THE FIELD SPANIEL:

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE BREED STANDARD



Courtesy of The Field Spaniel Society of America

The Field Spaniel: An Illustrated Guide to the Breed Standard

No part of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the Secretary of the Field Spaniel Society of America.

Publication and Illustrations Copyright 2018 by the Field Spaniel Society of America.

Field Spaniel Society of America (FSSA) Breed Standard was approved by the American Kennel Club on September 14, 1998.

Illustrations by Marcia Schlehr.

Contents

Introduction	4
Acknowledgments	5
Breed History	6
General Appearance	8
Size, Proportion, and Substance	10
Head	13
Neck, Topline, and Body	19
Forequarters	22
Hindquarters	25
Coat	27
Color	29
Gait	35
Temperament	37

Introduction

The Field Spaniel Society of America is pleased to present "*The Field Spaniel: An Illustrated Guide to the Breed Standard.*" This publication is intended as an educational supplement for Judges. However, we expect that breeders, exhibitors, and fanciers of the breed will also find it a useful tool in understanding our breed. Both our Breed Standard and the FSSA's accepted *Explanatory Wording* of the Breed Standard are presented on the following pages.

For ease of use and clarity for the reader, the FSSA Breed Standard is presented on a colored background. The Explanatory Wording (as approved by the FSSA Board of Directors) is presented on a white background and is shown for the reader's clarification on finer points of assessing the breed.

Acknowledgments

This booklet has been prepared by the Field Spaniel Society of America's Illustrated Standard Committee. All material presented here has been approved by the Field Spaniel Society of America's Board of Directors.

Past and present members of the Illustrated Standard Committee include:

- Lori Carver
- Suzanne Fernau
- Lynn Finney
- Becki Jo Hirschy
- Michael Roehrs
- Shula Shipton

Other contributors to this project include:

- Shawne Gamroth: Graphics
- Cynthia McGuire: Graphics and Design
- Joanne Roehrs: Proof-reading and Editing
- Marcia Schlehr: Illustrations Artist

Breed History

The Field Spaniel has a long and rich history in this country. Field Spaniels were one of the first breeds to be registered by the American Kennel Club. This breed's participation in dog shows predates the founding of the American Kennel Club in 1884.

The Field Spaniel was developed from a combination of larger black Spaniels with longer Sussex Spaniels and, perhaps the Norfolk Spaniel, English Springer Spaniel, and the Bassett Hound. They were introduced in matings to create the refined head and larger, longer body that became popular in the show rings at that time. In the early days, Cockers and Fields were often interbred. The litter was separated by the land spaniel classification they most resembled physically. Smaller dogs were known as Cocker Spaniels, and larger dogs designated as Field Spaniels.

By the late 1800's, as dog shows grew in popularity, spaniels were more thoughtfully divided into categories according to carefully designed breed standards. The handsome Field Spaniel rose in appeal at dog shows, but fell victim to a focus on aesthetics rather than utility. By the 1890s, the Field Spaniel body was excessively long and low, but it's favor passed by 1900. A few dedicated breeders worked to re-establish the Field Spaniel as a functional dog - shorter in length and neither low or up on leg. While successful in this pursuit, the breed never regained its former acclaim. The world focus shifted to the world war at hand.

In the 1960's, a few remaining dedicated breeders in England rallied their efforts to save the breed from extinction. A Field Spaniel had not been registered in the United States' studbooks since 1942. Dick Squier and Carl Tuttle imported three representatives of the breed

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Breed History

from England in 1967 to begin the revival of the breed here. Those three siblings (and later a black dog found in Canada) formed the "gene puddle" that is the gene pool of the Field Spaniel we know and love today.

The Field Spaniel Society of America was formed in 1978, and today includes a well-established group of breeders from across the country. Members strive to promote the breed as it was intended by maintaining both form and function. The Field Spaniel is a sporting spaniel able to keenly work a day in the field and provide loyal companionship in the home. This breed is structurally sound with no divergence among working dogs and bench (show) dogs. The Club's commitment to the breed is for it to remain as such. The Field Spaniel is a solidly built dog, which displays a vision of nobility and high breeding, never overdone or extreme, truly a case of beauty and utility combined.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

General Appearance

The Field Spaniel is a combination of beauty and utility. It is a well-balanced, substantial hunter-companion of medium size, built for activity and endurance in heavy cover and water. It has a noble carriage; a proud but docile attitude; is sound and free moving. Symmetry, gait, attitude and purpose are more important than anyone part.



Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

General Appearance

Explanatory Wording:

As a well-balanced, substantial hunter companion of medium size, the Field Spaniel is never weedy, slight of build, or cumbersome. He is larger and more substantial than his cousin, the English Cocker Spaniel; he is somewhat smaller, utilitarian, and not as squarely built as his cousin, the English Springer Spaniel. He is specifically bred to negotiate dense cover, such as Blackthorn. The Field Spaniel must be a solid dog. At the same time, he is never as massive as the Clumber Spaniel. He is first and foremost a hunting dog, where soundness of body and mind are of utmost importance. Stately, mild-mannered and biddable, the Field Spaniel is active and energetic enough to do a full day's work in the field, not just a short run in a field trial or working test.

The Field Spaniel is a workman. When looking at the Field Spaniel, one is often immediately drawn to the nobility of the head, which is very unlike that of other spaniels in its chiseling. The Field is not a head breed, nor an "any one part" breed for that matter. He is not a breed of angles, dramatic features or abrupt lines. The terms "moderate, moderately, gentle", and "slightly," are used often in the written standard of the breed. This is because no single feature should stand out. It is the combination of his symmetry, gait, attitude and purpose that makes him a Field Spaniel. The overall proportion, balance, depth and bone of the body contribute equally as much to the distinctive appearance of the breed as the noble head. To emphasize one attribute at the expense of another does the breed a disservice. The Field Spaniel is a combination of beauty and utility. It is a well-balanced, substantial hunter-companion of medium size, built for activity and endurance in heavy cover and water. It has a noble carriage; a proud but docile attitude; is sound and free moving. Symmetry, gait, attitude and purpose are more important than any one part.

Size, Proportion, and Substance

Balance between these three components is essential.

Size

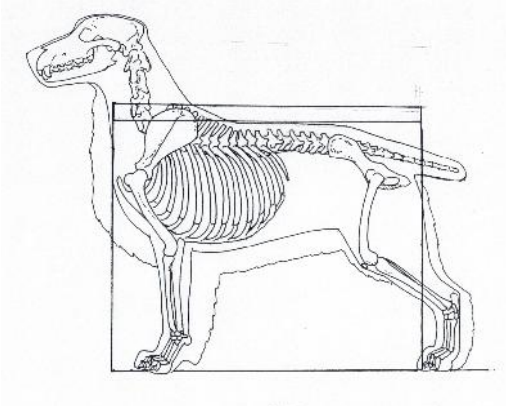
Ideal height for mature adults at the withers is 18 inches for dogs and 17 inches for bitches. A one-inch deviation either way is acceptable.

Proportion

A well-balanced dog, somewhat longer than tall. The ratio of length to height is approximately 7:6. (Length is measured on a level from the foremost point of the shoulder to the rearmost point of the buttocks.)

Substance

Solidly built, with moderate bone, and firm smooth muscles.



Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Size, Proportion, and Substance

Explanatory Wording:

This is a medium size spaniel. The Field Spaniel who is too large approaches the size of his cousins the English Springer and Clumber Spaniels. Too small, and the Field Spaniel approaches the size of his cousins the Cockers.



English Springer Spaniel



Field Spaniel



English Cocker Spaniel

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Size, Proportion, and Substance

The Field Spaniel is moderate in length; slightly longer than tall. The ratio of length to height is measured on a level from the foremost point of the shoulder to the rearmost point of the buttocks. He is a deep-bodied dog with little tuck up. The brisket should be deep, extending at least to or just slightly below the elbows. Chests that are too deep result in legs that appear too short. Shallow chests result in legs that appear too long. A deep powerful body gives the Field his solid workmanlike look.

In looking at bone, balance is the key. The front and rear assembly must match. A Field should never appear heavier in the front than the rear. The impression of bone should be that it is neither too little nor too much for the overall body. Spindly-boned or narrow dogs are not correct. Conversely, dogs that are coarse and heavy boned are equally incorrect. Too little or too much mass inhibits working speed afield. Muscling should be hard as befits a working hunter.

A typical mature 18-inch male should weigh 50 to 55 pounds (23 to 25 Kg); a 17-inch mature female 40-45 pounds (18 to 21 Kg). The dog must be large enough to negotiate dense cover by going through it, yet mobile enough to maintain good speed while working.

Head



Conveys the impression of high breeding, character and nobility, and must be in proportion to the size of the dog.

Expression

Grave, gentle and intelligent.

Eyes

Almond in shape, open and of medium size; set moderately wide and deep. Color: dark hazel to dark brown. The lids are tight and show no haw; rims comparable to nose in color.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Head

Ears

Moderately long (reaching the end of the muzzle) and wide. Set on slightly below eye level: pendulous, hanging close to the head; rolled and well feathered. Leather is moderately heavy, supple, and rounded at the tip.

Skull

The crown is slightly wider at the back than at the brow and lightly arched laterally; sides and cheeks are straight and clean. The occiput is distinct and rounded. Brows are slightly raised. The stop is moderate, but well defined by the brows. The face is chiseled beneath the eyes.

Muzzle

Strong, long and lean, neither snipy nor squarely cut. The nasal bone is straight and slightly divergent from parallel, sloping downward toward the nose from the plane of the top skull. In profile, the lower plane curves gradually from the nose to the throat. Jaws are level.

Nose

Large, fleshy and well developed with open nostrils. Set on as an extension of the muzzle. Color: solid: light to dark brown or black as befits the color of the coat.

Head

Lips

Close fitting, clean, and sufficiently deep to cover the lower jaw without being pendulous.

Bite

Scissors or level, with complete dentition. Scissors preferred.

Explanatory Wording:

HEAD: The head of the Field Spaniel is immediately striking and conveys an impression of overall quality of breeding, distinction, and integrity. The Field Spaniel head is very different than that of other spaniel breeds and there should never be a doubt in the eye of the beholder that one is looking at a Field Spaniel. Heads that are overly large or massive, as well as those that appear so small as to be mismatched to the size of the dog, are incorrect. In overall impression, the head is neither oval, linear, nor wedge-shaped.

EXPRESSION: The expression is an essential part of the Field Spaniel. It is one of the traits that sets the Field apart from the other spaniel breeds. It is a grave, gentle, intelligent expression, but never dull, hard, staring, or fearful.

Head

EYES: Eye shape is of high importance. They should be almond in shape. The eye is never to be round, tricorn or diamond-shaped, nor loose, bulging or protruding, as eyes of those shapes are more prone to injury when working in the field. A Field's eyes are set deep. They are also set moderately wide apart: The eyes are not set to the sides of the head, nor are they so close that there is little room for the stop. While eye color will vary according to the coat color of the dog, the eyes for both liver and black should be dark. A yellow or a very light brown eye creates a hard expression. Lighter eyes will be seen in puppies, as eyes darken with age.

EARS: Low-set and moderately long ears with a good amount of silky feathering frame the head. The feathering should never be so much as to interfere with field work. Ear leather should reach the end of the muzzle, yet not all the way around the end of the nose, as ears that are overly long are liabilities in the field. However, the ear leather is never as short as that of the Clumber. The ear is set on slightly below the eye level, which is most readily seen when the Field is relaxed and at ease. When the Field is drawn to inquisitive attention, or that of spotting something (particularly bait) his ears will be raised above the eye level. This position should not be confused with the ear set. The ears lie close to the head. The leather is pliable, which allows the leather at the top to lie close and gives the ear a dangling, soft look. The leather itself is moderately heavy; never so thick that it is not pliable or so thin as to tear. This unattached end of the ear is rounded and never triangular in shape.

Head

SKULL: The skull gives an overall impression of length. When viewed from the top, the skull is very slightly wider at the back than brow, though retaining an overall rectangular appearance. When viewed from the front, the skull is not narrow and is slightly arched laterally, from ear to ear. When viewed from the side, there is a slight upward line from brow to occiput. The occiput is distinct and gently rounded; there should never be a pronounced, peaked occiput.





Above the eyes, the brows are raised and finely chiseled, and at no time resemble the Sussex frown. Beneath the eyes, there is delicate chiseling. At no time should there be fullness beneath the eyes, and cheeks must be straight and clean.

The stop is well defined, but never abrupt. The brow gives definition to the stop.

Heavy skulls, with an overly wide backskull, and heads that are flat with no lateral arch, are the most commonly seen faults. A skull that is overly narrow is also incorrect, as are skulls that are domed. Pronounced cheekbones are entirely wrong.

Head

MUZZLE: The muzzle must be strong and long enough to accommodate the retrieve of game birds as large as rooster pheasants. The length of muzzle is at the minimum equal to the length of topskull; longer is preferable. A snipey muzzle is not a strong muzzle. Squarely cut muzzles, usually accompanied by pendulous lips, are not desired.

The front of the muzzle should not be a flat plane, but should curve slightly from side to side. The plane of the topskull and the muzzle are slightly divergent. The muzzle diverges slightly downward from the topskull and the nasal bone remains straight. A roman nose such that the bridge is comparatively high and in profile forms a slightly convex line from forehead to tip of nose, like that of a Bull terrier, is incorrect.

NOSE: The nose is large, with nostrils that are large and wide to enhance the scenting ability of the dog. The nose tapers slightly outward from front to back. A pushed in or upturned nose are equally incorrect.

LIPS: The lips must fit the muzzle well, without any hint of being pendulous. When viewed from the side, the lips show a gradual and soft curve, and must never be square in appearance. The dog must be able to pick up game cleanly without interference of heavy flews.

BITE: A regular scissors bite is ideal. However, the bite has less to do with bringing back a bird fit for consumption than the quality of the mouth, i.e.: the tendency toward hard or soft mouth that is not able to be assessed in the show ring. Thus, the Field Spaniel with overall type and a bite where the front incisors do not perfectly match, while still retaining correct placement of the canines and molars, should never be judged less than the animal with less overall type.

Neck, Topline, and Body

Neck

Long, strong, muscular, slightly arched, clean, and well set into shoulders.

Topline

The neck slopes smoothly into the withers; the back is level, well muscled, firm and strong; the croup is short and gently rounded.

Body

The prosternum is prominent and well fleshed. The depth of chest is roughly equal to the length of the front leg from elbow to ground. The rib cage is long and extending into a short loin. Ribs are oval, well sprung and curve gently into a firm loin. Loin--Short, strong, and deep, with little or no tuck up.

Tail

Set on low, in line with the croup, just below the level of the back with a natural downward inclination. Docked tails preferred, natural tails are allowed. The tail whether docked or natural length should be in balance with the overall dog.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Neck, Topline, and Body

Explanatory Wording:

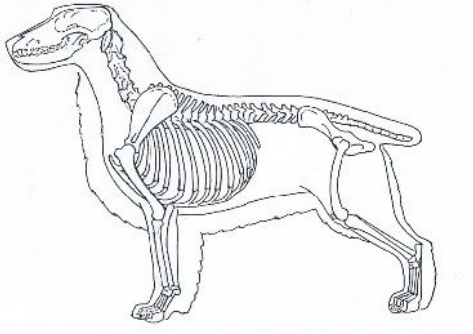
NECK: The entire head is set onto a neck of good length which, in turn, sets cleanly into the shoulders. A neck of proper length and build is important to the Field Spaniel on the retrieve. Length should be sufficient to allow the dog to easily pick up a pheasant or hare, and so that the dog trailing game does not appear to hunker down from the shoulder. A slight arch to the neck from behind the occiput adds to the aristocratic, finely bred appearance when the dog is viewed from the side and comes from proper musculature. The arch of the neck is a gentle curve and never swan-like. The neck should be muscular and clean; the skin on the neck should be well-fitted, with just enough laxity that it is able to roll, rather than tear, when the animal is working in the dense cover for which he was bred. Overall, the neck of the Field Spaniel should convey the impression of sufficient strength to carry game.

TOPLINE: The back is level and does not slope from front to back. This slope usually indicates shoulders that are too straight, or a stifle that has too much angle, or a second thigh that is too long. There is also no rise from mid-back to rump (i.e., the Field Spaniel is not rumpy). The back is well muscled, firm, and strong, as this contributes greatly to the solid appearance of the dog. The croup is short and gently rounded; it is not flat, nor does it drop off at a sharp angle.

BODY: The prosternum is easily felt, as it is well developed and fleshy. As befits the size of the dog, there is four to five inches between the legs when feeling the chest from the front. The rib cage of the Field Spaniel is longer than most of the other spaniels. However, ribs should be well sprung to allow for lung room, and the shape of the rib cage is oval; it is never barreled or round. The gentle swell of the ribs from behind the elbows curves gradually into a strong deep loin.

Neck, Topline, and Body





The brisket should be deep, extending at least to or just slightly below the elbows. This gives the appearance of the body being suspended between the legs rather than set over top of the legs. The body should give the appearance of being solid. Narrow, slab-sided bodies are totally incorrect.

LOIN: Long loins lend themselves to weakness. A shallow loin allows for too much tuck-up and gives a wrong appearance to the overall profile. On the average, the length of loin will not exceed 4 inches.

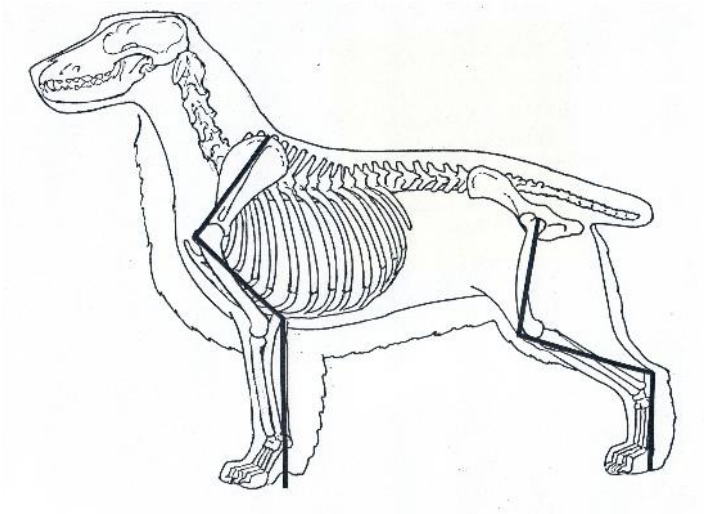
TAIL: Whether docked or undocked, the line of the tail set should follow the gently rounded line of the croup and is never carried above the level of the back. The tail is not set way down on the rear nor does it come off a flat croup. Terrier-type croups or tail sets do not fit on a Field. Undocked tails are allowed. For the undocked tail, the length of an undocked tail should reach approximately to the hock joint and should not curl. It is nicely feathered and should have a lively action. Whether docked or undocked, the key is that the tail length must be in balance with the overall dog.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Forequarters

Shoulder blades are oblique and sloping. The upper arm is close-set; elbows are directly below the withers, and turn neither in nor out. Bone is flat. Forelegs are straight and well boned to the feet. Pasterns are moderately sloping but strong. Dewclaws may be removed.

Feet face forward and are large, rounded, and webbed, with strong, well arched relatively tight toes and thick pads.



Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Forequarters

Explanatory Wording:

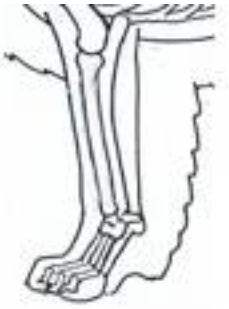
All sporting dogs should have a sloping shoulder. The Field Spaniel shoulder is obliquely placed. The appearance upon observation of layback that approaches a 90-degree angle between scapula and humerus places the elbows well under the body and directly under the point of the shoulder blade. It is the oblique shoulder placement that provides the ability to reach forward in a long low energy efficient smooth stride. Muscling is smooth, and there should be no bulges (over muscling) apparent or felt when the hand travels over the shoulder from the neck to back, or from the side of the neck over the shoulder blades.

When viewed from the side, the prosternum is visible beyond the point of shoulder; it is well-fleshed when examined and readily cupped in the palm of the hand. When viewed from the front, the elbows are set close to the body to provide adequate support. Elbows that turn out go along with a straight shoulder; those away from the body denote possible loaded shoulders, or lack of chest. There is good width of chest between the front legs, as the Field Spaniel is a more heavily built spaniel. A span of 4 to 5 inches will be noted, depending on the size of the dog; a larger Field Spaniel will have a wider chest. When viewed from the front, the legs are straight from elbow to feet, and well-boned for the entire length. Bone is flat, in that when feeling the side of the bone, from either the inner or outer aspect of the leg, the shape felt is flat. The feet turn neither in nor out when viewed from the front. The leg bone tapers very little from elbow to foot, and this adds to the overall solid look of the dog.

Forequarters

Pasterns are moderately sloping in that the Field Spaniel does not stand straight off the pasterns. When viewed from the side, the front legs are straight to the pastern. Starting at the pastern, there is a moderate slope to the foot. The pastern is the "shock absorber" for the dog. Straight pasterns contribute to excessive concussion of the shoulders and a continual jarring when the dog is working. However, the pastern should not be so sloped that it no longer provides the solid support column required for the solidly built body and efficient tireless gait.

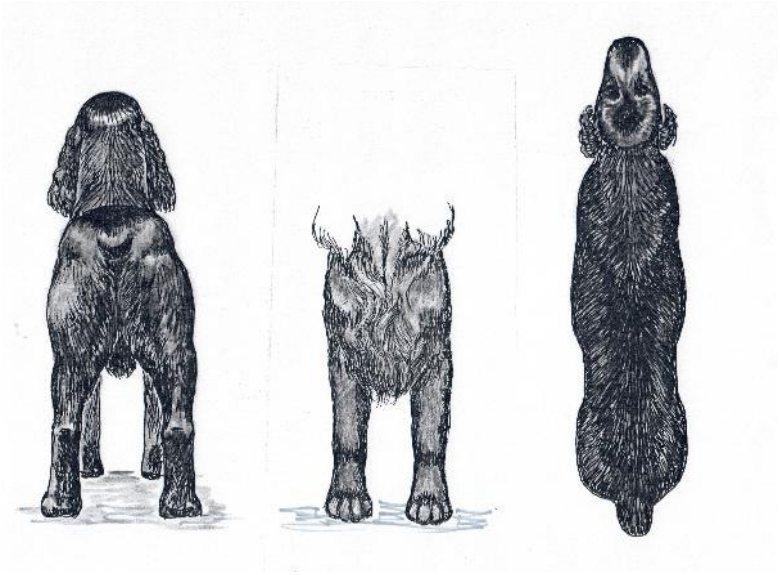




The foot is large, rounded, webbed, and well padded. The toes are well-arched and do not spread apart or become flattened in appearance when the dog stands or moves. Toes that are overly long or overly short are to be avoided. Thick foot pads have a protective function and provide cushioning during movement for the dog. The construction of the foot enables the dog to swim and negotiate daunting cover.

While most Field Spaniels will have front dewclaws removed, front dewclaw removal is not mandatory, and should not be a consideration in judging.

Hindquarters



Strong and driving; stifles and hocks only moderately bent. Hocks well let down; pasterns relatively short, strong and parallel when viewed from the rear. Hips moderately broad and muscular; upper thigh broad and powerful; second thigh well muscled. Bone corresponds to that of the forelegs. No dewclaws.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Hindquarters

Explanatory Wording:

The Field Spaniel is a heavy and solid-bodied dog. This requires appropriate structural support. The rear is wide and matches the good width of chest as defined by the width of chest between the front legs. The hindquarters should immediately convey the impression of great strength, as they propel the body in movement, and are the drive that combines with the front reach to create the long, low, energy-efficient stride. Bone must correspond to that of the forelegs.

The second thigh is wide and well-muscled. The angle of the stifle is moderate and produces the necessary structure to provide support as well as to produce the drive required to propel the Field Spaniel forward. An angle that is either too straight or overly bent creates a weak support system for the Field Spaniel. In stacking a dog, great backward extension should not be necessary to level the back nor should normal stacking result in the appearance of a back that slopes front to rear or, alternatively, from rear to front.



The hock joint is broad and supports the well muscled second thigh. There should be no rubbery motion of the hocks when the dog is standing or is on the move. Beneath the hock joint, the rear pasterns are short and strong. When viewed from the side, the point of the hock and pasterns are set perpendicular to the ground. At the same time when viewed from behind, the rear pastern is wide and strong as required to produce appropriate support for the heavier-bodied dog. The rear feet correspond in construction to the front feet. Dewclaws, if present on the rear legs, are a fault.

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Coat

Single; moderately long; flat or slightly wavy; silky; and glossy; dense and water-repellent. Moderate setter-like feathering adorns the chest, underbody, backs of the legs, buttocks, and may also be present on the second thigh and underside of the tail. Pasterns have clean outlines to the ground. There is short, soft hair between the toes. Overabundance of coat, or cottony texture, impractical for field work should be penalized. Trimming is limited to that which enhances the natural appearance of the dog. Amount of coat or absence of coat should not be faulted as much as structural faults.



Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Coat

Explanatory Wording:

The Field Spaniel has a dense and water resistant coat of silky texture. The appearance of the coat is that of a utilitarian working dog. The Field Spaniel is a natural dog, and should appear in a more natural coat that is only moderately long. Feathering is seen on the ears, chest/prosternum, beneath the belly, second thigh, backs of the legs, and a nice skirt will be seen on the rear. Untrimmed docked tails will show a flag of feathering. Natural tails will have feathering similar to that of a Flat-Coated Retriever. Feathering should never be thick, abundant, or appear as if it would take an extreme amount of time to comb out after hunting

Quality of the coat is important. The coat is single and silky to the touch. Fuzziness or a sleek hound coat, or a coat that is wiry or cottony is incorrect. Trimming should not result in a dog that appears sculpted. The tops of the ear, head, face, and throat are trimmed at the discretion of the owner, and should enhance the appearance of the dog. Pasterns, front and back, are trimmed for neatness. Feet are trimmed to show a neat rounded foot and to remove excess hair that could catch debris both between the toes and on the underside of the foot. Field Spaniels may be shown with the hair on the underside of a docked tail trimmed neatly or with a short flag of hair, according to the preference of the handler. A dog shown in working coat should not be penalized. Neither should amount of coat or absence of coat take precedence over structural faults and overall type.

Color

Black, liver, golden liver or shades thereof, in any intensity (dark or light); either self-colored or bi-colored. Bi-colored dogs must be roaned and/or ticked in white areas.



Liver



Black



Liver and Tan

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Color

Tan points are acceptable on the aforementioned colors and are the same as any normally tan pointed breed. White is allowed on the throat, chest, and/or brisket, and may be clear, ticked, or roaned on a self-color dog.



Black and Tan



Liver Roan



Blue Roan

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Color



Liver Roan with Tan



Blue Roan with Tan



Liver Bi-color with Ticking

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

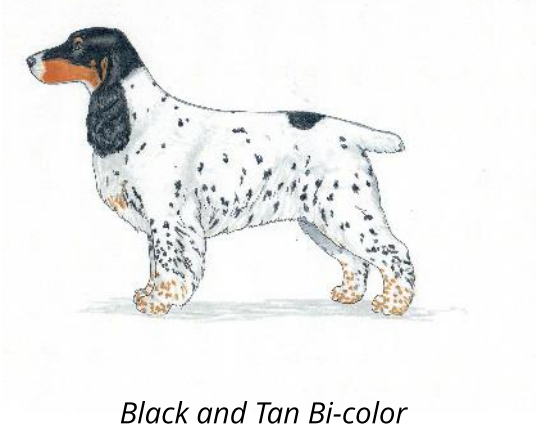
Color



Black Bi-color with Ticking



Liver and Tan Bi-color with Ticking



Black and Tan Bi-color with Ticking

Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Color

Explanatory Wording:

The description of color is short in the standard, as color is not as important as type, structure, soundness, or movement.

- Black coats may show a liver cast to the coat in the sunlight. Black coat color cast is preferred, but a liver hue to the black coat is acceptable.
- Liver coats may be noted in a variety of shades from light liver to dark liver.
- Roan coats will show an intermingling of colored (liver or black) hair with white hair with patches of the solid color commonly seen on the head, muzzle, cheeks, neck, body, legs, and back.
- Bi-colored coats have a combination of liver or black with white, and may at first glance appear to be two clear colors (liver and white, or black and white). The white is not clear and must have ticking or roaning evident, but may require that the coat be ruffled against the lay to determine that the ticking or roaning is present in either light or heavy intensity. Clear white is to be heavily penalized. Orange and white or red and white is to be severely penalized.

Color

- Tan markings may be combined with any allowed coat coloration, in the same areas as other tan-pointed breeds. The typical tan-point pattern includes an area of tan pigment on the sides of the muzzle (with no preference as to how far up the sides, from edge of lip to nose the tan extends), cheeks, throat, underside of the ear flaps, on the chest, over each eye, on all four feet and part of the legs, around the anus and on the underside of the tail. A chest bar of tan is not required. Penciling on the toes is allowed. A black, liver, or roan animal carrying the tan gene may show a hint of lighter color in the areas in which a tan-pointed dog would be clearly tan. This is not to be penalized.
- White patches on the throat or chest of an otherwise solid color dog does not make the coat a bi-colored coat, and such patches are allowed and may be clear, ticked or roaned.

DISQUALIFICATION - The SABLE pattern, a lighter undercoat with darker shading at tipping or dark overlay, with or without a mask present.

Gait

The head is carried alertly, neither so high nor so low as to impede motion or stride. There is good forward reach that begins in the shoulder, coupled with strong drive from the rear, giving the characteristic effortless, and long, low majestic stride. When viewed from front and/or rear, elbows and hocks move parallel. The legs move straight, with slight convergence at increased speed. When moving, the tail is carried inclined slightly downward or level with the back, and with a wagging motion. Tail carried above the back is incorrect. Side movement is straight and clean, without energy wasting motions. Over-reaching and single tracking are incorrect. The Field Spaniel should be shown at its own natural speed in an endurance trot, preferably on a loose lead, in order to evaluate its movement.





Courtesy of the Field Spaniel Society of America

Gait

Explanatory Wording:

The gait of the Field Spaniel is different than many spaniels seen in the show ring. The movement of the Field Spaniel is not flashy, fast, or animated. One should immediately note that the gait is so effortless that the dog may maintain the gait all day long. The efficient gait requires good reach forward with the front legs; it is as if the dog were reaching out to pull the ground beneath him when moving. At the same time, the rear legs drive strongly as if to push the ground away as he drives forward. This results in the proper Field Spaniel movement that is unhurried and fluid, yet covers the ground efficiently due to the combination of the length of the stride and the feet moving relatively low to the ground. The legs should never move in action that is high-stepping or piston-like. When viewed from the front or rear, the planes on which the front legs move are parallel with those of the rear legs, and converge slightly toward the center line as speed increases. The Field Spaniel does not single-track, move either narrow or overly wide, or have feet that cross or touch the center line of gravity. The bottom of the foot should strike the ground with the weight borne evenly across the pads, and there should be no tendency for the action of the foot to swing out toward the side when moving (paddling), strike the ground with the toes pointing toward the center line (toeing in), or strike the ground with the toes pointing away from the center line (toeing out). Inefficient movement must be avoided to maintain the Field Spaniel as a working animal. When moving, the tail is carried low in that it will be level with the line of the back or point slightly downward. The tail may show a wagging action during movement or may be held straight and level. A dog who is excited may carry the tail slightly above the line of the back, though this is not preferred, and should never be carried well above the line of the back in the manner of a terrier.

Temperament

Unusually docile, sensitive, fun loving, independent and intelligent, with a great affinity for human companionship. They may be somewhat reserved in initial meetings. Any display of shyness, fear, or aggression is to be severely penalized.

Temperament

Explanatory Wording:

Field Spaniels are noted for their superior temperament. However, the Field Spaniel is also very aloof, particularly with strangers. The Field Spaniel should be properly socialized and trained to stand for gentle, but non-threatening, thorough examination. As a judge, you are a stranger and even a seasoned competitor may not wag his tail during examination. Under no circumstances should a Field Spaniel growl or snap at a judge, handler, or another dog.

As a judge, you will see many young Fields and inexperienced handlers. Please take your time with them and make the experience a good one. Field Spaniels (and inexperienced handlers) have long memories and one bad experience in the ring can have long term effects. A judge should allow the Field Spaniel to know that he or she is present. Do not walk up suddenly and lean down directly over the shoulders of the dog, nor stare sternly and directly into the eyes. This is very intimidating, and a young or inexperienced Field may find this frightening. Be firm, but gentle. In examining for complete dentition, simply lift the lips and look. Many Field Spaniels do not care to have their private parts handled, especially males. If one continually tries to sit, be patient.

While dogs who are inexperienced with the show ring may indicate that they wish to leave the ring by avoiding examination, this may be an indication that the handler needs to do further socialization and training; Field Spaniels who show such behavior should never place highly in a class. However, the dog that does not truly represent the standard should not be awarded the points for good behavior; faulty quality will not improve with age, whereas socialization and lack of confidence may well improve with age. To identify the Field Spaniel who is showing a lack of confidence, watch the Field Spaniel with the handler; the dog should be relaxed during the one-on-one interaction with the handler.

Notes



Courtesy of The Field Spaniel Society of America