

CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/07/2025

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Companion and Toy.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. for interest – from Wikipedia: The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel]:

During the early part of the 18th century, John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough, kept red and white King Charles-type Spaniels for hunting. The duke recorded that they were able to keep up with a trotting horse. His estate was named Blenheim, in honour of his victory at the Battle of Blenheim. Because of this influence, the red and white variety of the King Charles Spaniel and, thus, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel became known as the Blenheim. The Second World War caused a drastic setback to the emerging breed, with the vast majority of breeding stock destroyed because of wartime hardship and food shortages. Following the war, few dogs survived as the new beginning from which all present-day Cavaliers descend. And in 1945, the Kennel Club first recognised the breed in its own right as the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Active, graceful, and well-balanced, with gentle expression.

CHARACTERISTICS

Sporting, affectionate, absolutely fearless.

TEMPERAMENT

Gay, friendly, non aggressive; no tendency to nervousness.

HEAD

Skull almost flat between ears. Stop shallow. Length from base of stop to tip of nose about 3.8cm (approx. 1½"). Nostrils black and well developed without flesh marks, muzzle well-tapered. Lips well-developed but not pendulous. Face well filled below eyes. Any tendency to snipeyness undesirable.

Eyes:

Large, dark, round but not prominent; spaced well apart.

Ears:

Long, set high, with plenty of feather.

Mouth:

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK

Moderate length, slightly arched.

FOREQUARTERS

Chest moderate, shoulders well laid back; straight legs moderately boned.

BODY

Short-coupled with good spring of rib. Level back.

HINDQUARTERS

Legs with moderate bone; well-turned stifle – no tendency to cow hocks or sickle hocks.

FEET

Compact, cushioned, and well-feathered.

TAIL

Length of tail in balance with body, well set on, carried happily, but never much above the level of the back. Docking previously optional, when no more than one-third was to be removed.

[*refer note below]

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free-moving and elegant in action, plenty of drive from behind. Forelegs and hind legs move parallel when viewed from in front and behind.

COAT

Long, silky, free from curl. Slight wave permissible. Plenty of feathering. Totally free from trimming.

COLOUR

Recognised colours are:

- **Black and tan:** Raven black with tan markings above the eyes, on cheeks, inside ears, on chest, legs, and underside of tail. Tan should be bright. White marks undesirable.
- **Ruby:** Whole-coloured, rich red. White markings undesirable.
- **Blenheim:** Rich chestnut markings well broken up, on pearly white ground. Markings evenly divided on head, leaving room between ears for much valued lozenge mark or spot (a unique characteristic of the breed). *[ed. Also known as “the queen’s thumbprint”, the lozenge is desirable, but not essential.]*
- **Tricolour:** Black and white well spaced, broken up, with tan markings over eyes, cheeks, inside ears, inside legs, and on underside of tail.

* Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Weight:

5.4kg – 8.2kg.

A small, well-balanced dog well within these weights desirable.

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.

***Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked or natural. Under no circumstances are Judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked or natural tails, and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.**

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.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 136: CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL

FCI Classification: Group 9 – Companion and Toy Dogs.

Section 7. 1. English Toy Spaniels
Without working trial.