

NEAPOLITAN MASTIFF

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 01/02/2021

ORIGIN

Italy.

UTILISATION

Protection and guard dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Neapolitan Mastiff is a descendant of the great Roman Mastiff described by Columelle in the first century A.D. in his book “*De Re Rustica*”. Widespread all over Europe by the Roman legions, with which he has fought, he is the ancestor of numerous Mastiff breeds in other European countries. The breed has survived for many centuries in the countryside at the foot of the Vesuvius Mountain and, in general, in the region of Naples. The Neapolitan Mastiff has been re-selected since 1947, thanks to the tenacity and devotion of a group of dog lovers.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Large, heavy, and massive dog, with a bulky appearance. The length of body to exceed the height at the withers.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The length of the body is 15% more than the height at the withers.
- The ratio of skull to muzzle is as 2 : 1.
- Length of head is about $3 \frac{8}{10}$ [ed. three-eighths or slightly less than half] of the height at the withers.
- Neck is rather short.
- The circumference of the thorax is ample.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Steady and loyal, not aggressive. Guard dog of property and its inhabitants, always vigilant, intelligent, noble, and majestic

HEAD

Short and massive, with the skull wide at the level of the zygomatic arches. Ample skin with wrinkles and folds, the most typical and best-marked goes from the outer palpebral angle [ed. outer corner of the eye] down to the lip angle [ed. corner of the lip]. The upper longitudinal axes [ed. toplines] of the skull and the muzzle are parallel [ed. parallel planes].

Cranial Region:

Skull: The skull is broad and flat, particularly between the ears; seen from the front, it is slightly convex in its fore part. The zygomatic arches are very prominent, but with flat muscles. The protuberances of the frontal bones [ed. brow bones] are well-developed; the frontal furrow is marked; the occipital crest is barely visible.

Stop: Well-defined.

Facial Region:

Nose: Set in the prolongation [ed. extension] of the muzzle, must not protrude beyond the outer vertical line of the lips; must be voluminous with large, well-opened nostrils. The colour is according to colour of the coat: black for black subjects, dark grey in dogs of other colours, and chestnut for brown coats.

Muzzle: Very broad and deep; the width is about equal to the length. The length must be equal to one-third of the length of the head. The lateral sides are parallel so that, seen from the front, the shape of the muzzle is practically square. The depth of the muzzle is about twice as much as that of the length.

Lips: Fleshy, thick, and full. Upper lips, seen from the front, form an inverted “V” at their meeting point. The lower, lateral profile of the muzzle is shaped by the upper lips; their lowest part is the corner of the lips, with visible mucous membranes, situated on the vertical from the external angle of the eye [*ed. in line with the outer corner of the eye*].

Jaws and teeth: Powerful with strong jawbones and dental arches [*ed: a dental arch is either the top or bottom set of teeth*] joining perfectly. Lower jaw must be well-developed in its width. Teeth white, well-developed, regularly aligned, and complete in number. Scissor bite, i.e. upper incisors closely overlapping the lower ones in close contact, set straight to the jaw, or pincer bite, i.e. upper incisors meet edge to edge with the lower incisors. The external margin of the upper incisors must be in close contact to the internal margin of the lower incisors. Reverse scissor bite tolerated.

Eyes:

Set well apart on an equal frontal level; rather round in shape, but never protruding or set too deep. Colour of iris usually darker than coat colour, except in coats of diluted shades, where the eye colour is lighter. Skin folds never to interfere with the eyes.

Ears:

Small in relation to the size of the dog, of triangular shape, set above the zygomatic arch, flat, and laying close to the cheeks. The ears are natural.

NECK

The upper profile is slightly convex. Rather short and conical, trunk-shaped, well-muscled. Lower profile of the neck is well-endowed with loose skin that forms a double dewlap, well-separated, but not exaggerated; dewlap starts at level of the lower jaw and does not reach below middle of the neck.

BODY

The length of the body exceeds the height at the withers by 15%.

Topline: Topline of the back is straight.

Withers: Wide, long, and not very prominent.

Back: Broad and, in length, about one-third of the height at the withers. The lumbar region must be harmoniously united with the back; muscled, and well-developed in width.

Loin: Broad, strong, and well-muscled. The hipbones are prominent to the extent of reaching the top lumbar line.

Chest: Broad with well-developed chest muscles. The ribcage is ample, with long and well-sprung ribs. The circumference of the thorax is ample. The tip of the sternum is situated at the level of point of shoulder.

TAIL

Broad and thick at the root; strong, tapering slightly towards the tip. In length, it reaches the articulation of the hock [*ed. hock joint*]. At rest, it is carried hanging and curved in sabre fashion, in action lifted horizontally or only slightly higher than the topline.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: The forelegs, from the ground to the point of the elbow, seen in profile and from the front, are vertical, with strong bone structure in proportion to the size of the dog.

Shoulder: Long and well laid back, the muscles are well-developed, long, and well-defined.

Upper arm: Well-angulated to shoulder blade and with significant musculature.

Elbow: Must be parallel to the median plane of the body, i.e. neither turned in nor out.

Forearm: Length is almost the same as that of the upper arm. Placed in perfect vertical position. Strong bone structure with lean and well-developed muscles.

Carpus (wrist): Broad, lean, and without nodosity [*ed. having many nodes or protuberances*], continues the vertical line of the forearm.

Metacarpus (pastern): Continues the vertical line of the forearm. Moderate angulation and length.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: On the whole, they must be powerful and sturdy, in proportion with the size of the dog and capable of the required propulsion in movement.

Upper thigh: In length, measuring one-third of the height at the withers, and the obliqueness is about 60°.

Broad, with thick, prominent, and clearly distinct muscles. The thighbone and the hipbone (femur and coxal) form an angle of 90°.

Stifle (knee): The femoro-tibial angle is about 110° – 115°.

Lower thigh: Length is slightly inferior to that of the thigh, and of an obliqueness of 50° – 55°, with strong bone structure and well-visible muscles.

Hock joint: The tibio-tarsal articulation form an angle of 140° – 145°.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Strong and lean, almost cylindrical in shape, perfectly straight and parallel, and fairly low-set.

FEET

Forefeet:

Of round shape, large, toes well-arched and well-knit. The pads are hard and well-pigmented. The nails are strong, curved, and of a dark colour.

Hind feet:

Smaller than the forefeet, round, with well-knit toes. Pads dry, hard, and pigmented. Nails strong, curved, and of dark colour.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

This constitutes a typical characteristic of the breed. At the walk, the gait is of feline type, like the steps of a lion. It is slow, and also resembles that of a bear. The trot is distinguished by a strong thrust of the hindquarters and a good extension of the forequarters. The dog rarely gallops; usual gait is walk and trot. Pacing is tolerated.

SKIN

Thick, abundant, and loose all over the body, particularly on the head, where it forms numerous folds and wrinkles, and at the lower part of the neck, where it forms a double dewlap. Never in abundance to the extent to interfere with the dogs' health and well-being.

COAT

Hair short and hard, dense, of the same length all over. Uniform short length that measures 1.5cm maximum. Must not show any trace of fringing.

COLOUR

Preferred colours are:

- Grey, lead-grey and black, but also brown, fawn and deep fawn (red deer).
- All these colours may be brindled
- Hazel, dove-grey, and isabella shades are tolerated.

* Permissible is a little white patch on the chest and/or on the tip of the toes.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 65cm – 75cm (approx. 25½" – 29½").

Females: 60cm – 68cm (approx. 23½" – 27").

Weight:

Males: 60kg – 70kg

Females: 50kg – 60kg

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

Note: Cropped ears – KUSA Schedule 2 Regulation 7:

“Any dog with cropped ears born within the jurisdiction of the KUSA, imported into it and cropped within it, shall not be registered or recorded by the Kennel Union, and if any such dog is registered or recorded in contravention of this Regulation, upon discovery, its registration or recording shall be cancelled.

7.1. Any dog with ears cropped before importation into the KUSA area of jurisdiction is not eligible for competition at any Kennel Union event.”

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.

Severe faults:

- Pronounced undershot bite.
- Tail carried too high.
- Size bigger or smaller than the limits allowed.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Accentuated convergence or divergence of the cranio-facial axes.
- Topline of muzzle concave or convex or very aquiline (Roman nose).
- Total depigmentation of nose.
- Overshot bite.

- Entropion / ectropion.
- Wall eye; total de-pigmentation of both rims of eyelids; cross-eyed.
- Absence of wrinkles, folds and dewlap.
- Absence of tail whether congenital or artificial.
- Extensive white patches; white markings on the head.

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FCI Standard No 197: MASTINO NAPOLITANO (NEAPOLITAN MASTIFF)

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid type dogs, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs

Section 2.1. Molossian breeds; Mastiff type
Without Working Trial