

ALASKAN MALAMUTE

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2017

ORIGIN

United States of America.

UTILISATION

Sledge dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. for interest – from Wikipedia: The Alaskan Malamute]:

The Alaskan Malamute has had a prominent role with their human companions as a utilitarian dog, working, hunting, and living alongside their humans. The dogs were renowned for their excellent hunting abilities, and were used to hunt large predators, such as bears. They also aided their owners in finding seals by alerting them to seal blow-holes. The interdependent relationship between the Malamute and their dogs fostered prosperity among both, and enabled them to flourish in the inhospitable land above the Arctic Circle. For a brief period, during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, the Malamute and other sledge dogs became extremely valuable to prospectors and settlers, and were frequently crossbred with imported breeds. This dog was never destined to be a racing sled dog; it was used for heavy freighting, pulling hundreds, perhaps thousands of pounds of supplies to villages and camps in packs of at least four dogs for heavy loads. They served well in World War II, primarily as search-and-rescue dogs in Greenland, although also used as freighting and packing dogs in Europe. Losses from service in World War II all but eliminated the breed. In 1947 there were estimated to be only about 30 registered dogs left. Robert J. Zoller became involved in the breed, and took this opportunity to combine remaining strains to create what became the “Husky-Pak” line. All modern Malamutes are descended from these early strains and show combinations of their characteristics.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Alaskan Malamute, one of the oldest Arctic sledge dogs, is a powerful and substantially built dog with a deep chest and strong, well-muscled body. The Malamute stands well over the pads, and this stance gives the appearance of much activity and a proud carriage, with head erect and eyes alert, showing interest and curiosity. The head is broad. Ears are triangular and erect when alerted. The muzzle is bulky, only slightly diminishing in width from root to nose. The muzzle is not pointed or long, yet not stubby. The coat is thick, with a coarse guard coat of sufficient length to protect a woolly undercoat. Malamutes are of various colours. Face markings are a distinguishing feature. These consist of a “cap” over the head, the face either all white, or marked with a bar and/or mask. The tail is well-furred, carried over the back, and has the appearance of a waving plume. The Malamute must be a heavy-boned dog with sound legs, good feet, deep chest, and powerful shoulders, and have all of the other physical attributes necessary for the efficient performance of his job. The gait must be steady, balanced, tireless, and totally efficient. He is not intended as a racing sled dog designed to compete in speed trials. The Malamute is structured for strength and endurance, and any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with the accomplishment of this purpose, is to be considered the most serious of faults.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

Size:

There is a natural range in size in the breed. The desirable freighting sizes are:

- **Males:** 25” (approx. 63½cm) at the shoulders; 85lbs (approx. 38.5kg)
- **Females:** 23” (approx. 58½cm) at the shoulders; 75lbs (approx. 34kg).

However, size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement, and other functional attributes. When dogs are judged equal in type, proportion, movement, the dog nearest the desirable freighting size is to be preferred.

Proportion:

The depth of chest is approximately one-half the height of the dog at the shoulders, the deepest point being just behind the forelegs. The length of the body from point of shoulder to the rear point of pelvis is longer than the height of the body from ground to top of the withers.

Substance:

The body carries no excess weight, and bone is in proportion to size.

HEAD

The head is broad and deep, not coarse or clumsy, but in proportion to the size of the dog.

Expression: The expression is soft and indicates an affectionate disposition.

Skull: The skull is broad and moderately rounded between the ears, gradually narrowing and flattening on top as it approaches the eyes, rounding off to cheeks that are moderately flat. There is a slight furrow between the eyes. The topline of the skull and the topline of the muzzle show a slight break downward from a straight line as they join.

Muzzle: The muzzle is large and bulky in proportion to the size of the skull, diminishing slightly in width and depth from junction with the skull to the nose.

Nose & lips: In all coat colours except reds, the nose, lips, and eye-rim pigmentation is black. Brown is permitted in red dogs. The lighter-streaked "snow nose" is acceptable. The lips are close-fitting.

Eyes:

The eyes are obliquely placed in the skull. Eyes are brown, almond-shaped, and of medium size. Dark eyes are preferred. Blue eyes are a disqualifying fault.

Ears:

The ears are of medium size, but small in proportion to the head. The ears are triangular in shape and slightly rounded at the tips. They are set wide apart on the outside back edges of the skull in line with the upper corner of the eye, giving ears the appearance, when erect, of standing off from the skull. Erect ears point slightly forward, but when the dog is at work, the ears are sometimes folded against the skull. High-set ears are a fault.

Mouth:

The upper and lower jaws are broad with large teeth. The incisors meet with a scissor grip. Overshot or undershot is a fault.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck: The neck is strong and moderately arched.

Topline: The chest is well-developed. The body is compactly built but not short-coupled.

Body: The back is straight and gently sloping to the hips. The loins are hard and well-muscled. A long loin that may weaken the back is a fault.

Tail: The tail is moderately set and follows the line of the spine at the base. The tail is carried over the back when not working. It is not a snap tail or curled tight against the back, nor is it short, furred like a fox brush. The Malamute tail is well-furred and has the appearance of a waving plume.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders are moderately sloping; forelegs heavily boned and muscled, straight to the pasterns when viewed from the front. Pasterns are short and strong and slightly sloping when viewed from the side. The feet are of the snow-shoe type, tight, and deep, with well-cushioned pads, giving a firm, compact appearance. The feet are large, toes tight-fitting and well-arched. There is a protective growth of hair between the toes. The pads are thick and tough; toenails short and strong.

HINDQUARTERS

The rear legs are broad and heavily muscled through the thighs; stifles moderately bent; hock joints are moderately bent and well let down. When viewed from the rear, the legs stand and move true in line with the movement of the front legs, not too close or too wide. Dewclaws on the rear legs are undesirable and should be removed shortly after puppies are whelped.

COAT

The Malamute has a thick, coarse, guard coat, never long and soft. The undercoat is dense, from 1" – 2" (approx. 2.5cm – 5cm) in depth, oily, and woolly. The coarse guard coat varies in length as does the undercoat. The coat is relatively short to medium along the sides of the body, with the length of the coat increasing around the shoulders and neck, down the back, over the rump, and in the breeching and plume. Malamutes usually have a shorter and less-dense coat during the summer months. The Malamute is shown naturally. Trimming is not acceptable except to provide a clean-cut appearance of feet.

COLOUR

- The usual colours range from light grey through intermediate shadings to black, sable, and shadings of sable to red.
- The only solid colour allowable is all white.
- Colour combinations are acceptable in undercoats, points, and trimmings.

* White is always the predominant colour on underbody, parts of legs, feet, and part of face markings. A white blaze on the forehead and/or collar or a spot on the nape is attractive and acceptable.

* The Malamute is mantled, and broken colours extending over the body, or uneven splashing are undesirable.

GAIT

The gait of the Malamute is steady, balanced, and powerful. He is agile for his size and build. When viewed from the side, the hindquarters exhibit strong rear drive that is transmitted through a well-muscled loin to the forequarters. The forequarters receive the drive from the rear with a smooth reaching stride. When viewed from the front or from the rear, the legs move true in line, not too close or too wide. At a fast trot, the feet will converge toward the center-line of the body. A stilted gait, or any gait that is not completely efficient and tireless, is to be penalised.

TEMPERAMENT

The Alaskan Malamute is an affectionate, friendly dog, not a "one man" dog. He is a loyal, devoted companion, playful in invitation, but generally impressive by his dignity after maturity.

SUMMARY

Important - In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else. The degree to which a dog is penalised should depend upon the extent to which the dog deviates from the description of the ideal Malamute and the extent to which the particular fault would actually affect the working ability of the dog. The legs of the Malamute must indicate unusual strength and tremendous propelling power. Any indication of unsoundness in legs and feet, front or rear, standing or moving, is to be considered a serious fault. Faults under this provision would be splayed feet, cow-hocks, bad pasterns, straight shoulders, lack of angulation, stilted gait (or any gait that isn't balanced, strong, and steady), ranginess, shallowness, ponderousness, lightness of bone, and poor overall proportion.

FAULTS

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.

Disqualifying faults:

- Blue eyes.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 243: ALASKAN MALAMUTE

FCI Classification: Group 5 – Spitz and Primitive breeds

Section 1: Nordic Sledge dogs
Without working trial.