

Preparation of an in depth analysis and expansion of the standard for the THE BORDER COLLIE

CHARACTERISTICS:

The Border Collie is highly intelligent, with an instinctive tendency to work and is readily responsive to training. It's keen, alert and eager expression adds to its intelligent appearance, whilst its loyalty and faithful nature demonstrates that it is at all times kindly disposed towards stock. Any aspect of structure or temperament foreign to a working dog is uncharacteristic.

Border Collies are, by nature, gatherers. They are sensitive to commands from their handlers. The dog's temperament must be sensitive enough to bend its will when asked, tough enough to stand up to the pressures of training, eager to learn, with enough confidence and determination to carry on with its work without constant guidance. Highly intelligent, instinctive tendency to work, responsive to training, keen, alert, eager, loyal, kind and faithful.

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

The general appearance should be that of a well proportioned dog, the smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to ensure that it is capable of enduring long periods of activity in its intended task as a working sheepdog. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness is undesirable

The Border Collie is first and foremost a working dog and should look like it is capable of doing a day's work for which it was intended. should be a moderate dog that is well proportioned, so keep moderate in mind, nothing exaggerated. Well balanced.

Head:

The skull is broad and flat between the ears, slightly narrowing to the eye with a strong and the same length as the skull. The lips are tight and clean and the nose is large with open nostrils. The nose colour in all dogs will be a solid colour with no pink or light pigment, and shall compliment the backgrounds colour of the dog.

The size and the length of head and neck should always be in balance with the whole dog. Head - Wedge shaped and flat between the ears, not doomed or round, slightly narrowing to the eye. NOT blocky or over broad. The ear placement can alter the visual shape of the skull as well as markings. Wide blaze can make the hear appear broader or coarse. Little or no blaze can make the head appear narrow, weak muzzle or small eyes.

Eyes:

The eyes are set wide apart, oval shaped of moderate size harmonising with the colour of the coat but darker colour preferred, except in the case of chocolate where a lighter colour is permissible and in the case of merles where blue is permissible. The expression is mild but keen, alert and intelligent.

the eyes are set wide to allow a better channel of vision. Coloured Border Collies eye colour varies so non-black dogs may have lighter shades. the expression is keen, alert and intelligent but also look for trust and loyalty regardless of the eye colour.

Ears:

The ears should be of medium size and texture, set well apart, carried semi-erect and sensitive in their use and inside well furnished with hair.

The carriage of the ear is cosmetic. Border Collies do not run on their ears. However, the placement of the ear on the head can affect the appearance. The ears are supposed to swivel, face forward and outwards. Border Collies can get bored in the show ring and ears can go down, this doesn't make the Border Collies less intelligent. If ears are spaced too wide apart, they can make the head look rounded and too high can make the head look narrow. Pricked ears tend to spoil the expression.

Mouth:

The teeth should be sound, strong and evenly spaced, the lower incisors just behind but touching the upper, that is a scissor bite.

As a BC is an active working dog, sometimes teeth can be ground down or missing.

Neck:

The neck is of good length, strong and muscular, slightly arched and broadening to the shoulders, without throatiness or coarseness.

A short neck can indicate a fault in the shoulder angulation and the dog would not be able to gait correctly with correct reach. The front feet of the dog should reach the end of its nose while gaing. The length of neck is important as the working function when moving so the dog can carry his head at different levels. Functions are gaing or crouching. Another function is to be able to reach up and look over and about while working sheep. The neck and the tail should be used for balance on the move.

Forequarters:

The shoulders are long and well angulated to the upper arm, neither in nor out at the elbow. The forelegs are well boned, straight and parallel when viewed from the front. Pasterns show flexibility with a slight slope when viewed from the side.

The Border Collie uses 80% of its weight on its front assembly so it is important that the shoulders are well angulated. When standing the withers should be approx. in a line with the elbow and wrist, this ensures the body is well supported over the centre of the front pads. The pro sternum should be well in front of the forelegs. This should be checked by feel as the BC has a big chest coat. Lack of pro sternum can indicate straight shoulder or a short upper arm. The elbows should be at 1/2 the BC's height. Pasterns should be strong, not weak or upright.

Body:

The body is moderately long with well-sprung ribs tapering to a fairly deep and moderately broad chest. The loins are broad, deep and muscular and only slightly arched flanks deep and not cut up.

10/9 is the ideal ratio. Level topline and only a slight rise over the loin. The BC should be well muscled, not fat or overloaded at the shoulder. Barrel chests or too heavy bone could interfere with the working ability. The topline should be neither dipped nor roached. Well sprung ribs, not barrelled.

Hindquarters:

The hindquarters are broad and muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to the set on of the tail. The thighs are long, broad, deep, muscular with well-turned stifles and strong hocks, well let down, and when viewed from the rear are straight and parallel.

Too long in the hind angulation will limit manoeuvrability and endurance. Reach and drive will be restricted by short legs and straight stifles. Flat or steep coups will restrict drive and manoeuvrability.

Feet:

Oval in shape, pads deep, strong and sound, toes moderately arched and close together. Nails short and strong.

To endure long periods of work, the feet should have deep strong pads and tight. Hair is removed for the show ring however, in the working dog the hair acts as extra protection. Dew claws can be left on the front legs, however back dew claws are very rare. Nice lay back of pasterns to act as shock absorbers is a must. Poor feet, thin pads will limit endurance and working ability. A slow pace Border should move with front feet slightly turned in.

Tail:

The tail is moderately long, set on low, well furnished with an upward swirl towards the end, completing the graceful contour and balance of the dog. The tail may be raised in excitement but not carried over the back.

The tail should reach as least to the hocks without any kinks or knots. Tails carried over the dogs back may indicate a high set tail not to be mistaken for the upward swirl in the tail which is a feature of the breed. All tails have a white tip (which is the shepherds lantern). An incorrect tail carriage spoils the outline of dog standing or moving. Tail should be in a continuation of the spine and is used for braking and balance.

Movement:

The movement is free, smooth and tireless, with a minimum lift of the feet, conveying the impression of the ability to move with great stealth. The action, viewed from the front, should be straight forward and true, without weakness at shoulders, elbows or pasterns. Viewed from behind the quarters thrust with strength and flexibility, with hocks not close or too far apart. When trotting, the dog's feet tend to come closer together as speed increases, but when the dog comes to rest he should stand four square. Any tendency to stiltedness or to cowhocks or bowhocks is a serious fault.

The BC should have reach and drive. His reach should let his front feet reach to at least to his nose level. His drive should show power and thrust and when moving out his rear feet should reach out behind him to almost the length of his tail. With a minimum lift of feet, thus creating a stable balance whether moving quickly or in a creep or crouch. Going away and back should be straightforward and true removing all possibility of a weak shoulder, elbow or pasterns. The gait should be smooth and tireless. A good moving dog can look slow and lazy, a faster moving dog doesn't mean it is a better mover. Moderate pace is required to show great stealth, a graceful and tireless movement.

Coat:

Double coated, with a moderately long, dense, medium textured topcoat while the undercoat is short, soft and dense, making a weather resisting protection with an abundant coat to form a mane, breeching and brush. On face, ear tips, forelegs (except for feather), hindlegs from hock to ground, the hair is short and smooth. A smooth coat is acceptable.

Each colour has a different texture. Baby puppies are not double coated until approx 4 or 5 months. Absence of undercoat in an Adult should be regarded as a fault as this does not provide any insulation. The coat can be straight or slightly wavy. Dogs have more coat than bitches.

Colour:

A variety of colours is permissible, but white should never predominate

Markings can affect the conformation. A wide blaze may appear to make the head broader or coarse. A dark face or no blaze may make the head appear narrow, making the muzzle look weak and the eyes look small. Uneven white or black on the front legs can make the dog look like its toeing in. Also white legs on stifle could suggest narrow thighs, crouching or overlong movement. White collars in the correct angle can make a dog look like it has an ideal shoulder or not! Broad collars can also suggest a long neck and a short body or vice versa should the dog have a half collar of black.

Size:

Height: Dogs 48-53 cm (approx 19-21 in) at withers

Bitches 46-51 cm (approx. 18-20 in) at withers

Faults:

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness of the fault should be in exact proportion to its degree.

Note:

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.