

COAT AND PIGMENT COLOR IN THE RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

BY MARY LYNNE ELLIOTT

Mary Lynne Elliott is the RRCUS Education Committee Chair and an AKC Judge.

Wheaten is the coat color of Rhodesian Ridgebacks. All shades of wheaten are equally correct, from lighter golds to richer reds. Wheaten is a banded or variegated coat, not a solid color. The hair is lighter at the base and darker at the tip.

Dogs may have masks or be clean-faced. Both are equally correct. A darker mask is often accompanied by a darker ear. The mask should not extend above the eyes, as in a Great Dane.

The coat is short, dense, sleek, and glossy. It is neither woolly nor silky.

Black hair (or, in the case of brown noses, dark-brown hair) may be interspersed on the neck, head, and chest area, including in a “widow’s peak” or bibbing.

Excessive black, including saddles or sabling, is unacceptable.

Black hairs should not interfere with the overall wheaten impression of the dog.

Black and tan is a historically incorrect pattern. While it is unlikely that a dog with this pattern will enter your ring, it should never be awarded. Instead, it should be excused for lack of merit.

Small socks and white on the chest on an otherwise typey, sound dog should not eliminate it from consideration.

Some Ridgebacks exhibit a pattern of lighter cream-colored coat on the underpinnings, neck, and bottom of jaw. This is acceptable.

The correct, round and dark eye gives the breed its intelligent expression.

The color of the eyes should harmonize with the color of the dog: This is a reference to skin pigment, not coat color.

Black-nosed dogs should have a dark eye (as deep a shade of brown as possible). Yellow eyes are undesirable.

The Scale of Points allows 3 points out of 100 to Coat and Color. Emphasis should be placed on the general conformation. ■



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Brown-nosed dogs should have an amber eye, the darker the better.

THE RIDGE

Demystifying the Ridgeback Judging Assignment

BY DANIELLE SAND



The Rhodesian Ridgeback Breed Standard is one of the few remaining standards that utilizes a point system. The “ridge” is worth 20 points out of 100 on this scale. The ridge is the escutcheon, or hallmark, of our breed. Without revisiting too much history, our breed is descended from a native African dog that possessed a ridge of hair growing in the opposite direction on its back. European settlers selectively mixed this indigenous dog with a variety of different breeds to create the modern Ridgeback. The original name of the breed was the African Lion Dog, but it was renamed the Rhodesian Ridgeback to give emphasis to its defining characteristic.

Decades of mentoring judges and giving breed seminars has confirmed that many judges are confused by the ridge. The Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States has an excellent, recently revised PowerPoint presentation with a bounty of illustrations and photographs of ridges. Ridges in our presentation are categorized as: desirable, acceptable, and unacceptable. Ridgelessness is a disqualification; therefore, you will not see these dogs in the show ring. A ridge should contain two symmetrical whorls, or crowns. The ridge should start directly behind the shoulder blades and taper to a point between the hips. Serious faults, which should keep dogs from the show ring, include having only one crown, having more than two crowns, having badly off-set crowns, or having a very short ridge. The whorls of the ridge create a fan, or box, at the top of the ridge; the size of this fan is immaterial. There can be a parting of the hair at the top of this box and this should not be confused as being an extra crown.

When adjudicating our breed, make sure the ridge is within the realm of acceptable, and then move on and judge the dog. Picture-perfect ridges may sit atop conformational disasters, and slightly imperfect ridges may grace structurally impressive animals.

Desirable Ridges



by Leisa Temple

Acceptable Ridges



When evaluating our breed, remember these priorities:

1. Overall Impression—Athletic, Agile, Powerful, Upstanding, Balanced, and Handsome;
2. Strong Bladed Bone, Oval Not Round;
3. Ridge.

I encourage anyone interested in judging our breed to avail themselves of our official presentation and to also seek out mentoring from RRCUS approved mentors. ■

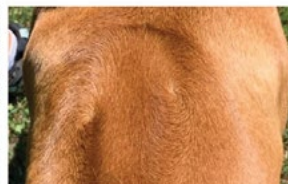


The ridge is the hallmark of the breed.

The only disqualification is ridgelessness.



Ridges with slightly asymmetrical crowns, or ridges that do not taper evenly are not desirable, but they are acceptable.



While this stripe of backward-growing hair is an important part of Ridgeback type, remember that there must be a good Ridgeback under that ridge!

This natural parting of the fan is where the follicle pattern changes direction. It is not a third crown.

Dogs with slightly longer coats will have more prominent whorls than slicker-coated dogs. The prominence of the whorling is irrelevant.



The ridge contains two identical crowns (whorls) directly opposite each other.



The ridge is tapering, starts immediately behind the shoulders and continues to a point between the prominence of the hips.