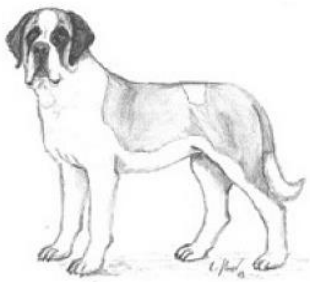
KUSA

Official Breed Standard

# Saint Bernard (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**: Companion-, watch- and farm dog.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY**: At the height of the Great St. Bernard Pass, 2469 metres above sea level, a hospice was founded by monks in the 11th century as a place of refuge for travellers and pilgrims. There, large mountain dogs have been kept since the middle of the 17th century for guarding and protection. The existence of such dogs has been documented pictorially since 1695 and in a written document at the hospice in the year 1707. The dogs were soon in use as companion dogs and especially as rescue dogs for travellers lost in snow and fog. The chronicles about the numerous human lives saved by these dogs from the « white death », published in many languages, and the verbal reports of the soldiers who crossed the pass with Bonaparte's army in 1800, spread the fame of the St. Bernard, called Barry-dog at that time, throughout Europe during the 19th century. The legendary dog « Barry » became the epitome of the rescue dog. The direct ancestors of the St. Bernard were the large farm dogs common in that region. Within a few generations and aiming to a defined ideal type, these dogs were developed to the present day type of breed.
Heinrich Schumacher from Holligen near Bern was the first who began to issue genealogical documents for his dogs in 1867.
In February 1884 the "Schweizerisches Hundestammbuch"(SHSB), the Swiss Dog Stud Book, was started. The very first entry was the St. Bernard "Leon", and the following 28 registrations also concerned St. Bernards. On the 15th March 1884, the Swiss St. Bernards-Club was founded in Basle. On the occasion of an international Canine Congress on June 2nd 1887, the St. Bernard dog was officially recognized as a Swiss breed and the breed standard was declared as binding. Since then, the St. Bernard has been regarded as the Swiss national dog.

**GENERAL APPEARANCE**:
There are two varieties of the St. Bernard:
· Short-haired variety (double coat, "Stockhaar"):
· Longhaired variety.
Both varieties are of considerable size and of impressive general appearance. They have a balanced, powerful, sturdy, muscular body with impressive head and an alert facial expression.

**IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS**:
· Ideal relation of height at withers to length of body (measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of buttocks) = 9 : 10.
· Ideal relation of height at withers to depth of chest see sketch below**.**
· The total length of the head is slightly more than one third of the height at withers.
· The relation of depth of muzzle (measured at its root) to length of muzzle is almost 2:1.
· Length of muzzle to be slightly longer than one third of the total length of the head.

**BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT**:
Friendly by nature. Temperament calm to lively; watchful.

**HEAD**: Powerful, imposing and very expressive.
CRANIAL REGION:
Skull: Strong, broad, seen in profile and from the front slightly rounded. When the dog is alert, the set-on of the ears and the top of the skull form a straight line, which slopes at the sides in a gentle curve to the strongly developed high cheekbones. Forehead falling away steeply towards the muzzle. Occipital bone only moderately developed, superciliary ridges strongly developed. The frontal furrow, which starts at the base of the forehead, is distinctly developed and runs up right in the middle of the skull.
The skin of the forehead forms slight wrinkles above the eyes that converge towards the frontal furrow. When the dog is at attention, they are moderately visible; otherwise they are rather inconspicuous.
Stop: Distinctly pronounced.
FACIAL REGION:
Nose: Black, broad and square. Nostrils well opened.
Muzzle: Of even width. Nasal bridge straight, with slight groove.
Lips: Edge of lips black pigmented. Flews of upper jaw strongly developed, firm and not too pendulous, forming a wide curve towards the nose. Corners of mouth remain visible.
Jaws/Teeth: Upper and lower jaw strong, broad, equal in length.
Well developed, regular and complete scissor or pincer bite. Close fitting undershot mouth without any space between the lower and the upper incisors acceptable. Absence of PM 1 (premolar 1) and M3 tolerated.
Eyes: Of medium size. Colour dark brown to nut-brown.
Moderately deep set with a friendly expression. Natural tightness of lids desired. **A very** small angular fold on the lower lids with the jaws only very slightly visible as well as a small fold on the upper lids are permitted. Eye rims completely pigmented.
Ears: Of medium size, set on high and wide. Strongly developed burrs. Flaps pliable, triangular with rounded tips. The rear edges slightly standing off, the front edges lying closely to the cheeks.
**NECK**: Strong and of sufficient length. Dewlap and loose skin on the neck moderately developed.

**BODY**:
General appearance: General appearance imposing, balanced, impressive and well muscled.
Withers: Well defined.
Back: Broad, strong, firm. Topline straight and horizontal up to the loins.
Croup: Long, hardly sloping, merging gently with the root of the tail.
Chest: Brisket moderately deep with well sprung ribs, but not barrelshaped.
Not projecting below elbow level.
Underline and belly: Slight tuck up towards rear.
**TAIL**: Set-on broad and strong. Tail long and heavy. The last vertebra reaching at least to the hock joint. When in repose, the tail hangs straight down or slightly upturned in the lower third. When animated, it is carried higher.
**LIMBS**
FOREQUARTERS:
General appearance: Forelegs straight and parallel seen from the front. Standing moderately broad.
Shoulder: Shoulder blades oblique, muscular and well attached to the chest wall.
Upper arm: Longer than the shoulder blade. Angle between shoulder blade and upper arm not too blunt.
Elbow: Close fitting.
Forearm: Straight, strong in bone, with lean musculature.

Metacarpus (Pasterns): Seen from the front vertical in prolongation of the forearms; slightly oblique seen from the side.
Forefeet: Broad, with strong, tight, well arched toes.
HINDQUARTERS:
General appearance: Muscular with moderate angulation. Seen from the back, hind legs are parallel, not standing closely together.
Thigh: Strong, muscular, broad.

Stifle (Knee): Well angulated, turning neither in nor out.
Lower thigh: Slanting and rather long.
Hock joint: Slightly angulated, firm.
Metatarsus (Rear pastern): Straight and parallel when seen from behind.
Hind feet: Broad, with strong, tight, well arched toes. Dewclaws tolerated if they do not hinder the movement.
**GAIT / MOVEMENT**: Harmonious far reaching movement with good drive from the hindquarters, the back remaining stable and firm. Front and hind feet move forward in a straight line.
**COAT**
Hair:
· Shorthaired variety (Stockhaar, double coat): Topcoat dense, smooth; close lying and coarse. Plenty of undercoat. Thighs with slight breeches. Tail covered with dense hair.
· Longhaired variety: Topcoat straight, of medium length with plenty of undercoat. Short hair on face and ear; hair over the haunches and the croup usually somewhat wavy. Front legs feathered. Thighs with good breeches. Bushy tail.
Colour: Primary colour white with smaller or larger **clear red** patches (splash-coated dogs) up to an unbroken **clear to dark red mantle** covering back and flanks (mantle dogs). A broken reddishbrown mantle is of equal value. A brindle reddish-brown colour permissible. Brownish-yellow tolerated. Dark shadings on head desirable. Slight touch of black **shading** on body tolerated.
Required white markings: Chest, feet, tip of tail, muzzle band, blaze and patch on neck.
Desirable markings: White collar. Symmetrical dark mask.

**SIZE**:
Height at the withers: For males minimum 70 cm,
For females minimum 65 cm.
For males maximum 90 cm,
For females maximum 80 cm.
Dogs which exceed the maximum height will not be penalised, provided their general appearance is balanced and their movement is sound.
**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.
· Lack of sexual characteristics.
· Unbalanced general appearance.
· Muzzle too short or too long.
· Flews of the lower jaw turning outwards.
· Missing teeth other than PM 1 (premolar 1) and M3. Small teeth (especially incisors).
· Slightly undershot mouth.
· Light eyes.
· Eyelids too loose.
· Sway back or roach back.
· Croup higher than withers or falling away.
· Tail carried curled on the back.

· Absence of required markings.
· Faulty movement.
· Curly coat.
· Incomplete or totally absent pigmentation on nose leather, around the nose, on the lips or the eyelids.
· Faulty primary colour e.g. reddish-brown dots or ticks in the white.

**SEVERE FAULTS**:
· Too short legs in relation to size (short-legged).
· Heavy folds on head and neck.
· Crooked or severely turned out front legs.
· Poorly angulated, open-hocked or cow-hocked hindquarters.

**ELIMINATING FAULTS**:
· Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
· Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
· **Weak temperament**
· Overshot mouth, distinctly undershot mouth.
· Wall eye.
· Ectropion, entropion.
· Solid white or solid reddish-brown coat (absence of the primary colour).
· Coat of any other colour **as well as flesh coloured nostrils (nostrils without pigmentation)**
· Height at withers below minimum size.

**N.B**.:
· Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum (this expression is obligatory in every standard).
· Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

**The latest amendments are in bold characters.**

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FCI Standard No. 61 (Grp 2)
03.06.2016
Most recent changes to this Standard has an effective date of 01.02.2017

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