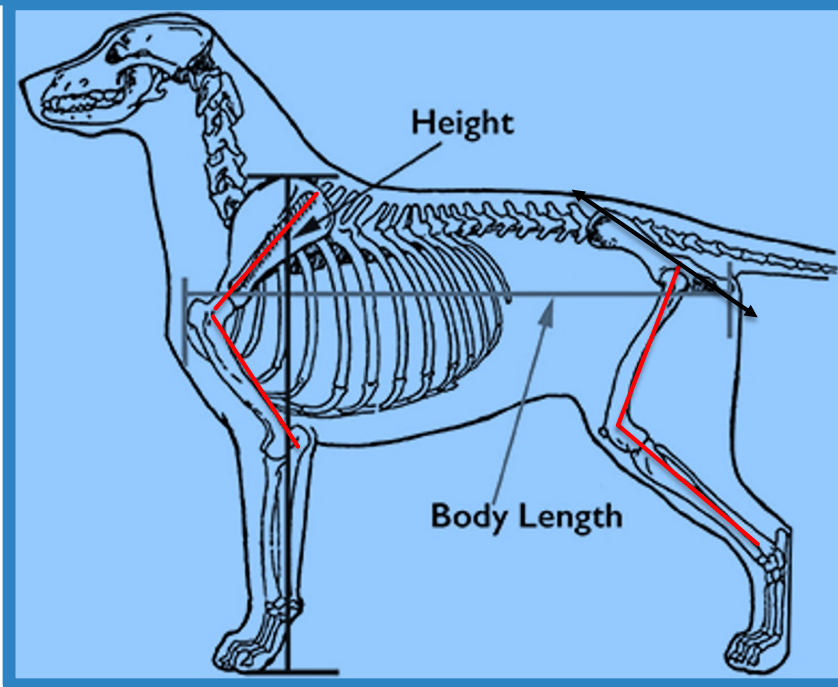
Limbs are moved minimally, no farther than necessary from the center of gravity, but freely and smoothly.

Balance



Balance

Front Angulation matches rear angulation



Balance

This dog is balanced (straight front and rear), but lacks support, because of steeper angulation front and rear.



Measure Balance

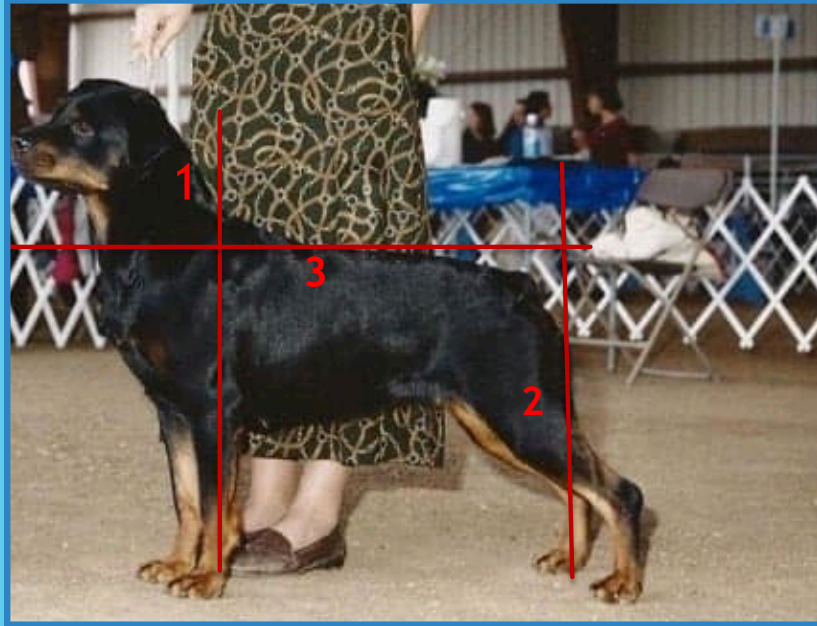
To judge balance, draw three lines on your dog. The First Is a line from the middle of the front leg up past the top of your dog's head. The head and neck should be in front of the line.

The second line is from the point of the buttock to the ground. For moderate rear angulation, The front of your dog's rear toe should hit the line.

The third line follows the back line forward from the tail out past The dog's head (horizontally). Your dogs chin should be above that line

If your dog passes these three tests, he's generally balanced and has decent angles.

Measure Balance



Disqualifications

Entropion, ectropion

Overshot, undershot, more than one missing tooth

Unilateral cryptorchid or cryptorchid males

Long coat, any base color other than black, absence of all markings.
A dog that in the opinion of the judge attacks any person in the ring.

Serious faults

Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized
Reversal of sex characteristics (doggy bitch, bitchy dog)

Level bite
Any missing tooth

Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color or size, hairless eye rim

Ear: improper carriage, creased, folded or held away from cheek/head.

Total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth)

Open coat, excessively short or curly coat, total lack of undercoat, any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.

Straw colored, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings

Rust other than described in the standard.

White marking any place on dog.

Faults

Wavy coat

Any structural fault that detracts from the described working dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation.



“Your entire selection process is aimed at selecting the very best of each new generation while taking the lesser ones out of the gene pool.

Do not encourage people to show dogs of yours that do not measure up.

A breeding program is better when a few really good dogs represent it in the gene pool than when it is represented by a wide array of dogs—many of them mediocre—with all of them in the gene pool.

Your goal is not how many but how good”!

From:
Patricia Craige’s “Born to Win”

EPS 