

MENTOR PACKET

SBTCA Breed Seminar





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OFFICIAL STANDARD

Staffordshire Bull Terrier



General Appearance: The Staffordshire Bull Terrier is a smooth-coated dog. It should be of great strength for its size and, although muscular, should be active and agile.

Size, Proportion, Substance: Height at shoulder - 14 to 16 inches. Weight - Dogs, 28 to 38 pounds; bitches, 24 to 34 pounds, these heights being related to weights. Non-conformity with these limits is a fault. In proportion, the length of back, from withers to tail set, is equal to the distance from withers to ground.

Head: Short, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop, short fore-face, black nose. Pink (Dudley) nose to be considered a serious fault. Eyes - Dark preferable, but may bear some relation to coat color. Round, of medium size, and set to look straight ahead. Light eyes or pink eye rims to be considered a fault, except that where the coat surrounding the eye is white the eye rim may be pink. Ears - Rose or half-pricked and not large. Full drop or full prick to be considered a serious fault. Mouth - A bite in which the outer side of the lower incisors touches the inner side of the upper incisors. The lips should be tight and clean. The badly undershot or overshot bite is a serious fault.

Neck, Top-line, Body: The neck is muscular, rather short, clean in outline and gradually widening toward the shoulders. The body is close coupled, with a level top-line, wide front, deep brisket and well sprung ribs being rather light in the loins. The tail is undocked, of medium length, low set, tapering to a point and carried rather low. It should not curl much and may be likened to an old-fashioned pump handle. A tail that is too long or badly curled is a fault.

Forequarters: Legs straight and well boned, set rather far apart, without looseness at the shoulders and showing no weakness at the pasterns, from which point the feet turn out a little. Dewclaws on the forelegs may be removed. The feet should be well padded, strong and of medium size.

Hindquarters: The hindquarters should be well muscled, hocks let down with stifles well bent. Legs should be parallel when viewed from behind. Dewclaws, if any, on the hind legs are generally removed. Feet as in front.

Coat: Smooth, short and close to the skin, not to be trimmed or de-whiskered.

Color: Red, fawn, white, black, or blue, or any of these colors with white. Any shade of brindle or any shade of brindle with white. Black-and-tan or liver color to be disqualified. The Merle pattern does not exist genetically in the breed and shall be disqualified.

Gait: Free, powerful and agile with economy of effort. Legs moving parallel when viewed from front or rear. Discernible drive from hind legs.

Temperament: From the past history of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the modern dog draws its character of indomitable courage, high intelligence, and tenacity. This, coupled with its affection for its friends, and children in particular, its off-duty quietness and trustworthy stability, makes it a foremost all-purpose dog.

Disqualification: Black-and-tan or liver color and merle to be disqualified.

Approved July 8, 2025

Effective September 30, 2025

HEAD, BALANCE, SOUNDNESS & TEMPERAMENT

What are we looking for?

What does it mean to “reward the virtues” in Staffordshire Bull Terriers? Just what are the virtues that are important to us, and why should they be rewarded?

Our breed standard describes what a Staffordshire Bull Terrier should look like, but the descriptions are more or less a list of parts, with no emphasis given to the priorities.

It is easier to visualize the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Standard if the “list” is organized into four major categories. These four categories for me are head, balance, soundness, and temperament. These are the four VIRTUES, that a Staffordshire Bull Terrier must possess. Positive characteristic attributes in all of these categories need to be apparent to be a good Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

HEAD, BALANCE, SOUNDNESS & TEMPERAMENT

Head: The correct head is a virtue comprised of bits of elements which make up the whole

Balance: The correct amount of dog to get the job done, not an ounce more or less. The presence of correct balance is a virtue.

Soundness: The Staffordshire Bull Terrier must be constructed soundly with movement being a test of soundness. Can the dog do the job it was intended to do over and over without injury?

Temperament: The correct temperament is often overlooked in the ring. There are tells and indications even in a short exam.





JUDGING TECHNIQUES

What are the judges doing?

- Watch dogs enter the ring. Look at the silhouette of the dogs from side and from the front.
- Measure muzzle to head proportions with hand 1/3 to 2/3 - 3 fingers across the muzzle and over the head for proportion. Is the profile of muzzle depth approximately half the skull depth?
- Use thumb in stop to verify depth. Do not rely on visual affirmations or confuse with eye socket or brow. Distinct stop as compared to other terriers, not extreme stop.
- Does the exhibit have a dark eye? Remember, the eye color can match coat color. i.e. eye color may be lighter on light coated dogs but darker is preferred. Light rims are a fault except in the case of coat color next to eye.
- Feel the thickness of ears and pull ear corner to eye, ears should be thin and only reach to outside corner of eye, rose or half prick is acceptable Full prick or drop ears is a serious fault. Know the difference between half prick and 3/4 prick ear.
- Does the exhibit 's feet turn out slightly, but show no weakness of pasterns?
- Does the exhibit show a straight front - (look for the letter H) without overloaded shoulders. Feel fore-chest and verify upper arm length and shoulder lay back and lay in.
- Side view - Short coupled desired. The standard has us measured as slightly longer than tall. Breeders tend to lean toward more square, as desired
- Measure width of coupling with hand width, dog should be short coupled, approximately 4 fingers.
- Push the hair backwards up the back and between the shoulders to verify proper coarse texture and tight.
- The thigh muscles are supposed to be the strongest most muscular part of the Stafford - put hands around the inner to outer thigh. Should be impressively wide for size.
- Stand over from rear to look down at the hour glass figure, showing a waistline. Never fat.
- Feel for a thumb print spot at the base of the tail to verify low set. Tail will look like an old fashioned pump handle when relaxed and off duty. Some may lift or carry their tail higher while moving. This is to be expected in a stimulating environment .
- Tail is of medium length; run hand down tail to measure for general length, approx at the hock. A tail which is too long or curly is a fault.
- The Stafford should show no extremes of any kind, never exaggerated in any way. He should be moderate showing great strength for his size.
- What does a 15" 29 lb bitch look like and 16" 38 lb dog look like? Get to know this. It is balance according to our standard and an important part of breed type.
- Watch dog move on loose leash, a Stafford will drop their head on the move. Head should not be held up by handler holding a tight leash. Handler should walk not run.
- Is the dog fit for function showing well defined muscles or is he soft or heavy.
- Is dog turning away from you displaying avoidance or looking at you? Or does he show keen interest?



GENERAL APPEARANCE

Great Strength For Size

Smooth Coated

At first glance one may think that all Staffords are smooth coated. However, when you put your hands on them you may notice a wide range of coat lengths, textures and thicknesses. The correct coat should feel slightly hard to the touch, not soft, not silky. It should be tight, short and lay flat against the skin - with a natural shine.

Great strength for its size, Muscular, Active & Agile

The Stafford is a medium sized dog. Its appearance should be that of an athlete or a gladiator. They should be quite active indeed - sometimes too active for many people.

A Stafford should be very agile. He will exhibit “economy of effort” in every move and is in general nimble – both physically AND mentally.

They are amazing athletes when kept in good condition. Staffords excel in many sports such as agility, fly-ball, coursing, weight pull, frisbee, dock jumping and more. Mentally they are agile thinkers whether it be for obedience, rally, tracking, search and rescue, nose-work, barn-hunt or as a service or therapy dog. As the breed standard points out, the Stafford is “a foremost all-purpose dog”.

Staffords should be shown in fit, athletic condition. This doesn't mean completely “stripped down” as if they are getting ready to go into the pit, but it certainly does not mean the dog should be carrying excess fat. Excess weight is unhealthy and interferes with the dog's function. Always look for a well defined waistline and “tuck”. The Stafford is “rather light in the loin”.

Expect great strength for his size comprised of long lean hard resilient muscle; not bulky, rounded muscle that has power yet lacks stamina.

“Great strength for his size” again alludes to efficiency. You would expect a large, heavy dog to be powerful. Do not fall for such an animal. A Stafford's strength is sometimes surprising since the package should be much more compact than other dogs of similar strength.



THE STAFFORD HEAD

Points to Consider

Muzzle & Skull Angles

The ideal muzzle angle is a little less than parallel to the angle of the skull = "slightly converging planes."

Muzzle Length

The ideal muzzle length can be described as 1/3 muzzle to 2/3 skull & approximately 1/2 the depth of the skull. Muzzle from tip of nose to stop should measure no less than 1/2 from stop to occipital bone.

Nose & Nostril

The size & shape of the nose & nostril affect appearance and breathing ability. The Stafford should ideally have large open nostrils. The nose should not appear to be 'tip tilted'. The Stafford should never be 'gasping' to breathe. This could be an indication of overlong soft palate or "Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome" (BOAS) which are conditions that can be checked for by a veterinary specialist

Head & Skull

The Stafford head size should be in proportion to his body, be balanced, not over or undersized. His skull should be broad & deep through and nearly the same width as depth with very pronounced cheek muscles.

Stop & Eye Socket

The Stafford should have a 'distinct' stop (as compared to other terriers) but it should not be completely vertical. His

eye socket approaches vertical but the stop itself is more gradual than this. The stop angle has a direct relation to the eye shape. Too much will result in bulging eye and too little will result in almond or squinty eye shape.

Eyes

The Stafford ideally has a dark eye, round (never bulging, never almond), of medium size, set in the skull to look straight ahead with a keen expression. His eyes should be quite animated resulting in a lively expression. There is some exception to be made in color in relation to coat, but the darker the better always.

Other points to consider

The Stafford head description is in comparison to other terriers and although described as 'short fore-face' he is not brachycephalic. His face should be free of wrinkles, not be heavy, lippy or fleshy at all, yet also not weak or snipey. A clean face is ideal, with open nostrils and a clean tight lip. He should have a broad muzzle and a strong under jaw. The temporal muscles in a mature Stafford will be well defined with a furrow down the center.



BALANCE

How wide is wide?
How broad is broad?

The only way to know this is to rely on the official standard's definition of balance.

There are a number of definitions of "balance". It can be confusing for someone to understand that being a balanced canine based on most common definitions does not exactly equal balance as described by our Standard.

- AKC says Balance is When all the parts of the dog, moving or standing, produce a harmonious image.
- OXFORD says Balance is an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady, a condition in which different elements are equal or in the correct proportions so that it does not fall.

SBTCA Official Definition:
Height at shoulder: 14 to 16 inches. Weight: Dogs, 28 to 38 lbs; bitches, 24 to 34 lbs, these heights being related to weights.

The SBTCA definition does not discount all other definitions, it only gives parameters to that which those definitions most conform.

Size, Proportion, Substance Height at shoulder: 14 to 16 inches. Weight: Dogs, 28 to 38 pounds; bitches, 24 to 34 pounds, these heights being related to weights. **Non-conformity with these limits is a fault.** In proportion, the length of back, from withers to tail set, is equal to the distance from withers to ground.

Take 38 pounds of clay in one hand and the breed standard in the other.

Mold a dog that is 16 inches tall and 16 inches long. Now make him look like everything the standard says he is supposed to be. Take each section of the standard and identify some of the main descriptors you have to work with: *Hint: If you go too wide and too broad, you will run out of clay before the dog is finished!*

- General -----of great strength, muscular, active, agile
- Head -----short, deep, broad
- Neck/Body -----muscular, short, deep, close, wide
- Fore -----well boned, rather far apart
- Hind -----well muscled

The breed standard clearly defines ideal size, proportions, and substance which essentially tells us the proper balance between bull and terrier.

It is not personal

Make no mistake; there is little room for personal interpretation of those descriptors, "deep," "broad," "wide," "rather far apart." The parameters of balance are handed to us in objective language, and our personal understanding of "deep," "broad," "wide," and "rather far apart," must comply with what the standard says about Proportion and Substance, and to a lesser degree, but still important, Size.

It is easy to say, "but you don't measure and weigh your breed, how important can this be?" It is one of the four virtues! You do not have to weigh and measure to get an eye for a fit, balanced Stafford that roughly fits in these parameters. You might be surprised at what this looks like.

Once you see it, you can't unsee it!



MORE: On Stafford Balance

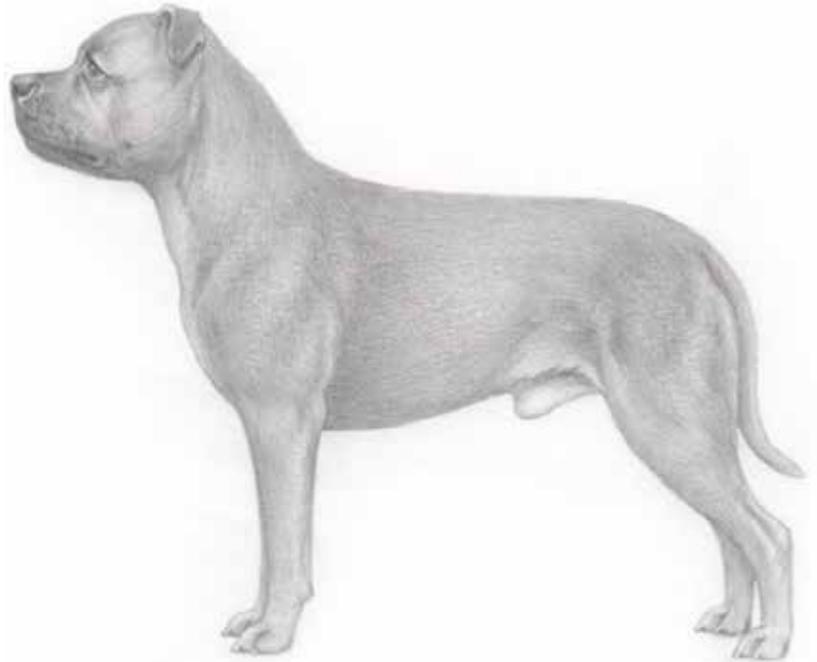
The Stafford is an efficient athlete. Everything about him should reflect this.

There are to be no exaggerations in his make-up. Excess would inhibit the breed's original function as well as its health.

He needs enough bone, enough muscle, and enough substance to support his powerful, athletic endeavors, but not an excess of any of these features.

He will need strength and vigor, allied with speed and suppleness. The Stafford should have stamina in abundance. He should feel hard to the touch, never soft.

The cloddy, heavy-boned, over muscled dog may look impressive but he'll lack the speed, agility and stamina of the athlete.



The racy, light-boned dog may be agile and athletic, but will lack strength and resilience. The one in the middle will get the job done.

- Alan Mitchell (Hoplite, UK over 50 years) Author of best selling books: "The Show – Stafford Handbook" (2001) and Introduction To The Staffordshire Bull Terrier, President Western SBT Society, UK.



TEMPERAMENT

In the Ring

“From the past history of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the modern dog draws its character of indomitable courage, high intelligence, and tenacity. This, coupled with its affection for its friends, and children in particular, its off-duty quietness and trustworthy stability, makes it a foremost all-purpose dog.”

What is not said in the above passage from the Standard:

WITH OTHER DOGS

Puppies to teenagers - Typically social with other dogs. Can be rude and a bit excited. Usually not aggressive toward other dogs. Probably will not fire off at another dog in the ring. May be a bit nervous but should not be fearful.

Mature dogs: Lean toward dog tolerance. Should mind their own business but have no problem reacting to a perceived threat or a rude dog. They can be selectively aggressive to some or aggressive to all other dogs. This is normal!

From overly friendly puppies to adults who fire off at other dogs in the ring, these are normal behaviors and should not be penalized

IN GENERAL

They should be cool and easy going about new environments and situations. Except for young pups, Staffords should be confident in the ring while being examined. Once past a few puppy exams they should stand for exam nicely.

Staffords tend to be worriers, a bit empathetic, and can also show typical Terrier arousal issues. If the handler is nervous the dog will be. Staffords should NEVER be human aggressive under any circumstances. Mature dogs can start to become noise sensitive, if not already. Except for the case of a puppy very new to showing there should be no crawling on their belly or fear behaviors or trying to leave the ring. It usually takes one or two ring events for the typical Stafford to say “hold my beer”.



FOREQUARTERS

legs, shoulders, upper arm

*“The front legs should be straight **with the feet turning out slightly** at the pasterns. Legs are perpendicular to the ground, dropping straight down from the shoulder. “*

A strong well-balanced front possesses bone in proper proportion with the rest of the body. The shoulder assembly is one of the main components to making a correct front. The scapula (shoulder blade) needs to be well laid back and the upper arm needs to be angled back and of a length that puts the front leg back to support the weight of the dog under the withers. This correct angulation and layback of shoulder will ensure the shoulders are not overloaded and the dog moves freely with economy of effort.

The feet are set wide for stability. The elbows are approximately the same distance apart as they are off the ground, and that point is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ the height of the dog at the withers. Feel for the correct thickness and roundness of the bone, which should be ample rather than heavy.

Elbows lie tightly against the body showing no looseness. The chest drops to the elbow or VERY slightly lower, not well below this point. It should be blunt and wide at its lowest point forming a U shape as oppose to a V shape.

Feet are well padded with strong pasterns. Feet should be tight, and toes short, but not to the point of being a ‘cat foot.’ There should be no sign of weakness. Remember the standard says the “feet turn out a little.”

Moderation is key – Not overdone but showing strength - too much rib spring will hinder efficient movement and too much depth of brisket only adds bulk and heaviness not conducive to agile and free movement. Not enough chest or brisket weakens movement and crowds the vital organs important to an athlete.

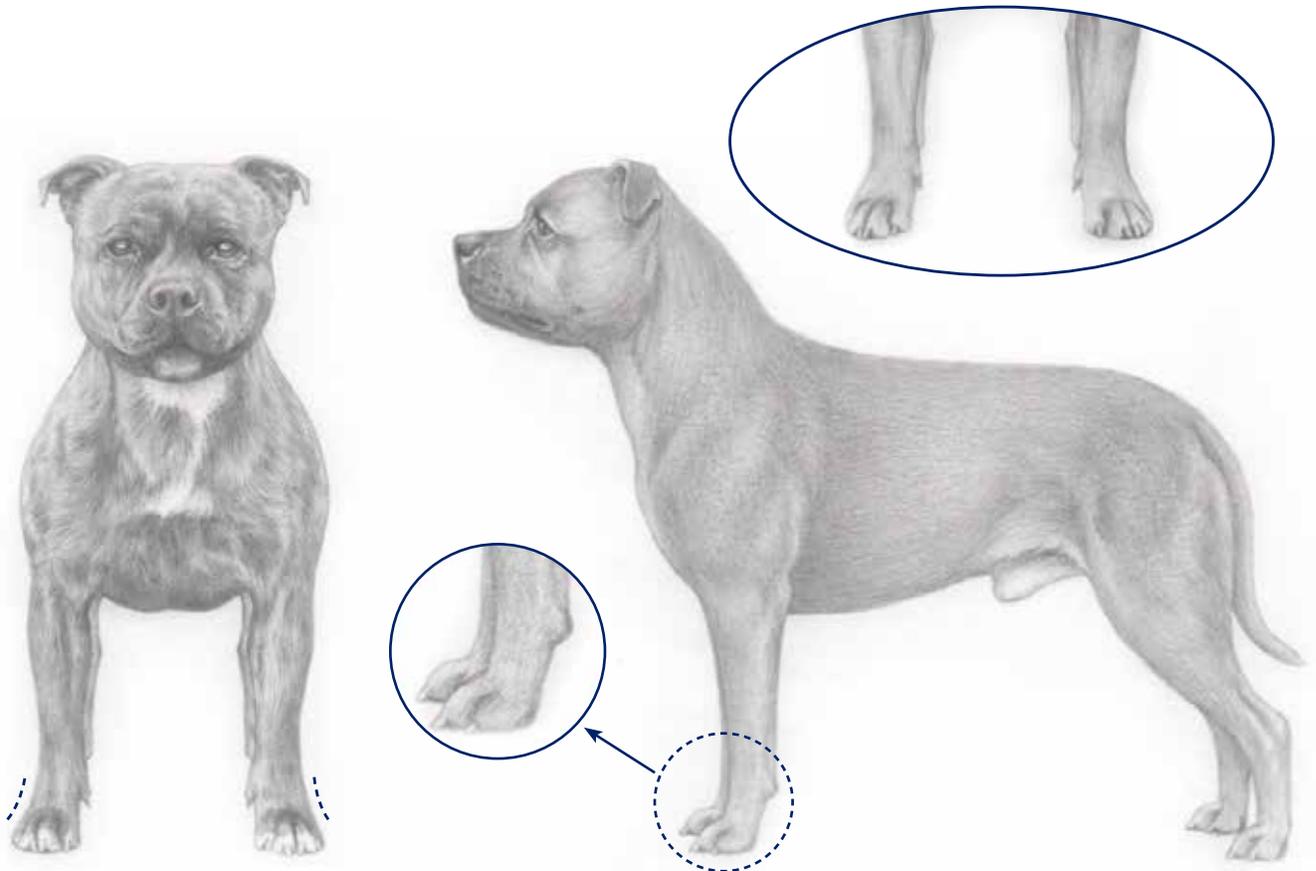
The Stafford requires excellent balance to move freely. The Stafford is often shown on a 3/4 angle or facing in, towards the judge in most countries, unlike other terriers who are shown in profile. The Stafford is also often shown in the traditional leather ‘Stafford collar’ (with brass or nickel embellishments) which can be buckle or martingale.



STAFFORD FEET

Foundation to all Movement

- Feet are well padded with strong pasterns. Feet should be tight, and toes short, but not to the point of being a 'cat foot.'
- There should be no sign of weakness. Remember the standard says the "feet turn out a little."
- Keeping in mind we have an active, athletic breed. Thin, flat or splayed feet are very undesirable, as the foundation to all movement is weakened. Considering again the breed's original function, all parts of the Stafford should be able to hold up to forces equaling several times his own weight.
- Look for short black nails in solid-colored dogs. Where a dog has white toes you can expect translucent nails.





HISTORICAL PRIORITIES

The Old 100 Point System

For historical reference consider the following 100 point judging system that was proposed in 1948/49 for the updated version of the breed standard:

General Appearance and Coat Condition	10
Head.....	25
Neck	10
Body	25
Legs and Feet.....	15
Tail.....	5
General Movement and Balance	10
<hr/>	
TOTAL.....	100

This system is not used today as the UK Kennel Club discontinued inclusion of all 100 point judging systems in published breed standards. However, it does give us some perspective as to how the ‘fore-fathers’ of the show Stafford prioritized the importance of the individual elements and characteristics of the breed after its departure from its original function as a fighting dog.



FAULTS & SERIOUS FAULTS

in the Stafford

In the country of origin, UK, at the end of the written Breed Standard for the Staffordshire Bull Terrier it is stated:

“Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and on the dog’s ability to perform its traditional work.”

This is a good reminder to not only look for the balanced Stafford, remember its origin, but also to balance your judging when in the ring with the breed. The AKC Breed Standard for the Stafford lists only three ‘faults’ and only three ‘serious faults’. Fault judging is to be avoided but these six points should be kept in mind when you find yourself faced with similar virtuous examples in your ring from which to select from. The standard was written as a way to describe this particular breed as a blueprint to follow to differentiate the Stafford from other terriers.

Faults:

“Non-conformity with heights to weights limits”

Our Standard calls for dogs 28-38lbs, bitches 24-34lbs with both dogs and bitches being 14” - 16” at withers. They should be balanced height to weight. BALANCE is the key word here. Get familiar with what 34lb bitches and 38lb dogs look and feel like. And remember a 14” dog is in Standard and is balanced at 28lbs just as a 16” bitch is in Standard and balanced at 34lbs.

“Dark eye preferred but may bear some relation to coat color. Light eyes or pink eye rims to be considered a fault, except that where the coat surrounding the eye is white the eye rim may be pink.”

This means we prefer a dark eye but in a red or brindle dog, for example, there can be some consideration for a lighter brown eye. We do not want to see yellow, gray or blue eyes at all no matter what coat color.

“A tail that is too long or badly curled is a fault.” This is self explanatory but to be taken into consideration as to the above paragraph regarding degree and affect upon health. Also, in the original point system the tail was valued at only 5 points. I’ve heard it said that if the Stafford has one that’s half the points right there.

Serious Faults:

“Pink (Dudley) nose to be considered a serious fault.”

The Stafford nose needs to be black. Some argument of consideration could be made for the blue Stafford but even then we want the darkest possible pigmentation so that the nose appears black.

“Full drop or full prick to be considered a serious fault.”

A small, thin leathery tight ear held back close to the head would be preferred and safest in its original function, however there is consideration for a half prick ear. This means half, not 3/4 and never full drop or full prick. Either of those not only would affect the Stafford in its original function, but also gives a foreign expression. As well this differentiates the breed from other terriers.

“The badly undershot or overshot bite is a serious fault.”

The scissor bite is called for, and we want large well placed canines but as we also strive for a strong muzzle and under-jaw, a slight under/over may not affect the original function - however - converging canines would affect the health and comfort of the Stafford

Again, it is worth repeating - please keep in mind the exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and on the dog’s ability to perform its traditional work when judging this breed. With only these few faults mentioned they should be easy to keep in mind.



THE ORIGINAL RECIPE

Bulldog + Terrier = Stafford

STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

A lot of emphasis has been made on how to achieve the perfect blend and balance of the Bull and Terrier to produce the Staffordshire Bull Terrier. It occurred to us that a very important key bit of information was missing.

When we say we strive for an equal blend of Bull and Terrier, are we picturing in our mind the original breeds used or modern day versions? Many people today are picturing the modern day version of the English/British Bulldog. This way of thinking is dangerous to the health and future of the Stafford. If that is the blend one is attempting to produce, one will certainly find shorter legs, upper arm, straighter stifles, barreled rib spring, shorter muzzles - plus health issues that go along with that type of animal which was not intended as the athletic gladiator the Stafford was bred to be. We are seeing more cesareans, screw/ short tails, buggy eyes, wrinkles, poor dentition (converging canines, under or over shot), lippy muzzle and overlong soft pallet in some Staffords. Some are so heavy and overdone they have trouble gaiting around the ring without panting, much less being able to get proper exercise.



The original Bulldogs used to create the Stafford looked more like the athletic bodies of dogs such as Crib and Rosa" pictured here, circa

1811 by Abraham Cooper. Similar to the athletic body of an American Bulldog, Boxer and similar breeds as seen in the other images here. This is not something that can be easily disputed as it is shown many times in book after book on the history of the Stafford.



As you can clearly see from the photos, the original Bulldog used to create the Stafford didn't resemble what we picture as a Bulldog of today. He was

leggier, more athletic, less wrinkle, and in general a beautiful example of a gladiator. Some speculate if he was actually more Mastiff, than Bulldog. We can see why this breed was chosen, for he was portrayed to be powerful, courageous, tenacious and tough, but still a reliable guardian with an off duty quietness and affection for humans.

So try to imagine THIS Bulldog when you picture balance and an equal blend of Bull and Terrier in today's mix - The Staffordshire Bull Terrier!



The other half of the 'mix' is said to have been either a now extinct breed known then as the "White English Terrier" or the 'Black and Tan Terrier" or perhaps the 'Manchester Terrier





THE STAFFORD COLLAR

The Back Story



We have all seen them, and many use them, but what is the story behind the use of the traditional Staffordshire Bull Terrier collar and lead?

I would have a difficult time coming up with the number of times that question has been asked of me, or how many laughs I have had with people over what they believed the symbols meant. My favorite was with a new person learning about the breed and asking an exhibitor if his dog's name was Pretzel. Not sure which was funnier – the comment the person made, or the look on the exhibitor's face. To this day that person and I still laugh about that moment.

So let's discuss where this all began. The 8th Duke of Hamilton was from the English town of Stafford. He is known as the "Father of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier." The Duke bred Bulldogs as well as terrier breeds. His dogs were admired by many and highly sought after by wealthy aristocrats. He had a wealth of knowledge about dogs and horses, and he wanted to come up with a breed that was muscular, like the a Bulldog, but smaller and more agile like a terrier. He worked systematically on the interbreeding of those dogs, and in about 1770, he managed to create a race of Staffordshire Bull Terriers. Those are the dogs we know and dearly love today.



Dog shows have been a part of English and American history for many years. The first dog

show in England was held in New Castle in 1859. The first American dog show was sponsored by the Westminster Kennel Club in 1877. But it was not until May 25, 1935, that a man named Joe Dunn would become the founder of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club in the UK and would publish a summary of the breeds' features. It was at that time that the Kennel Club – the British authority on dogs – recognized the breed as valid.

The club members then went to work on the Breed Standard for the Staffordshire Bull Terrier. In August 1935, only three months after the recognition of the breed, organizers held the first



official Staffordshire Bull Terrier Show in Cradley Heath in West Midlands. The show was attended by 60 dogs and bitches, and each sported the traditional collars with the characteristic Stafford

Knot feature. What is really unique is that the Staffordshire Bull Terrier is probably the only breed that has its own symbol.

There are many questions about the Stafford Knot's origin. The Stafford Knot is a triple wound knot that is the traditional symbol of the English county of Staffordshire and the regional town of Stafford. However, the origin of the knot is something of a mystery. According to legend, when three convicted criminals had to be executed together, there was a dispute over who should be hung first. The executioner solved the problem by creating the Staffordshire Knot and hanging all three together.

A more probable story is that it is the Celtic Christian symbol, which was passed around in Staffordshire by missionary monks. Another story

is that Staffordshire was a mining region, and many miners worked in dangerous and confined spaces. The only connection between the miner and his coworkers was a rope tied to his belt. If necessary, a miner in distress could be pulled out of the shaft by the rope, and his life depended on the strength of that knot.

Sadly we don't know the real story of how the Stafford Knot became a symbol of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier. But we do know it has remained their symbol since their creation in that little English town of Stafford where the motto of arms is "The Knot Unites." It has become a symbol that represents strength, courage, reliability and devotion.



These collars are not worn as a fad or because they look cool. They are worn to preserve a tradition that has a very clear link to the heritage and history of our beloved breed.

A Stafford owner should take pride in the tradition of the Stafford Collar. Having your Stafford wear one in the ring does not mean that basic ring training should be ignored. Since the Stafford is unique in being allowed to wear traditional collars in the show ring, it's important that owners demonstrate that the collar enhances, rather than hinders, ring etiquette.

If an owner does not feel they have the control of their dog or have not spent time training their dog to work on these collars, then they should be avoided. Upholding tradition is important, but not being prepared and having a Stafford in the ring completely out of control will cause



more damage than not wearing the collar at all. What works best for you and your Stafford is what matters in the ring, but never use a show lead and a traditional collar at the same time – make sure you pick one or the other.

If a traditional collar doesn't work for you in the show ring, that's OK – you can always sport your beautiful Stafford collars and show your pride outside of the ring. And who knows – maybe a bystander will ask if your dog's name is Pretzel.



Staffords have always worn their traditional breed collars both in and out of the show ring. The wide leather collars afforded protection for the dog by saving their neck from injury, and were strong enough to help the owners keep them under control with no risk of them breaking free. The collars and their shiny brass details and ornamentation reflect pride of ownership and are the hallmark of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

THE STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

Ramp Optional Reminder

Dear AKC Judge,

Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of America would like to remind all AKC judges that are approved to judge the Stafford or approved to judge Best in Show of the acceptable examination procedures.

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier is listed as a ramp optional breed. Referencing: **Rules Policies and Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges : page 16: The appropriate place to individually examine dogs during breed judging is designated by each parent club and AKC does not preempt their authority in this regard.*

Ramp Breeds: A judge requesting the use of a ramp must give reasonable notice to the show superintendent/ show secretary prior to judging. AKC approval is not required. Breed designated as ramp optional may be examined on the ground (table if applicable) or on a ramp during breed, group and Best in Show judging at the sole discretion of the judge, not the exhibitor. (or any other person!)

It is important to note that in the home country of the United Kingdom and most of the rest of the world, the Stafford is traditionally examined on the ground/floor. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of America fully supports the judge's decision to examine the Stafford on the ramp or on the ground/floor at that judge's discretion. We rely on our judges to determine the best location to complete the examination based on their own physical characteristics and the conditions specific to the show on the day.

The Judge's Education Committee of the SBTCA is available at any time to assist our judges and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of America
Judges Education Committee



**AKC, Rules, Policies and Guidelines for Conformation Dog Show Judges (2024, March) <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/REJ999.pdf>*



STAFFORD VS STAFFY

It's Just a Name, or is it?

Every so often, you hear people ask why some insist on calling Staffordshire Bull Terriers “Staffords,” avoiding the use of those other alternative short names for the breed. Most of the time you never get a serious answer, other than personal opinion: “That’s just the way it has always been!” And then it turns into an argument of semantics. However, there are actually a variety of reasons why “Stafford” was, and continues to be, the die-hard go-to name for so many serious enthusiasts of the breed.

The oldest and simplest line of reasoning actually predates the dogs by about 500 years: Early people of Staffordshire, England carried the family name “Stafford.” Was the land named after them or were they named after the land? Who knows, but in the very early days (15th century), if you were a “Stafford” by name you were from, or of, the County of Staffordshire. The County Town (county seat) of Staffordshire is Stafford, and sometimes the entire county of Staffordshire is just referred to as “Stafford.” Items from the County of Staffordshire, like the region’s famous pottery, are often referred to by shortened common names, such as “Stafford pottery,” as opposed to the full Staffordshire pottery,” which is what you will find printed on each piece. The Staffordshire Knot which appears on everything from the county seal to pub signs, family crests to hat pins, is commonly called the Stafford Knot. Some say the knot is named after Lady Joan de Stafford (“of Stafford” – Staffordshire) who used it in her family seal. There is at least a 600-year history of the term “Stafford” being the simple, abbreviated term for anything from or of Staffordshire County. This is one of the deep-rooted reasons some people still insist that the Staffordshire Bull Terrier is the “Stafford” and not the “Staffy” nor the “Staffy Bull.” Had it been “Lady Joan de Staffy” who brought her family crest to the land in the 15th century, perhaps history might direct the use of alternative nomenclature today.

There’s another reason that many people in the breed prefer the term Stafford. In the United States the most popular breed the “pit bull.” Wait a minute -- no it isn’t. Not by any registry kept on this planet, at least. However, any mix of dog with a slightly blocky head, short coat and muscles that ends up in a shelter is called a “pit bull” in this country. Most of them have American Pit Bull Terrier in them somewhere, but the most commonly seen dog has become more of a style of cur dog, as my granddad who raised American Pit Bull Terriers would say, than a breed. No matter what they have been mixed with over the years, though, it’s always the pit bull part that becomes their identity. The shelters are full of them. The classifieds are full of them, and the Internet is full of them, particularly when they bite something or someone. Now, let’s jump the pond.

In 1991 Britain’s Dangerous Dog Act banned pit bulls and effectively eliminated them from that country. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier, of course, was not a part of the ban. Still, the breed ended up facing a similar issue in Great Britain that we have with the American Pit Bull Terrier here. Take six to 10 generations of mostly Stafford, mixed with the occasional neighbor’s Jack Russell, throw in a small Lab-mix here or there, and what happens when they end up on the street, in the shelter, or on the news for biting someone? It’s one of those blocky-headed, short-haired muscled dogs you see everywhere – it’s a “Staffy.” The term has become a catch-all for any backyard dog that looks mostly like a Staffordshire Bull

Terrier, or a mix thereof, just like “pit bull” is used in the United States.

This is particularly true amongst those who have experience working with shelters and rescues. The term has even caught on in the United States. I was watching one of those dog rehab shows on TV the other day. It was supposed to feature a Staffordshire Bull Terrier on the episode, but when I tuned in, it ended up being a small pit bull that they kept calling a “Staffy.” Because of the generalizations and how loosely the term “Staffy” is thrown about, you will often find conformation breeders in the UK have a preference for the more traditional term “Stafford,” which tends to remove their dogs from the image that comes to mind of the typical backyard or shelter dog. Whether or not a person thinks it’s pretentious to distance themselves from the common vision of a backyard pet or shelter dog by using the term traditionally passed down in conformation circles for fancy purebred Staffordshire Bull Terriers, well, that’s up to the individual.

The third reason I want to share for why the term Stafford is preferable is perhaps the least enthralling, but it’s the most important one to some people, for reasons that can’t be explained through history or sociolinguistics. At its core, it’s rather simple: Their mentor told them the breed is to be called “Stafford.” Out of respect for their mentors, and for that reason alone, they carry the name Stafford with honor.

–Jason Nicolai (Homebrewed)





STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

“How Well do you know the Stafford?”

Circle the correct response.

1	T	F	SBT tail should be overly long and curl.
2	T	F	SBT is more terrier type than bulldog type.
3	T	F	Erect ears are a DQ.
4	T	F	The chest drops well below point of elbow.
5	T	F	Feet should be tight with short toes and should turn out a little.
6	T	F	Gait should have “bulldog roll”.
7	T	F	Eyes are dark and almond shaped.
8	T	F	Liver color and black and tan are a DQ.
9	T	F	Top-line slopes slightly from withers to croup.
10	T	F	Neck should be short and stuffy.
11	T	F	A furrow or cleave that runs down the center of the skull is a distinct mark of the breed.
12	T	F	Fore-face should be longer and pointing downward.
13	T	F	Muzzle length in relation to skull is 1/3 muzzle, 2/3 skull.
14	T	F	Feet should be well padded.
15	T	F	Bone should be round and ample rather than heavy.
16	T	F	Muscles should be large and bunched.
17	T	F	SBT should be straight in the stifles.
18	T	F	SBT should have a tuck up.
19	T	F	Pink eye rims are a serious fault.
20	T	F	Weight for Dogs 28 to 38, Bitches 24 to 34 lbs.

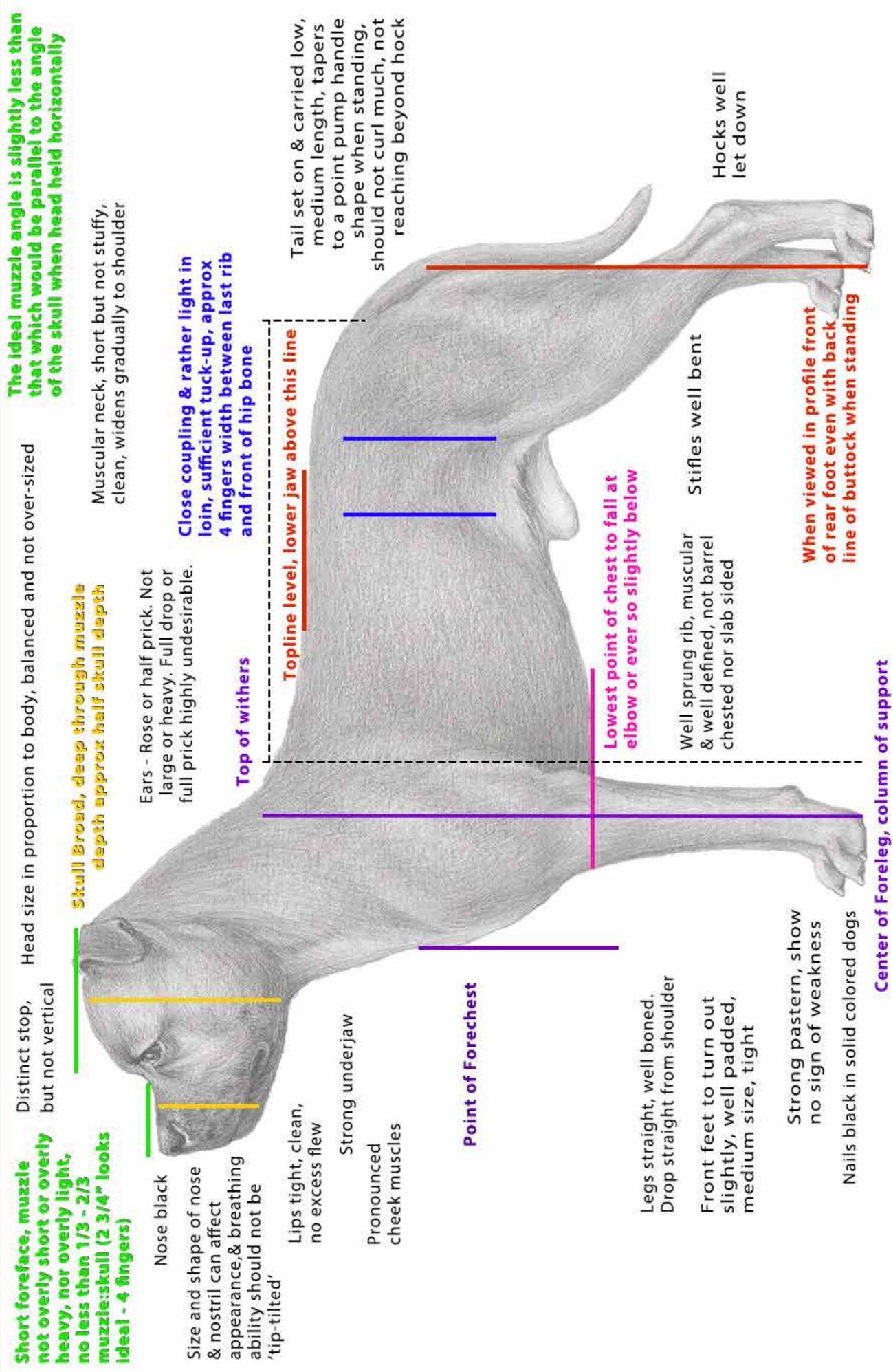
Answers on Reverse

Stafford Quiz Answers

1. FALSE - A tail that is too long or badly curled is a fault.
2. FALSE – There is only one type, the balanced type.
3. FALSE - Ears - Rose or half-pricked and not large. Full drop or full prick to be considered a serious fault.
4. FALSE – The chest drops to the elbow or slightly below.
5. TRUE - Legs straight and well boned, set rather far apart, without looseness at the shoulders and showing no weakness at the pasterns, from which point the feet turn out a little. Dewclaws on the forelegs may be removed. The feet should be well padded, strong and of medium size.
6. The gait is free, powerful and agile with economy of effort. Legs moving parallel when viewed from front or rear. Discernible drive from hind legs.
7. FALSE - Eyes - Dark preferable, but may bear some relation to coat color. Round, of medium size, and set to look straight ahead.
8. Black and Tan and Liver are the only DQ's in the Stafford breed standard. as well Merle does NOT EXIST in the Stafford breed.
9. FALSE - The body is close coupled, with a level top-line, wide front, deep brisket and well sprung ribs being rather light in the loins.
10. FALSE - The neck is muscular, rather short, clean in outline and gradually widening toward the shoulders. Never stuffy.
11. TRUE – Although this may not be seen in puppies or young adults.
12. FALSE - Short, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop, short fore-face, black nose. Pink (Dudley) nose to be considered a serious fault. The head planes should be almost level to one another, never down faced nor dish faced.
13. TRUE – The muzzle should not be less that 1/3 the skull and should have no wrinkle.
14. TRUE - The feet should be well padded, strong and of medium size. The padding and tight foot is important and should not be overlooked due to what this breed was originally bred for.
15. FALSE - Legs straight and well boned, set rather far apart, without looseness at the shoulders and showing no weakness at the pasterns, from which point the feet turn out a little. Well boned is not heavy boned. He should be active and agile, the correct amount of dog to get the job done, not an ounce more or less. The presence of correct balance is a virtue.
16. FALSE - It should be of great strength for its size and, although muscular, should be active and agile. The cloddy, heavy-boned, over muscled dog may look impressive but he'll lack the speed, agility and stamina of the athlete. The racy, light-boned dog may be agile and athletic, but will lack strength and resilience. The one in the middle will get the job done.
17. FALSE – Stifles should be well bent. Straight or too much bend will weaken the dog. Again, balance is what is called for.
18. TRUE - It should be of great strength for its size and, although muscular, should be active and agile. The body is close coupled, with a level top-line, wide front, deep brisket and well sprung ribs being rather light in the loins.
19. FALSE - Light eyes or pink eye rims to be considered a fault, except that where the coat surrounding the eye is white the eye rim may be pink.
20. TRUE - Height at shoulder - 14 to 16 inches. Weight - Dogs, 28 to 38 pounds; bitches, 24 to 34 pounds, these heights being related to weights. Non-conformity with these limits is a fault. In proportion, the length of back, from withers to tail set, is equal to the distance from withers to ground.

STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

Balance Proportions and Substance



Short foreface, muzzle not overly short or overly heavy, nor overly light, no less than 1/3 - 2/3 muzzle:skull (2 3/4" looks ideal - 4 fingers)

Head size in proportion to body, balanced and not over-sized

Distinct stop, but not vertical

The ideal muzzle angle is slightly less than that which would be parallel to the angle of the skull when head held horizontally

Skull Broad, deep through muzzle depth approx half skull depth

Nose black

Muscular neck, short but not stuffy, clean, widens gradually to shoulder

Ears - Rose or half prick. Not large or heavy. Full drop or full prick highly undesirable.

Size and shape of nose & nostril can affect appearance, & breathing ability should not be 'tip-tilted'

Close coupling & rather light in loin, sufficient tuck-up, approx 4 fingers width between last rib and front of hip bone

Top of withers

Lips tight, clean, no excess flew

Tail set on & carried low, medium length, tapers to a point pump handle shape when standing, should not curl much, not reaching beyond hock

Topline level, lower jaw above this line

Strong underjaw

Well sprung rib, muscular & well defined, not barrel chested nor slab sided

Lowest point of chest to fall at elbow or ever so slightly below

Pronounced cheek muscles

Stiffles well bent

Stifles well bent

Point of Forechest

Legs straight, well boned. Drop straight from shoulder

When viewed in profile front of rear foot even with back line of buttock when standing

Front feet to turn out slightly, well padded, medium size, tight

Hocks well let down

Center of Foreleg, column of support

Strong pastern, show no sign of weakness

Nails black in solid colored dogs

Center of Foreleg, column of support

Nails black in solid colored dogs