The Belgian Tervuren
Illustrating the AKC Standard
The Illustrated Belgian Tervuren 2012

Prepared by the American Belgian Tervuren Education Committee
Edeltraud Laurin, Chairman
Karen Johnson, Co-Chair
Leslie Earl
Linda Friedow
Janina Laurin
Sharon Redmer
Linda Robey

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This body of work is fluid.
The Education Committee looks forward to updating and
perfecting the information herein as an aid to judges and
fanciers in understanding the Belgian Tervuren.

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Jeanne Flora for the beautiful illustrations

Text of the Official Written Standard (approved 2007)

For more information on the Belgian Tervuren and the American
Belgian Tervuren Club, Inc., visit the website at http://www.abtc.org

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GENERAL APPEARANCE

The first impression of the Belgian Tervuren is that of a well-balanced, medium-size dog, elegant in appearance, standing squarely on all fours, with proud carriage of head and neck. He is strong, agile, well-muscled, alert and full of life. He gives the impression of depth and solidity without bulkiness. The male should appear unquestionably masculine; the female should have a distinctly feminine look and be judged equally with the male. The Belgian Tervuren is a natural dog and this is no need for excessive posing in the show ring. The Belgian Tervuren reflects the qualities of intelligence, courage, alertness and devotion to master. In addition to his inherent ability as a herding dog, he protects his master’s person and property without being overtly aggressive. He is watchful, attentive, and usually in motion when not under command. The Belgian Tervuren is a herding dog and versatile worker. The highest value is to be placed on qualities that maintain these abilities, specifically, correct temperament, gait, bite and coat.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

The ideal male is 24 to 26 inches and the female 22 to 24 inches in height measured at the withers. Dogs are to be penalized in accordance to the degree they deviate from the ideal. Males under 23 inches or over 26.5 inches or females under 21 inches or over 24.5 inches are to be disqualified. The body is square; the length measured from the point of shoulder to the point of the rump approximates the height. Females may be somewhat longer in body. Bone structure is medium, in proportion to height, so that he is well-balanced throughout and neither spindly or leggy, nor cumbersome and bulky.

- Balance is critical. Best assessed initially by observing from across the ring.
- No quality in the parts, however great, makes a superior specimen if the dog is markedly out of balance.
- Significant elegance in both males and females within their gender.
- Correct temperament is vital to maintaining the breed’s versatile working talents.
- Proper weight and well-muscled condition are essential.
- An active breed which should not be required to stack and remain motionless.

- Medium-size breed with min/max height limits, but no preference for a particular height within those specified limits.
- Height limits are different for dogs vs. bitches.
- Measure any dog which appears to be outside of the standard limits.
- A square breed – incorrect to have a rectangular dog in either direction – horizontally or vertically oriented. Coat can fool the eye when assessing proportions.
**SILHOUETTE & PROPORTIONS**

**CORRECT** silhouette & proportions followed by illustrations showing an increased degree of faults at right.

**CORRECT** proportions with underlying bone structure

The body is square; the length measured from the point of shoulder to the point of the rump approximates the height.

- **A** Square dog with short legs
- **B** Longer legs on a square dog
- **C** Taller than long
- **D** Long body with overangulated rear
- **E** Short legs on a longer body
- **F** Square but very faulty. Long legs, straight forward front, straight rear
Well-chiseled, skin taut, long without exaggeration. Expression intelligent and questioning, indicating alertness, attention and readiness for action. Eyes dark brown, medium-size, slightly almond shape, not protruding. Light, yellow or round eyes are a fault.

- Ears triangular in shape, well-cupped, stiff, erect; height equal to width of base. Set high, the base of the ear does not come below the center of the eye. Hanging ears, as on a hound, are a disqualification.

- Expression is intelligent and alert to its surroundings.
- Eyes are calm, dark and attentive.
- Ears are small, in balance with the head, triangular and set high, carried erect. Proper ear set and carriage contributes to the elegant look of the head.
- Ears are mobile, illustrating alertness and curiosity.

Skull and muzzle measuring from the stop are of equal length. Overall size is in proportion to the body, top of skull flattened rather than rounded, the width approximately the same as, but not wider than the length. Stop moderate. The topline of the muzzle is parallel to the topline of the skull when viewed from the side. Muzzle moderately pointed, avoiding any tendency toward snippiness or cheekiness. Jaws strong and powerful. Nose black without spots or discolored areas. Nostrils well defined. Lips tight and black, no pink showing on the outside when the mouth is closed.

- Skull and the muzzle – same length and in balance. Stop is approximately at the midpoint. Muzzle blends smoothing into back skull. Head is strong, yet elegant.
- Skull should NOT be broad, short or blocky.
- Nose is black. Lips are fully pigmented and black. Okay if pink shows on the inside of the mouth if lips are black.
**EYES**

- **CORRECT** eyes, faults below
- Round eyes
- Light eyes

**EARSET & HEAD**

- **CORRECT** earset above, faults at right
- Highset but tall
- Rounded ear tips
- Wide set ears
- Wide and low set ears
- Convex head with Roman nose
- Concave head

**CORRECT** head faults at right
**CORRECT** head faults at right
TEETH

Full complement of strong white teeth, evenly set, meeting in a scissors or a level bite. Overshot and undershot teeth are a fault. An undershot bite such that there is a complete loss of contact by all the incisors is a disqualification. Broken or discolored teeth should not be penalized. Missing teeth are a fault. Four or more missing teeth are a serious fault.

- Scissors or level bite.
- Teeth are strong; missing teeth should be penalized. Typically missing teeth are at P1, occasionally P2.
- Discolored teeth are not specifically penalized, but teeth should be clean with good dental hygiene.
- Check for full dentition. Check from the sides by lifting the lips, do not pry the mouth open.

CORRECT earset & head above, faults at right

Faiths rarely occur alone, this shows a progression of faults. Dog A has large ears, a wide base, and a lack of cupping. Dog B adds a wider topskull. Dog C pronounced zygomatics.

NECK TOPLINE BODY

CORRECT neck extension and body length with proper level topline.

Neck round, muscular, rather long and elegant, slightly arched and tapered from head to body. Skin well-fitting with no loose folds. Withers accentuated. Topline level, straight and firm from withers to croup. Croup medium long, sloping gradually to the base of the tail. Chest not broad without being narrow, but deep; the lowest point of the brisket reaching the elbow, forming a smooth ascendant curve to the abdomen. Abdomen moderately developed, neither tucked up nor paunchy. Ribs well-sprung but flat on the sides. Loins section viewed from above is relatively short, broad and strong, but blending smoothly into the back. Tail strong at base, the last vertebra to reach at least to the hock. At rest the dog holds it low, the tip bent back level with the hock. When in action, he may raise it to a point level with the topline giving it a slight curve, but not a hook. Tail is not carried above the backline nor turned to one side. A cropped or stump tail is a disqualification.

- Silhouette is best assessed from across the ring with dogs being free-baited and standing naturally.
- Elegant and rather long neck is a hallmark of the breed. Correct carriage contributes to the ideal outline and should not be overlooked.
- Faulty short-necked look alters the outline so that the head appears out of balance with the body, sometimes appearing to almost “sit” on the shoulders generally due to a forward set front – a very unattractive non-Tervuren look and should be penalized.
- Less commonly seen, also unattractive is a neck which appears too long. This may indeed be a ewe neck, also incorrect and another departure from the ideal.
- Withers are accentuated just ahead of the otherwise straight and level topline, and the croup has a gradual slope.
- Chest is deep, not broad. Abdomen should rise gently being neither flat nor cut-up. Loin is short, broad, strong, and NEVER long.
- Tails of correct length give balance to the dog in motion. Last vertebra of tail should reach to the hock. Check tail length.
**FOREQUARTERS**

Shoulders long, laid back 45 degrees, flat against the body, forming a right angle with the upper arm. Top of the shoulder blades roughly two thumbs width apart. Upper arms should move in a direction exactly parallel to the longitudinal axis of the body. Forearms long and well-muscled. Legs straight and parallel, perpendicular to the ground. Bone oval rather than round. Pasterns short and strong, slightly sloped. Dewclaws may be removed. Feet rounded, cat-footed, turning neither in nor out, toes curved close together, well-padded, strong nails.

- Correct placement/angulation of the shoulder assembly, slightly sloping pasterns and well developed feet help dogs maintain stamina and flexibility.

**FRONTS**

**CORRECT** Male, faults below

**CORRECT** front, faults at right

Forward set front

Steep shoulder, straight upper arm

Pinched front

Wide front, short legs

Very wide front, short legs
Hindquarters

Legs powerful without heaviness, moving in the same pattern as the limbs of the forequarters. Bone oval rather than round. Thighs broad and heavily muscled. Stifles clearly defined, with upper shank at right angles to hipbones. Hocks moderately bent. Metatarsi short, perpendicular to the ground, parallel to each other when viewed from the rear. Dewclaws are removed. Feet slightly elongated, toes curved close together, heavily padded, strong nails.

- Rear legs work in harmony with the forequarters.
- Short metatarsi – typical of dogs built for stamina and able to work all day at a comfortable trot, with bursts of speed.
- Strong feet with thick pads to aid in working over various terrains.
- Thin flat feet (front and rear) are objectionable.

Coat

The Belgian Terrier is particularly adaptable to extremes of temperature or climate. The guard hairs of the coat must be long, close-fitting, straight and abundant. The texture is of medium harshness, not silky or wiry. Wavy or curly hair is a fault. The undercoat is very dense, commensurate, however, with climatic conditions. The hair is short on the head, outside the ears, and on the front part of the legs. The opening of the ear is protected by tufts of hair. Ornamentation consists of especially long and abundant hair, like a collarette around the neck, particularly on males; fringe of long hair down the back of the forearm; especially long and abundant hair trimming the breeches; long, heavy and abundant hair on the tail. The female rarely has as long or as ornamented a coat as the male. This disparity must not be a consideration when the female is judged against the male.

- Double coated breed. Outer coat is straight, and harsh. Lengthens with maturity in adult males and should lay naturally with the body contours.
- Females do not carry as long or abundant a coat as males.
- Consideration must be given for geographical and climatic conditions.
- Trimming is limited to neatening of feet and lower legs only. Any sculpting should be penalized.

Color

Body rich fawn to russet mahogany with black overlay is ideal and preferred. Predominant color that is pale, washed out, cream or gray is a fault. The coat is characteristically double pigmented whereby the tips of fawn hair are blackened. Belgian Terrier characteristically become darker with age. On mature males, this blackening is especially pronounced on the shoulders, back and rib section. Blackening in patches is a fault. Although allowance should be made for females and young males, absence of blackening in mature dogs is a serious fault.

- Colors range from the ideal rich fawn through deep mahogany to the paler, not ideal, shades of body color (beige, gray-beige, cream, pale fawn and gray). Base colors with a definite warm (fawn to red) hue are preferred, while the cooler (cream to gray) tones are faulted.
- All base colors should possess an overlay of blackening as if the dog were caressed by soot. The amount of blackening will vary from males to females and even within one gender. A complete absence of blackening in fully mature adults is a serious fault.
- Note any white markings to determine if they are within the permissible range. Coat, particularly the mane on males, can cover chest markings – lift to evaluate for allowable white at the skin.
OVERLAY

Typical overlay on male

Typical overlay on female

Heavier overlay, but also acceptable (within range)

Less overlay, but also acceptable (within range)
COAT & COLOR

FAULTS

Lack of masking – a fault

Too much white extending to neck, and a white foot. Each is a disqualification. (white on toe tips is acceptable)

Too much white, extending to point of shoulder – Also a disqualification.

Heavy blackening with patches – a fault

Male with no overlay – a serious fault

GAIT

Lively and graceful, covering the maximum ground with minimum effort.
Alway in motion, seemingly never tiring, he shows ease of movement rather than hard driving action. He single trakcs at a fast gait, the legs both front and rear converging toward the centerline of gravity of the dog. Viewed from the side, he exhibits full extension of both fore and hindquarters. The backline should remain firm and level, parallel to the line of motion. His natural tendency is to move in a circle, rather than a straight line. Padding, hackneying, weaving, crabbing and similar movement faults are to be penalized according to the degree with which they interfere with the ability of the dog to work.

• Movement is to be free and smooth with minimal effort. Balance combines good reach in the forequarter with balanced drive in the hindquarters to show effortless gait.
• Trot should be at a moderate speed and the feet should lift only enough to clear the ground.
• Any movement fault which affects the ability of the dog to herd must be penalized commensurate with the degree of its effect.
• With increasing speed, the legs should converge towards a single track.
• From the side, look for a clean, level topline with head carriage almost level with the body and with a level or slightly lower extended tail.
• Correct, ground covering, effortless, lively movement can only be achieved with proper front and rear construction.
In his relationship with humans, he is observant and vigilant with strangers, but not apprehensive. He does not show fear or shyness. He does not show viciousness by unwarranted or unprovoked attack. He must be approachable, standing his ground and showing confidence to meet overture without himself making them. With those he knows well, he is most affectionate and friendly, zealous for their attention and very possessive.

- Watchful and reactive to the environment.
- Every dog should stand for examination but is not required to bait or animate for someone they do not know or to show expression constantly.
- Dog is not required to be friendly to strangers but must stand its ground with poise and confidence when meeting a new person.
- Confidence should be present on the exam and on the move.
- Excuse any dog which cannot be examined safely. Dogs that are constantly fearful or nervous in the ring, or that need to be firmly “propped up” for exam should be faulted to the point of not being considered above competition, and should never be awarded points.

**TEMPERAMENT**

**FAULTS**

Any deviation from these specifications is a fault. In determining whether a fault is minor, serious or major, these two factors should be used as a guide:

- The extent to which it deviates from the standard.
- The extent to which such deviation would actually affect the working ability of the dog.

**DISQUALIFICATIONS**

- Males under 23 inches or over 26.5 inches or females under 21 inches or over 24.5 inches.
- Hanging ears, as on a hound.
- An undershot bite such that there is a complete loss of contact by all the incisors.
- A cropped or stump tail.
- Solid black, solid liver or any area of white except as specified on the chest, tips of toes, chin and muzzle.