

MODERATION

THE BREEDER'S PERSPECTIVE



EXPLORING MODERATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN RELATION TO CORRECT ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL BREED TYPE

by THE ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL CLUB OF AMERICA

MODERATION IN AN ENGLISH COCKER, WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT MEAN?

Webster's Dictionary describes Moderate as: "The quality of being moderate; avoidance of extremes or excesses."

HOW DOES THAT DEFINITION TRANSLATE TO OUR BREED?

The word "moderate" appears five times in our AKC Breed Standard. It is

also implied numerous times throughout. In the opening paragraph: "He is, above all, a dog of balance, both standing and moving, without exaggeration in any part, the whole worth more than the sum of its parts"

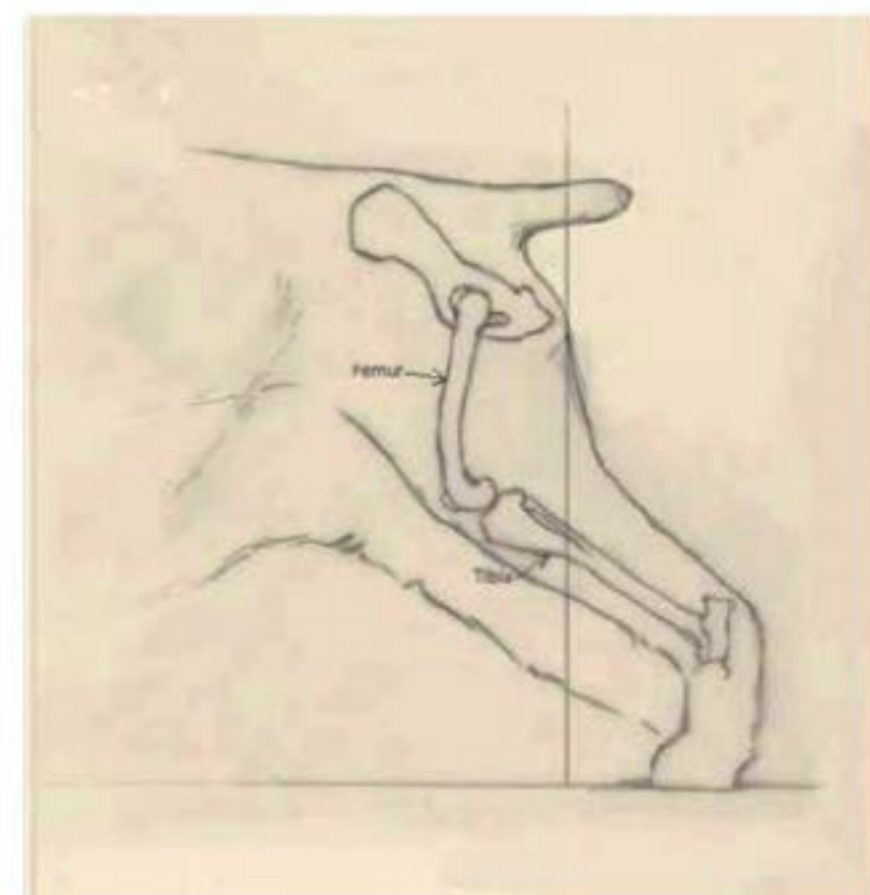
As with any breed of dog, form should follow function. He is alive with energy; his gait is powerful and frictionless, capable both of covering ground effortlessly and penetrating dense cover to flush and retrieve game. His enthusiasm in the field and the incessant action of his tail while at work indicate how

much he enjoys the hunting for which he was bred.

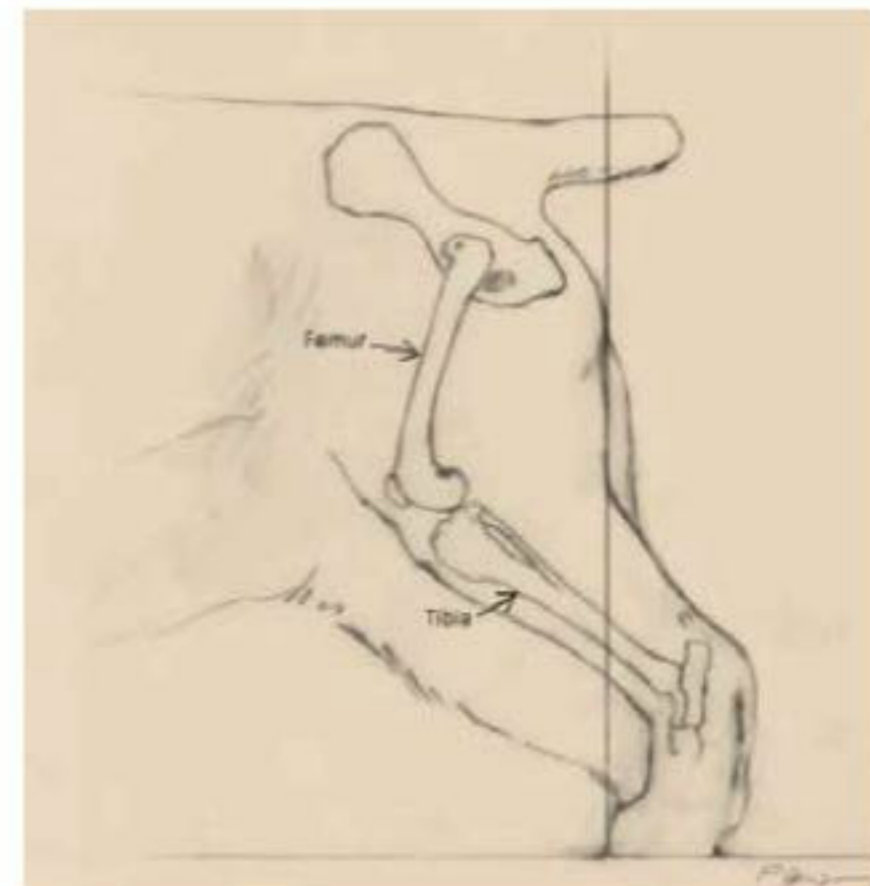
The English Cocker is a dog of balance, with no one feature overpowering another. He has a round, softly contoured appearance, with no sharp angles or lines.

CAN YOU TRAIN YOUR EYE TO SEE A MODERATE DOG?

The ability to identify the correct balance and type for our breed requires an understanding of the essential points of measurement.



Moderate rear angulation

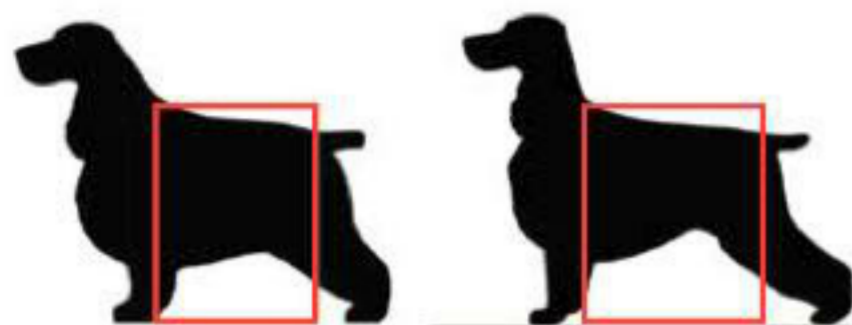


Exaggerated rear angulation

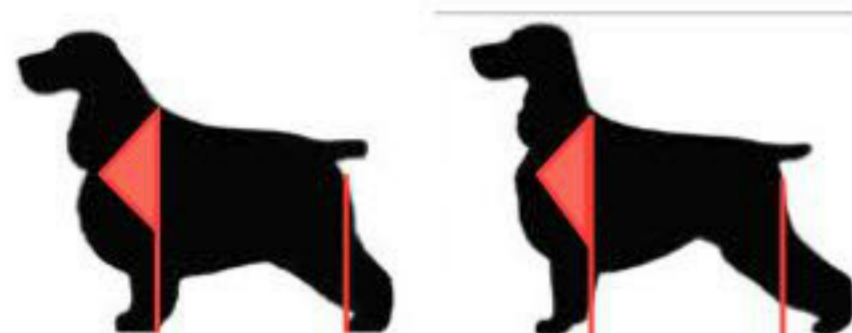




Moderate English Cocker Spaniel (left) versus the exaggerated (right).



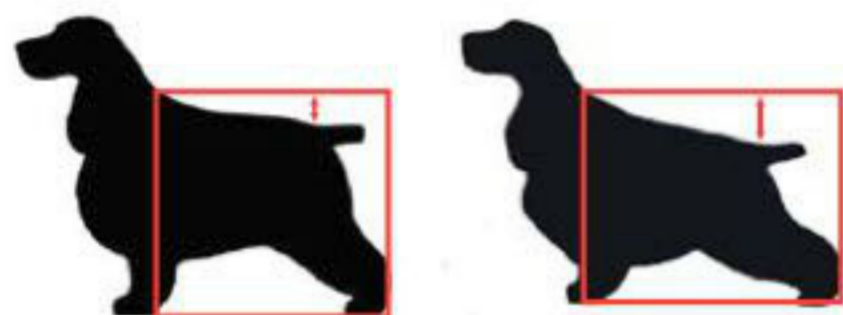
Correct length (left) versus a leggy English Cocker Spaniel (right).



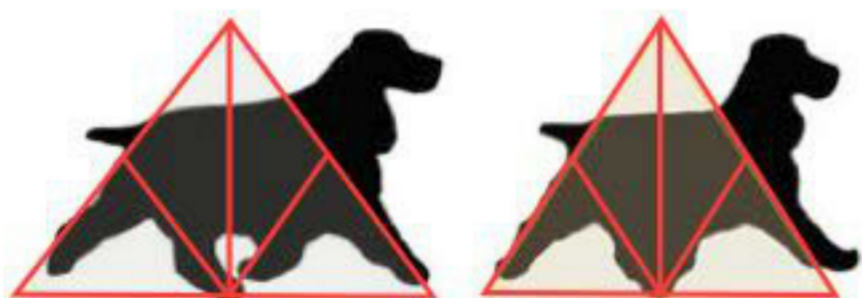
Moderate shoulder angles (left) versus exaggerated angles (right).



Moderate rear angulation (left) versus exaggerated angulation (right).



Slightly sloping topline (left) versus exaggerated slope (right).



Effortless movement (left) versus overreaching movement (right).

THE ENGLISH COCKER IS SLIGHTLY TALLER THAN LONG

This is a short-backed, compact, cobby breed. From the points of measurement, the withers to the set on of the tail, he is slightly taller than long. The elbow is midpoint between the withers and the ground. The breed is neither "leggy" nor low on leg.



WHAT ARE MODERATE ANGLES?

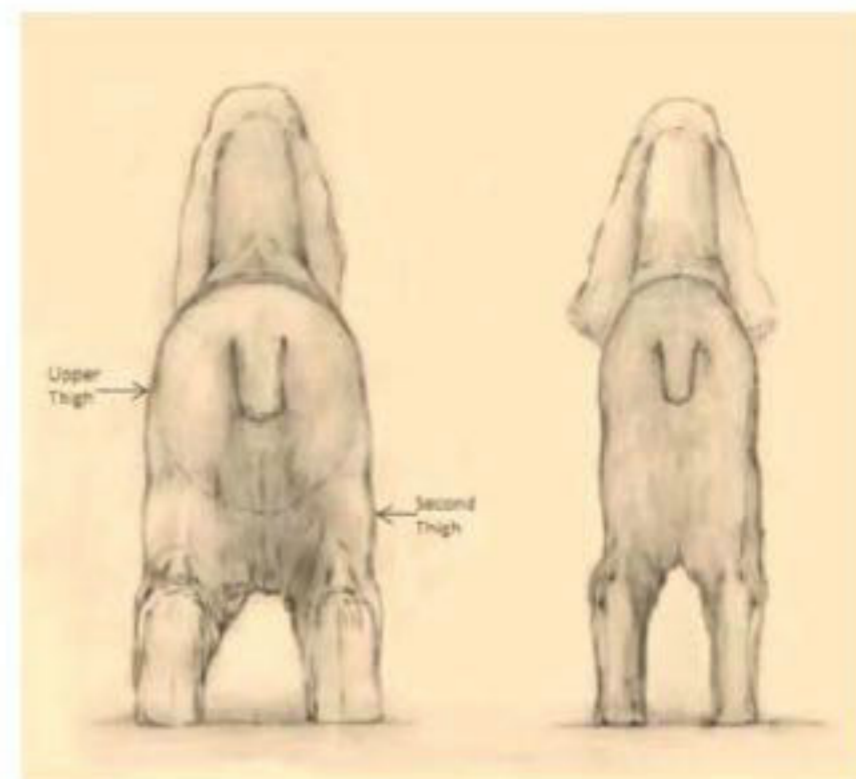
With the ideal 90 degree shoulder, formed by the scapula and the upper arm, the front legs are located under the body, rather than on the forward most end of it. The rear angle and length should match the moderate angles of the front, with the rear foot located under the dog to support its weight. "Rear angulation moderate and, most importantly, in balance with that of the forequarters"

REAR ANGULATION IS MODERATE.

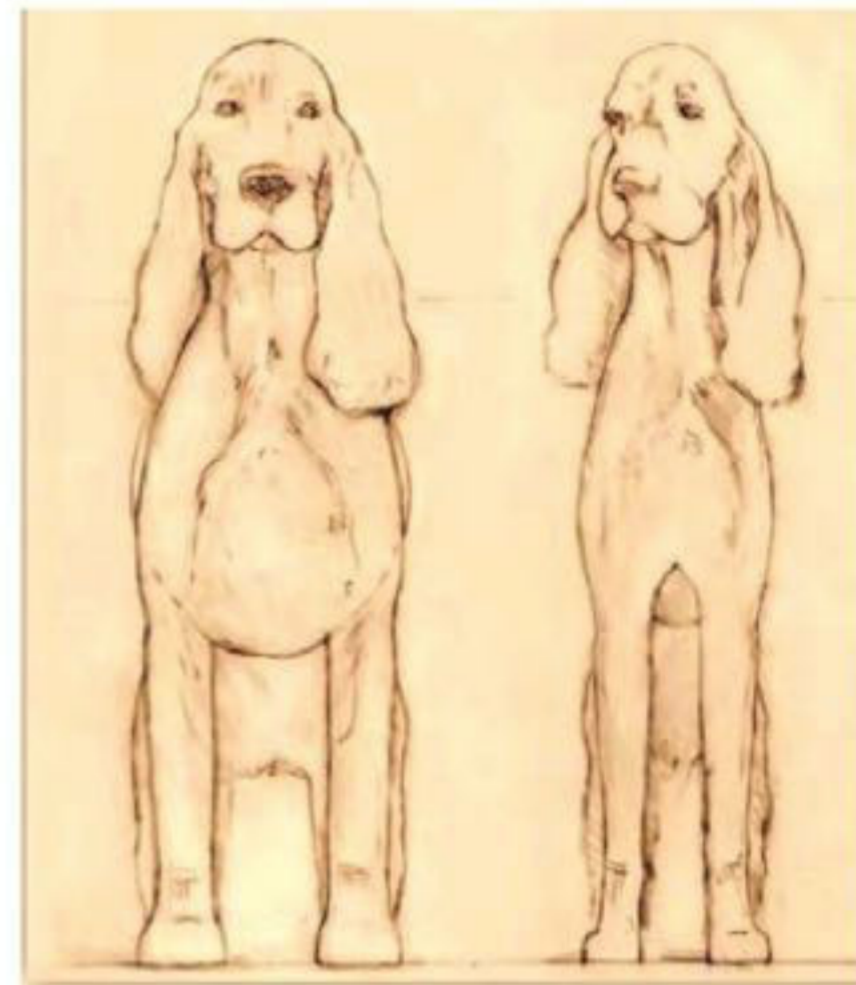
A perpendicular line dropped from the furthest projection of the buttock to the ground, should land directly in front of the rear foot. The femur and the tibia are equal in length.

THE STANDARD CALLS FOR A SLIGHTLY SLOPING TOPLINE

Exaggeration of any characteristic will throw off the balance of a compact, well-knit dog. He has a slightly sloping



Proper substance (left) versus insufficient substance (right).



Proper substance (left) versus insufficient substance (right).

back, with a tail that is carried level off of a gently rounded croup.

"He covers ground effortlessly and with extension both in front and in rear, appropriate to his angulation."

Here again, the standard is referring to the breed's moderate angles, effortless and appropriate to his angulation. If a dog is over-extending front or rear, overreaching underneath, it is indicative of unbalance, causing wasted motion that will tire a dog in no time. Note the flipped front foot, the curled hind toes and the crossed feet underneath on the right.

The amount of substance for height contributes to the overall harmonious make and shape of a correct Cocker.

This breed has the frame and carries the muscle of a weight lifter rather than that of a long distance runner. "The English Cocker is a solidly built dog with as much bone and substance as possible without becoming cloddy or coarse."

Remember they were developed to hunt in dense cover and retrieve heavy game. That requires strength, balance, moderation and no Extremes. ■