



Official Breed Standard

Mastino Napoletano (Neapolitan Mastiff) (Working Group)

A Breed Standard is the guideline which 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 which could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.

UTILIZATION: 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.

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 skull-muzzle is as 2 to

1. Length of head is about 3.8/10 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 down to the lip angle. The upper longitudinal axes of the skull and the muzzle are parallel.

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 are well developed; the frontal furrow is marked; the occipital crest is barely visible. Stop: Well defined.

FACIAL REGION: Nose: Set in the prolongation 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 a 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. Jaws/Teeth: Powerful with strong jawbones and dental arches 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 scissors bite tolerated. Eyes: Set well apart on an equal frontal level; rather round in shape but never protruding or too deep set. 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 which 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 by 15% the height at the withers. Top line: Top line of the back is straight. Withers: Wide, long and not very prominent. Back: Broad and in length about 1/3 of the height at the withers. The lumbar region must be harmoniously united with the back and 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. At rest it is carried hanging and curved in sabre fashion, in action lifted horizontally or only slightly higher than the top line.

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 with 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, continues the vertical line of the forearm. Metacarpus (Pastern): Continues the vertical line of the forearm. Moderate angulation and length. 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.

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. Thigh: In length measuring 1/3 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. 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 wellbeing.

COAT

Hair: Short and hard, dense, of the same length all over. Uniform short length that measures 1.5 cm 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). Permissible is a

little white patch on the chest and/or on the tip of the toes. All these colours may be brindled; hazel, dove-grey and isabella shades are tolerated.

SIZE AND WEIGHT: Height at the withers: Males: 65–75cm.
Females: 60–68cm.

Males: 60–70kg. Females: 50–60kg.

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.

SEVERE FAULTS:

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

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- 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.

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.



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