

SCHIPPERKE

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 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

Belgium.

UTILISATION

Small guardian and companion dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 83]

In the Flemish dialect, Schipperke means "little shepherd". The common ancestor of the Belgian Shepherds and the Schipperke was probably a sheepdog called Leuvenaar, an early breed, usually rather small and black. The Schipperke's origins go back to the 17th century. About 1690, the Schipperke was the favourite dog of working people, and cobblers, from the St.Gery quarter of Brussels, used to organise competitions to show off the intricately worked brass collars with which they adorned their dogs. Its tail was completely docked, a fashion that seems to have existed since the 15th century. It was renowned as a catcher of mice, rats, moles, and other vermin. The Schipperke was shown for the first time in 1882 in the town of Spa. It became fashionable thanks to Queen Marie-Henriette of Belgium. It was introduced into Great Britain and the U.S.A. in 1887. The first standard was drawn up in 1888 by the breed club, founded that year, which is the oldest breed club in Belgium. Over the years, great efforts have had to be made to unify the type. Indeed at that time, there was discussion about the different varieties coming from Anvers, Louvain, and Brussels.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Small, cobby, active dog, with sharp, foxy expression.

CHARACTERISTICS

Intensely lively and alert.

TEMPERAMENT

Amenable, intelligent, and faithful.

HEAD

Skull not round, but fairly broad, flat, with little stop. Muzzle moderate in length, fine but not weak, well-filled under eyes. Nose black and small.

Eyes:

Dark brown, more oval than round, not full; bright, most expressive.

Ears:

Moderate length, not too broad at base, tapering to a point. Carried stiffly erect and strong enough not to be bent otherwise than lengthways.

Mouth:

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

NECK

Strong and full, rather short, set broad on shoulders, slightly arched.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders muscular and sloping. Legs perfectly straight, well under the body, bone in proportion to the body.

BODY

Chest broad and deep in brisket. Back short, straight, and strong. Loins powerful, well drawn up from brisket.

HINDQUARTERS

Lighter compared with forequarters; muscular and well-developed thighs; well-rounded rump. Legs strong, muscular, hocks well let down.

FEET

Small, cat-like, and standing well on the toes.

TAIL

Previously customarily docked. Full length tail, tightly curled, carried over the back, well covered with hair. May be born visibly tailless or with partial length fully coated tail.

- **Docked:** Very short.

[*refer note below]

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Short, brisk stride, moving true fore and aft.

COAT

Abundant, dense and harsh; smooth on head, ears, and legs; lying close on back and side; erect and thick round neck, forming a mane and frill; with good culottes on the back of thighs.

COLOUR

Black – jet black with black nose.

Cream – range from pale ivory through shades of cream, fawn and gold to light red. Nose may be black or dark brown.

Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Weight:

About 5.5kg – 7.5kg. (12-16 lbs)

***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.



When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 83: SCHIPPERKE

FCI Classification: Group 1 – Sheepdogs and Cattle dogs (except Swiss Cattle dogs).

Section 2.2. Sheepdogs.

Without working trial.