



The American Rottweiler Club presents:

THE ROTTWEILER

A Judging Handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an easy to read, convenient guide to judging Rottweilers. This handbook is not a replacement to the American Rottweiler Club's Illustrated Standard, but rather an accompaniment. Our goal is to reinforce the total Rottweiler, a dog of substance and type, sturdy and correct in body and temperament, and one who is distinguishable as only a Rottweiler. We hope this handbook will help make your judging of Rottweilers a rewarding and pleasant experience.

The Rottweiler is a versatile working dog. In a day's work, he should be capable of herding and moving a flock of sheep or cattle; pulling a cart with a load; moving athletically among obstacles to watch and protect property; tracking a lost person's scent; and, ultimately, be a very devoted and loyal companion and protector.

To do this, the Rottweiler must be structurally correct and should exemplify sturdiness and substance, without being fat or overpowering. He must possess the stable temperament which enables him to deal intelligently with the situation at hand.

Type is of paramount importance in the judging of any breed and certainly in the judging of a strong, hard working dog like the Rottweiler. Type is the essence of a breed. It is that image, that silhouette, which distinguishes one breed from all others.

In the Rottweiler, type has its origins in the purpose and function of the breed and is those characteristics which have been bred into the breed long enough that they have become stable and are reproducible with some uniformity. When you think of the "typical" Rottweiler, you not only picture body structure and head model, but also movement and character.

How do you determine type and learn to recognize it? You study the breed standard. You learn the history and function of the breed and take as many opportunities as possible for direct observation of individual dogs functioning on the working field, at home or in the conformation ring. The list of approved Breed Mentors and current AKC breeder judges found on pages 15 and 16 will enable you to arrange for these observations. (Ed. Note: The list of approved Breed Mentors and current AKC breeder-judges can be obtained by e-mailing adrna@ic.net).

History of the Breed

The Rottweiler is believed to be descended from the most ancient of breeds. His origin is from the Roman times, in which era he performed the duties of guard and drover dog. When the Roman Legions traversed the Alps, the dogs accompanied them protecting the soldiers and driving the herds. Settling in the area of Rottweil, the Roman Army dogs came into contact with dogs native to the area. The natural result was an interbreeding of the two.

The principle duties of these interbreeds remained the guarding and driving of large herds, the defense of their masters and the master's property. Since there was a large concentration of the dogs in the vicinity of the Old German Empire City of Rottweil, the dog acquired the name: ROTTWEILER, "butcher dog."

The butchers bred this type of dog solely for their working ability and their personal use. With the passage of time, an outstanding guarding and drover dog, as well as cart dog, was the result. With the dawn of the 20th Century, when the police were soliciting service dogs, the Rottweiler was readily recognized as admirably suited to this type of duty. It was this natural protective instinct and hardness, coupled with the willingness to please and trainability, that led to his use in the military and police and enabled him to survive two world wars. These characteristics certainly have influenced the enormous population explosion and his present popularity. The Rottweiler is number two in AKC registrations and usually has one of the largest entries at our dog shows.

The Rottweiler was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1935. The first revision to the standard was not made until 1979 and the second in 1990. The 1990 revision brought the AKC Standard closer to the ADRK Standard (Algemeiner Deutcher Rottweiler Klub of Germany). This 1990 revision is the standard under which you judge in the AKC (and study for the test!)

So, the objective in the breeding of Rottweilers is to produce a powerful, yet vigorous, dog, black with clearly defined rust (mahogany) markings, which, despite its substance, is stamped with an air of nobility and is capable of fulfilling the role for which it was bred as companion, guardian, and working dog. Your mission as a judge of Rottweilers is to learn to recognize this typical dog in the two to three minutes you are allowed to examine each entry in the AKC conformation ring.

Official Standard for the ROTTWEILER

Approved May 8, 1990; Effective June 28, 1990

General Appearance

The ideal Rottweiler is a medium-large, robust and powerful dog, black with clearly defined rust markings. His compact and substantial build denotes great strength, agility and endurance. Dogs are characteristically more massive throughout with large frame and heavier bone than bitches. Bitches are distinctly feminine, but without weakness of substance or structure.

Size, Proportion, Substance

Dog: 24 inches to 27 inches

Bitches: 22 inches to 25 inches

with preferred size being midrange of each sex. Correct proportion is of primary importance, as long as size is within the standard's range.

The **length of body** from prosternum to the rear-most 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. Depth of chest is approximately fifty percent (50%) of the height of the dog. His bone and muscle mass must be sufficient to balance his frame, giving a compact and very powerful appearance.

Serious Faults: *Lack of proportion, Undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches).*

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 backskull to muzzle is 3 to 2. Forehead is preferred dry, however some wrinkling may occur when dog is alert.

Expression is noble, alert and self-assured.

Eyes of medium size, almond shaped with well-fitting lids, moderately deep-set, neither protruding nor receding. The desired color is a uniform dark brown.

Serious Faults: *Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color size, hairless eye rim.*

Disqualification: *Entropion. Ectropion.*

Ears of medium size, pendant, triangular in shape; when carried alertly the ears are level with the top of the skull and appear to broaden it. Ears are to be set well apart, Hanging forward with the inner edge lying tightly against the head and terminating at approximately mid-cheek.

Serious Faults: *Improper carriage (creased, folded or held away from cheek/head).*

Muzzle - bridge is straight, broad at base with slight tapering towards tip, The end of the muzzle is broad with well developed chin. Nose is broad rather than round and always black. **Lips** - always black; corners closed; inner mouth pigment is preferred dark.

Serious faults: *Total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth)*

. Bite & Dentition - Teeth 42 in number (20 upper; 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite; lower incisors touching inside of upper incisors.

Serious faults: *Level bite; any missing tooth.*

Disqualifications: *Overshot, undershot (when incisors do not touch or mesh); wry mouth; two or more missing teeth.*

Neck, Topline, Body

Neck - Powerful, well muscled, moderately long, slightly arched and without loose skin.

Topline - The back is firm and level, extending in a straight line from behind the withers to the croup. The back remains horizontal to the ground while the dog is moving or standing.

Body - The chest is roomy, broad and deep, reaching to elbow, with well pronounced forechest and well sprung, oval ribs. **Back** is straight and strong. **Loin** is short, deep and well muscled. **Croup** is broad, of medium length and only slightly sloping. **Underline** of a mature Rottweiler has a slight tuck-up. Males must have two normal testicles properly descended into the scrotum.

Disqualifications: *Unilateral cryptorchid or cryptorchid males.*

Tail - Tail docked short, close to body, leaving one or two tail vertebrae. The set of the tail is more important than length. Properly set, it gives an impression of elongation of topline; carried slightly above horizontal when the dog is excited or moving.

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. **Pasterns** are strong, springy and almost perpendicular to the ground. **Feet** are round, compact with well arched toes, turning neither in nor out. Pads are thick and hard. Nails short, strong and black. Dewclaws may be removed.

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. **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.**

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

Fault: *Wavy coat*

Serious faults: *Open, excessively short, or curly coat; total lack of under-coat; any trimming that alters the length of the natural coat.*

Disqualifications: *Long 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 completely 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).*

Disqualifications: *Any base color other than black; absence of all markings.*

Gait - The Rottweiler is a trotter. His movement should be balanced, harmonious, sure, powerful and unhindered, with strong forereach and a powerful rear drive. The motion is effortless, efficient, and ground-covering. Front and rear legs are thrown neither in nor out, as the imprint of hind feet should touch that of forefeet. In a trot the forequarters and hindquarters are mutually coordinated while the back remains level, firm and relatively motionless. As speed increases the legs will converge under body towards a center line.

Temperament - The Rottweiler is basically a calm, confident and courageous dog with a self-assured aloofness that does not lend itself to immediate and indiscriminate friendships. A Rottweiler is self-confident and responds quietly and with a wait-and-see attitude to influences in his environment. He has an inherent desire to protect home and family, and is an intelligent dog of extreme hardness and adaptability with a strong willingness to work, making him especially suited as a companion, guardian and general all-purpose dog. The behavior of the Rottweiler in the show ring should be controlled, willing and adaptable, trained to submit to examination of mouth, testicles, etc. An aloof or reserved dog should not be penalized, as this reflects the accepted character of the breed. An aggressive or belligerent attitude towards other dogs should not be faulted.

A judge shall excuse from the ring any shy Rottweiler. A dog should be judged fundamentally shy if, refusing to stand for examination, it shrinks away from the judge. A dog that, in the opinion of the judge menaces or threatens him/her, or exhibits any sign that it may not be safely approached or examined by the judge in the normal manner, shall be excused from the ring. A dog that in the opinion of the judge attacks any person in the ring shall be disqualified.

Summary

Faults: The foregoing is a description of the ideal Rottweiler. Any structural fault that detracts from the above-described working dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

Disqualifications: *Entropion, ectropion. Overshot, undershot (when incisors do not touch or mesh); wry mouth; two or more missing teeth. 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.*

Discussion Of The Standard

An important point to remember as you study the standard to determine type (balance and proportion) is that it will help you if you categorize deviations from the standard into faults of structure versus faults of beauty. In judging, you should give more importance to faults of structure than to beauty or cosmetic faults. You should place great importance in how the structure functions in movement (gaiting), but, in the final analysis, you should go back to type (the sum of them all) in determining your placements.

You always judge the **TOTAL** dog as he is presented to you that day in that ring. You will only get an impression of his character in those few minutes you have, but how he presents himself to you in those minutes is also important in determining type.

Serious Faults of STRUCTURE:

Lack of proportion, undersized, oversized, reversal of sex characteristics (bitchy dogs, doggy bitches).

Level bite; any missing tooth.

DISQUALIFICATIONS:

Overshot, undershot, wry mouth, two or more missing teeth.

Serious Faults of BEAUTY/COSMETICS

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

Improper ear carriage (creased, folded or held away from cheek/head).

Total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth).

Open, excessively short, wavy, or curly coat, total lack of undercoat, any trimming which alters natural coat.

Straw-colored, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings; white markings any place on dog.

DISQUALIFICATIONS:

Entropion. Ectropion

Long coat.

Any base color other than black; absence of all markings.

Correct Breed Types

CORRECT DOG



Critique:

Large (very substantial), strong, balanced male, well muscled with strong bones. 66 cm tall (26"), 31 cm depth of chest (12.2"), 89 cm chest circumference (35.04"), 76 cm body length (29.92"). Head is dry, strong male, skull strong, generally straight line to the stop (bridge of nose), strong close-fitting lips on muzzle. Eyes medium sized, almond shaped, dark. Ears set correctly. Good strong scissors bite. Body outline deep and broad -- good forechest, ribs well-sprung, good top and bottom line, well-developed testicles, good angulation, deep front, well placed shoulders, tight close-set elbows, straight correct legs, good pasterns, feet well arched, pads hard, toes tight, well angulated deep rear with broad, somewhat sloping croup, Strong, muscular, broad upper thighs, straight forward stifle joint, straight hocks. Floating, ground covering reaching movement; a natural trotter. Full of temperament, steady nerved, natural and controlled.

CORRECT BITCH



Critique

Two and one-half years old. Correct size and length. Strong, broad and deep. Very beautiful head with brown eyes. The somewhat heavy ears are high and set somewhat behind and should lie better. Good over and under lines. Faultless angulation. Coat and color very good. Somewhat loose in shoulder. Lightly giving in back. Lazy and dragging during the evaluation of movement.



CORRECT DOG HEAD



CORRECT BITCH HEAD

The Rottweiler Standard Describes THE 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 backskull to muzzle is 3 to 2. Forehead is preferred dry, however some wrinkling may occur when dog is alert.

Expression is noble, alert, and self-assured.

Eyes of medium size, almond shaped with well-fitting lids, moderately deep-set, neither protruding nor receding. The desired color is a uniform dark brown.

Serious Faults: *Yellow (bird of prey) eyes, eyes of different color or size, hairless eye rim.*

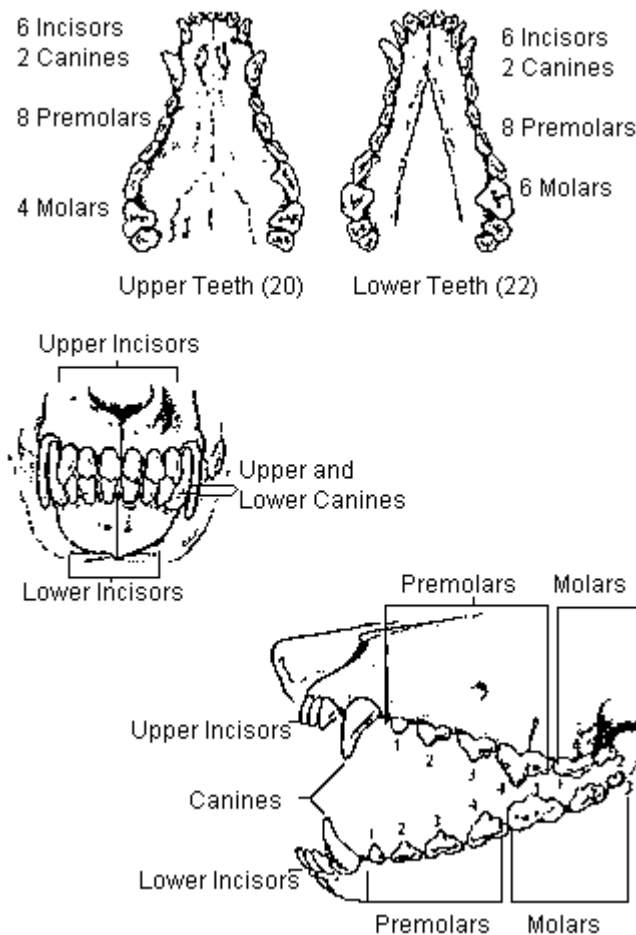
Disqualification: *Entropion, Ectropion*

Ears of medium size, pendant, triangular in shape; when carried alertly the ears are level with the top of the skull and appear to broaden it. Ears are to be set well apart, hanging forward with the inner edge lying tightly against the head and terminating at approximately mid-cheek.

Serious Faults: *Improper- carriage (creased, folded or held away from cheek/head).*

Muzzle - bridge is straight, broad at base with slight tapering towards tip. The end of the muzzle is broad with well developed chin. Nose is broad rather than round and always black.

CORRECT DENTITION



CHECKING DENTITION

The Rottweiler Standard says:

Bite and Dentition - Teeth 42 in number (20 upper; 22 lower), strong, correctly placed, meeting in a scissors bite (lower incisors touching inside of upper incisors).

Serious faults: *Level bite; any missing tooth.* **Disqualifications:** *Overshot, undershot (when incisors do not touch or mesh); wry mouth; two or more missing teeth.* **Comments On Checking Dentition**

It is important to count teeth in all exhibits. Do not just look for gaps between teeth and only count if there is a gap. In Rottweilers, who do not have long muzzles and have large teeth, there is not always an obvious gap when a tooth is missing. With practice and technique, counting teeth can be done quickly and easily.

Count by groups. Look for 6 incisors and 2 canines each, upper and lower. This can be done when checking the occlusion. Look for the 4 premolars and 3 molars on each side lower and the 4 premolars and 2 molars on each side upper. The fourth premolar on the bottom is a large tooth, and looks like it should be a molar. On the other hand, the last molars are small and quite easily missed.

The good news is that it is usually a premolar that will be missing. It is also, usually, a premolar which will be an extra tooth. Regarding extra teeth, while the AKC Rottweiler standard calls for 42 teeth, it and the FCI (Federation Cynologique International) standard do not address the extra teeth problem. Therefore, extra teeth should not be considered a serious or disqualifying fault. Remember that faults of dentition are faults of structure.

Most handlers are very good at showing the bite and teeth, but you may need to ask for the mouth to be opened like an alligator to see the smog-all back molars. It is also easy to see and count the groups of teeth while the dog is relaxed with his mouth open and panting.

If you find any deviations, tell the handler what you found. This is also a good time to make a mental note of the mouth pigmentation.

How To Correctly Approach And Examine A Rottweiler

This is a dog who normally is very alert and responsive to his surroundings and the people in it. Your attitude and stance are important to the dog's acceptance of you as a complete stranger, invading his area. Approach him in a deliberate, confident and friendly manner. When first approaching, (slightly at an angle from the front) to assess head type and expression, do not stare since this can be perceived as a challenge to the dog. You can assess ear set, eyes, head proportions without staring. Ask the handler to show the dentition and then examine the body and testicles quietly and confidently with gentle firm hands. It takes very little "hands on" examination to judge a Rottweiler. Rottweilers do not require a heavy touch and, in fact, may resent it. However, the AKC does require that a judge physically examine the dog.

The DOs and DON'T s Of How To Correctly Approach, Examine And Handle A Ring Full Of Rottweilers

DO remember to give each entry the same consideration and pattern.

DO realize that large entries mean more novice handlers. Your understanding can make the novice handler want to become the pro of the future.

DO have the large classes lined-up in catalog order for your ease in checking the number in your judges book, for the ring stewards, exhibitors, and spectators ease in keeping track of the entries, to say nothing of videographers and photographers.

DO, when possible, split large classes and excuse the group not being judged from the ring. A ring full of Rottweilers gaiting next to a ring full of waiting Rottweilers can cause some unwanted disruptions of the judging process.

DO ask the handlers, when gaiting the dog to: keep their space, not run-up on the dog in front of them, and gait the dog at a moderate speed (under control at all times, your aim). Your ring is NOT the "INDY 500! "

DO respect the character of the breed when you go to approach and examine the individual dog. Not all Rottweilers enjoy being examined by a stranger, but all Rottweilers can be trained to do so. Just in case you meet that one in a thousand that is not, approach from the front, but slightly at an angle, shoulder down, at ease, yet confident. That is the submissive position which we have learned from temperament testing. You are no threat. Stand at the side of the dog when checking the teeth and body. A hand along side of his throat lets him know you are still there. Go over the dog quickly and smoothly, checking for the undercoat and the texture of the outer coat, and the testicles; remember that undercoat is greatly affected by climate.

DO ask the handler to show the bite and dentition. If the handler is having trouble, you have the option of asking to see the gait which may settle the dog down so that you can proceed with the individual examination alleviating the necessity of having to excuse a dog that could not be examined that day.

DO think in terms of a critique when studying the individual dogs. Practice in your mind articulating to yourself what you are observing.

DON'T be a "hero". If you feel the dog cannot on this day be examined safely, excuse him. If the dog is causing a continual disruption in your ring affecting the other entries, excuse him.

DON'T over examine a Rottweiler. You can see most of what you need to know.

DON'T grab head, ears, pound back, pinch thighs, pull legs out from behind or kneel in front of the dog staring at him.

DON'T bait the dog yourself with noises, food, or arm movements. The dog may be trained to focus on the handler.

DON'T reposition or stack the dog for the handler. The dog may tolerate his own handler, but not a stranger, you.

DON'T judge Rottweilers until you feel completely comfortable with the breed.

And finally, DO remember that the exhibitor, by asking for your opinion on his dog, has given you the greatest compliment you can have in the dog world. This is your ring, your domain, but also your responsibility. The "buck" ends with you, the judge.

Suggested Reading

Dogsteps by Rachel P. Elliott (Howell Book House)

Out- Friend the Rottweiler by Yrjola & Tikka (Powderhorn Press)

Rottweilers by Les Price (Howell Book House-Macmillan)

Step By Step Book About Rottweilers by Heinrich Von Beine (T.F.H.)

The Complete Rottweiler by Muriel Freeman (Howell Book House)

The Rottweiler by Jim Pettengell (Howell Book House)

The Rottweiler, An International Study Of The Breed by Dr. Dagmar Hodinar (Von Palisaden Publications)

The Rottweiler In Australia by Hall

The Ultimate Rottweiler- by Andrew H. Brace (Howell Book House - Macmillian)

The Rottweiler- by Joan Blackmore (Tetra Press)

The Rottweiler Experience by Joan R. Klem & Susan Rademacher (Howell Book House - Macmillan)

Suggested Videos

Dogsteps by Rachel P. Elliott

Let's Talk About Rottweilers by Joan Klem

The Rottweiler, The American Kennel Club video

Attention all AKC-Licensed Judges Currently Approved or Considering Application for Approval to Judge Rottweilers:

Following is the text of the American Rottweiler Club publication, "**The Rottweiler: A Judging Handbook**" The approved Breed Mentor list and list of Licensed Breeder-Judges has been omitted, but can be obtained by e-mailing Linda Michels at: adrna@ic.net

AKC-Licensed Judges may obtain, free of charge, a copy of the full publication as well as a copy of the ARC's "Illustrated Standard" and other information pertinent to the judging of Rottweilers by e-mailing your Name, Address and AKC Judge's Number to : adrna@ic.net If you do not submit your AKC Judge's Number, you will not receive the Illustrated Standard free of charge. If you are not an AKC-Licensed Judge and would like a copy of the Illustrated Standard, the cost is \$9.00 .
