

DOBERMANN

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 01/08/2022

ORIGIN

Germany.

UTILISATION

Companion, protection, and working dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Dobermann is the only German breed that bears the name of its original breeder, Friedrich Louis Dobermann (1834 – 1894). He was believed to be a tax collector, offal abattoir manager (knacker), and a part-time dog catcher, legally allowed to catch all stray dogs. He bred animals from this reservoir that were particularly sharp. The so-called “Butcher’s dogs”, which were already considered a relatively pure breed at that time, played a most important role in the origination of the Dobermann breed. These dogs were an early type of Rottweiler, mixed with a type of Shepherd dog that existed in Thüringen as a black dog with rust red markings. Mr Dobermann bred this mixture of dogs in the 1870s – not only alert, but highly protective working and house dogs, often used as guard and police dogs as well as controlling large vermin. Their extensive use in police work led to the nickname “Gendarme dog”. In these circumstances, it was a matter of course that the Dobermann was recognised officially as a Police Dog by the beginning of the 20th century. The Dobermann is a medium-sized, powerful, muscular dog. Despite his substance, he shall be elegant and noble, which will be evident in his body line. He must be exceptionally suitable as a companion, protection, and working dog, and also as a family dog.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Dobermann is of medium size, strong, and muscularly built. Through the elegant lines of its body, its proud stature, and its expression of determination, it conforms to the ideal picture of a dog.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The body of the Dobermann appears to be almost square, particularly in males.
- The length of the body measured from the tip of breast to the point of the buttock shall not be more than 5% longer than the height from the withers to the ground in males, and 10% in females.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

The disposition of the Dobermann is friendly and calm; very devoted to the family. Medium temperament and medium sharpness (alertness) is desired. A medium threshold of irritation is required with a good contact to the owner. Easy to train, the Dobermann enjoys working, and shall have good working ability, courage, and hardness. The particular values of self-confidence and intrepidity are required, and also adaptability and attention to fit the social environment.

HEAD

Cranial Region:

Skull: Strong and in proportion to the body. Seen from the top, the head is shaped in the form of a blunt wedge. Viewed from the front the crown line shall be almost level and not dropping off to the ears. The muzzle line extends almost straight to the topline of the skull that falls, gently rounded, into the neckline. The superciliary ridge is well-developed without protruding. The forehead furrow is still visible. The occiput shall not be conspicuous. Seen from the front and the top, the sides of the head must not bulge. The slight bulge between the rear of the upper jawbone and the cheekbone shall be in harmony with the total length of the head. The head muscles shall be well-developed.

Stop: Shall be slight but visibly developed.

Facial Region:

Nose: Nostrils well-developed, broader than round, with large openings without overall protrusion. Black in black dogs; in brown dogs, corresponding lighter shades.

Muzzle: The muzzle must be in the right proportion with the upper head and must be strongly developed. The muzzle shall have depth. The mouth opening shall be wide, reaching to the molars. A good muzzle width must also be present on the upper and lower incisor area.

Lips: They shall be tight and lie close to the jaw that will ensure a tight closure of the mouth. The pigment of the gum to be dark; in brown dogs a corresponding lighter shade.

Jaws and teeth: Powerful, broad upper and lower jaw, scissor bite, 42 teeth correctly placed, and normal size.

Eyes:

Medium-sized, oval, and dark in colour. Lighter shades are permitted for brown dogs. Close-lying eyelids. Eyelids shall be covered with hair.

Ears:

The ears are left natural and of an appropriate size; they are set on either side at the highest point of the skull and are ideally lying close to the cheeks.

NECK

The neck must have a good length and be in proportion to the body and the head. It is dry and muscular. Its outline rises gradually and is softly curved. Its carriage is upright and shows much nobility.

BODY

Withers: Shall be pronounced in height and length, especially in males, and thereby determine the slope of the topline from the withers to the croup.

Back: Short and firm, of good width, and well-muscled.

Loin: Of good width and well-muscled. The female can be slightly longer in loin because of the required space for suckling offspring.

Croup: It shall fall slightly, hardly perceptible from sacrum to the root of the tail, and appears well-rounded, being neither straight nor noticeably sloping, of good width and well-muscled.

Chest: Length and depth of chest must be in the right proportion to the body length. The depth, with slightly arched ribs, should be approximately 50% the height of the dog at the withers. The chest has good width with especially well-developed forechest.

Underline and belly: From the bottom of the breastbone to the pelvis the underline is noticeably tucked-up.

TAIL

[ed. Previously customarily docked.]

The tail is left natural and is ideally carried high in a slight curve.

[*refer note below]

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: The front legs, as seen from all sides, are almost straight, vertical to the ground and strongly developed.

Shoulder: The shoulder blade lies close against the chest, and both sides of the shoulder blade edge are well-muscled and reach over the top of the thoracic vertebrae, slanting as much as possible and set well back. The angle to the horizontal is approximately 50°.

Upper arm: Good length, well-muscled.

Elbow: Close in, not turned out.

Forearm: Strong and straight. Well-muscled. Length in harmony with the whole body.

Carpus (wrist): Strong.

Metacarpus (pastern): Bones strong. Straight seen from the front. Seen from the side, only slightly sloping.

Forefeet: The feet are short and tight. The toes are arched towards the top (cat-like). Nails short and black.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Seen from the rear the Dobermann, looks, because of his well-developed pelvic muscles in hips and croup, wide and rounded-off. The muscles running from the pelvis towards the thigh and lower thigh result in good width development, as well as in the thigh area, in the knee joint area, and at the lower thigh. The strong hind legs are straight and stand parallel.

Upper thigh: Good length and width, well-muscled. Good angulation to the hip joint. Angulation to the horizontal approximately between 80° – 85°.

Stifle (knee): The knee joint is strong and is formed by the thigh and lower thigh, as well as the kneecap.

Lower thigh: Medium length and in harmony with the total length of the hindquarter.

Hock joint: Medium strength and parallel. The lower thigh is joined to the metatarsal at the hock joint.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): It is short and stands vertical to the ground.

FEET

Forefeet:

The feet are short and tight. The toes are arched towards the top (cat-like). Nails short black.

Hind feet:

Like the forefeet, the toes of the hind feet are short, arched and closed. Nails short, black.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

The gait is of special importance to both the working ability as well as the exterior appearance. The gait is elastic, elegant, agile, free, and ground-covering. The forelegs reach out as far as possible. The hindquarter gives far-reaching and necessary elastic drive. The foreleg of one side and the hind leg of the other side move forward at the same time. There should be good stability of the back, the ligaments, and the joints.

SKIN

The skin fits closely all over and has good pigmentation.

COAT

The hair is short, hard, and dense. It lies tight and smooth, and is equally distributed over the whole surface. Undercoat is not allowed.

COLOUR

The Dobermann is bred in two colour varieties:

- **Black or brown** with rust red, clearly defined, clear markings (tan markings).

* Tan markings are on the muzzle as a spot on the cheeks and the top of the eyebrow; on the throat; two spots on the forechest; on the metacarpus, metatarsus, and feet; on the inner side of the hind thigh; on the forearms, and under the tail.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 68cm – 72cm (approx. 26½" – 28½").

Females: 63cm – 68cm (approx. 25" – 26½").

Medium size desirable.

Weight:

Males: about 40kg – 45kg.

Females: about 32kg – 35kg.

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 with the exception of the World Dog Show (WDS) and FCI Section Shows, the latter restriction applying to all dogs born after 1 January 2025. At shows where this restriction does not apply, i.e. shows other than the WDS or FCI Section Shows, 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.

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.

- Lack of sexual dimorphism; little substance; too light; too heavy; too leggy; weak bones.
- Head too heavy, too narrow, too short, too long, too much or too little stop; ram's nose, bad slope of the topline of the skull; weak lower jaw; round or slit eyes; light eye; cheeks too heavy; loose flews; eyes too open or too deep set; ear-set too high or too low; open mouth angle.
- Back not straight; sway back; roach back; insufficient depth or width of chest; tail-set too low; sloping croup; too little or too much tuck-up.
- Too little angulation in forequarters; hindquarters with too little or too much angulation; loose elbow; feet too close together or too wide apart; cow-hocks, spread hocks; open or soft paws, crooked toes; pale nails.
- Tan markings too light or not sharply defined; smudged markings; mask too dark; big black spot on the legs;

- chest markings hardly visible or too large; hair long, soft, curly, or dull. Thin coat; bald patches.
- Deviation of size up to 2cm from the standard should result in a lowering of the quality grading.
- Gait that is not harmonious, in particular pacing.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Yellow eyes (bird of prey eye); different-coloured eyes.
- Overshot; level bite; undershot; missing teeth according to the formula.
- White spots.
- Visible undercoat.
- Dogs that deviate more than 2cm over or under the standard.

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FCI Standard No 143: DOBERMANN

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

Section 1. Pinscher and Schnauzer type

With Working Trial