KUSA

Rhodesian Ridgeback (Hound 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.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Rhodesian Ridgeback is presently the only registered breed indigenous to southern Africa. Its forbears can be traced to the Cape Colony of southern Africa where they crossed with the early pioneers' dogs and the semi domesticated, ridged, Hottentot hunting dogs. Hunting mainly in groups of two or three, the original function of the Rhodesian Ridgeback, or Lion Dog, was to track game, especially lion, and with great agility, keep it at bay until the arrival of the hunter. The original standard, which was drafted by F.R.Barnes, in Bulawayo, Rhodesia, in 1922, was based on that of the Dalmatian and was approved by the South African Kennel Union in 1926.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Rhodesian Ridgeback should represent a well balanced, strong, muscular, agile and active dog, symmetrical in outline, and capable of great endurance with a fair amount of speed. The emphasis is on agility, elegance and soundness with no tendency towards massiveness. The peculiarity of the breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge is the escutcheon of the breed. The ridge must be clearly defined, symmetrical and tapering towards the haunch. It must start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to the hip (haunches) bones. The ridge must contain only two crowns, identical and opposite each other. The lower edges of the crowns must not extend further down the ridge than one third of its length. A good average width of the ridge is 5cm (2ins).

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT

Dignified, intelligent, aloof with strangers, but showing no aggression or shyness.

HEAD

CRANIAL REGION

Skull

Should be of a fair length (width of head between ears, distance from occiput to stop,

stop to end of nose, should be equal), the skull flat and broad between the ears and the head should be free from wrinkles when in repose.

Stop

The stop should be reasonably well defined and not in one straight line from the nose to the occipital bone.

FACIAL REGION

Nose

The nose should be black or brown. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown nose by amber eyes.

Muzzle

The muzzle should be long, deep and powerful.

Lips

The lips should be clean, closely fitting the jaws.

Mouth

Jaws strong, with a perfect and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. The teeth must be well developed, especially the canines or holders.

Cheeks

Cheeks should be clean.

Eyes

Should be moderately well apart, round bright and sparkling, with intelligent expression, their colour harmonising with the colour of the coat.

Ears

Should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at base, and gradually tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head.

Neck

Should be fairly long, strong and free from throatiness.

BODY

Back

Powerful.

Loins

Strong, muscular and slightly arched, powerful.

Chest

Should not be too wide but very deep and capacious and brisket should reach to the elbow.

Forechest

Should be visible when viewed from the side.

Ribs

Moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel hoops.

Tail

Should be strong at the root and gradually tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should be of moderate length. It should not be inserted too high nor too low, and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled.

LIMBS

Forequarters

The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong and well boned, with the elbows close to the body. When viewed from the side, the forelegs should be wider than when viewed from the front. Pasterns should be strong with slight spring.

Shoulders

The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed.

Feet

The feet should be compact and round, with well arched toes, and tough elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads.

Hindquarters

In the hind legs the muscles should be clean, well defined, good turn of stifle and strong hocks well let down.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

Straight forward, free and active.

COAT

Hair should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance, but neither woolly nor silky.

COLOUR

Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes is permissible, but excessive white hairs here, on belly, or above toes is undesirable. A dark muzzle and ears permissible. Excessive black hairs throughout the coat are highly undesirable.

SIZE

The desirable heights are:

Dogs : 63cm (25ins) to 69cm (27ins)

Bitches : 61cm (24ins) to 66cm (26ins)

WEIGHT

The desirable weights are:

Dogs : 36.5kg (80lbs)

Bitches : 32 kg (70lbs)

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.

NOTE

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Kennel Union of Southern Africa/Zimbabwe Kennel Club

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