

THE BULLMASTIFF STANDARD

AS REVISED IN 1991

GENERAL APPEARANCE...That of a symmetrical animal showing great strength, endurance, and alertness; powerfully built but active. The foundation breeding was 60% Mastiff and 40% Bulldog. The breed was developed in England by gamekeepers for protection against poachers.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE...*Size* - 3 Dogs, 25 to 27 inches at the withers, and 110 to 130 pounds in weight. Bitches, 24 to 26 inches at the withers, and 100 to 120 pounds in weight. Other things being equal, the more substantial dog within these limits is favored. *Proportion* - The length from tip of breastbone to rear of thigh exceeds the height from withers to ground only slightly, resulting in a nearly square appearance.

HEAD...*Expression* - Keen, alert, and intelligent. *Eyes* - Dark and of medium size. *Ears* - V-shaped and carried close to the cheeks, set on wide and high, level with occiput and cheeks, giving a square appearance to the skull; darker in color than the body and medium in size. *Skull* - large, with a fair amount of wrinkle when alert; broad with cheeks well developed. Forehead flat. *Stop* - Moderate. *Muzzle* - broad and deep, its length, in comparison with that of the entire head, approximately as 1 is to 3. Lack of foreface with nostrils set on top of muzzle is a reversion to the Bulldog and is very undesirable. A dark muzzle is preferable. *Nose* - Black, with nostril large and broad. *Flews* - not too pendulous, *Bite* - Preferably level or slightly undershot. Canine teeth large and set wide apart.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY...*Neck* - Slightly arched, of moderate length, very muscular, and almost equal in circumference to the skull. *Topline* - Straight and level between withers and loin. *Body* - Compact. Chest wide and deep, with ribs well sprung and well set down between the forelegs. *Back* - Short, giving the impression of a well balanced dog. *Loin* - Wide, muscular, and slightly arched, with fair depth of flank. *Tail* - Set on high, strong at the root and tapering to the hocks. It may be straight or curved, but never carried hound fashion.

FOREQUARTERS...Shoulders muscular but not loaded, and slightly sloping. Forelegs straight, well boned, and set well apart; elbows turned neither in nor out. Pasterns straight, feet of medium size, with round toes well arched. Pads thick and tough; nails black.

HINDQUARTERS...Broad and muscular, with well developed second thigh, denoting power, but not cumbersome. Moderate angulation at hocks. Cowhocks and splay feet are serious faults.

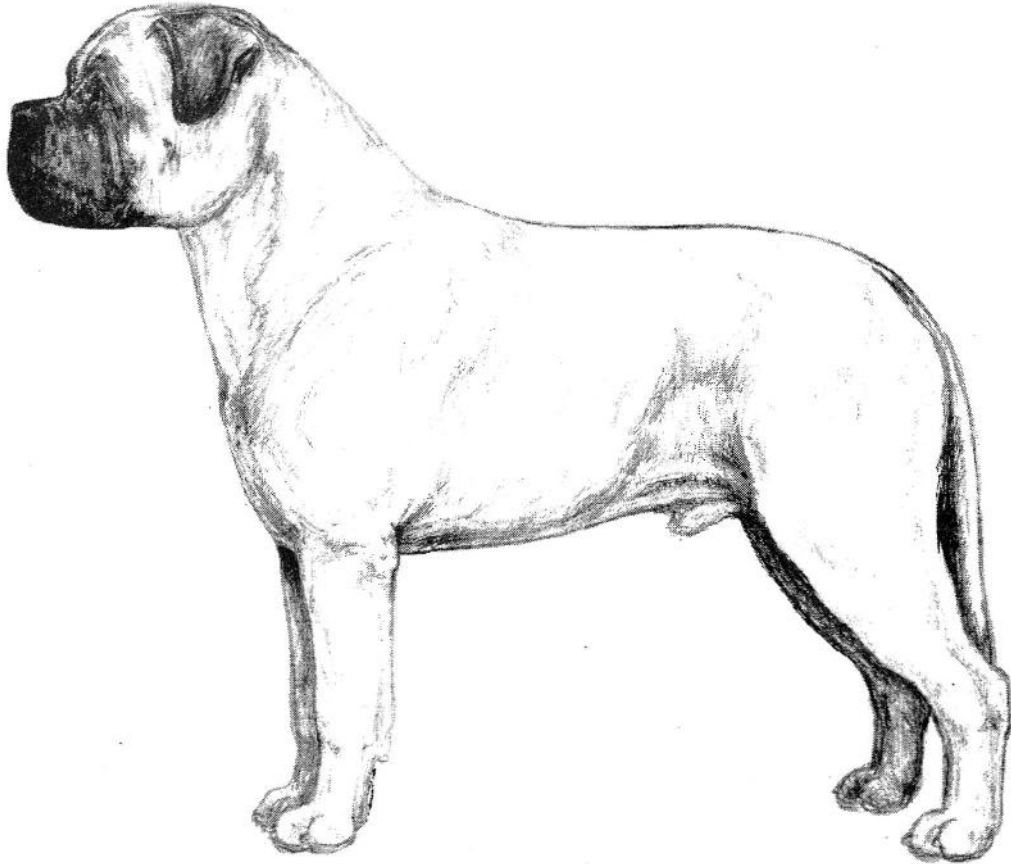
COAT...Short and dense, giving good weather protection.

COLOR...Red, fawn, or brindle. Except for a very small white spot on the chest, white marking is considered a fault.

GAIT...Free, smooth, and powerful. When viewed from the side, reach and drive indicate maximum use of the dog's moderate angulation. Back remains level and firm. Coming and Going, the dog moves in a straight line. Feet tend to converge under the body, without crossing over, as speed increases. There is no twisting in or out at the joints.

TEMPERAMENT...Fearless and confident yet docile. The dog combines the reliability, intelligence and willingness to please required in a dependable family companion and protector.

Ideal Male



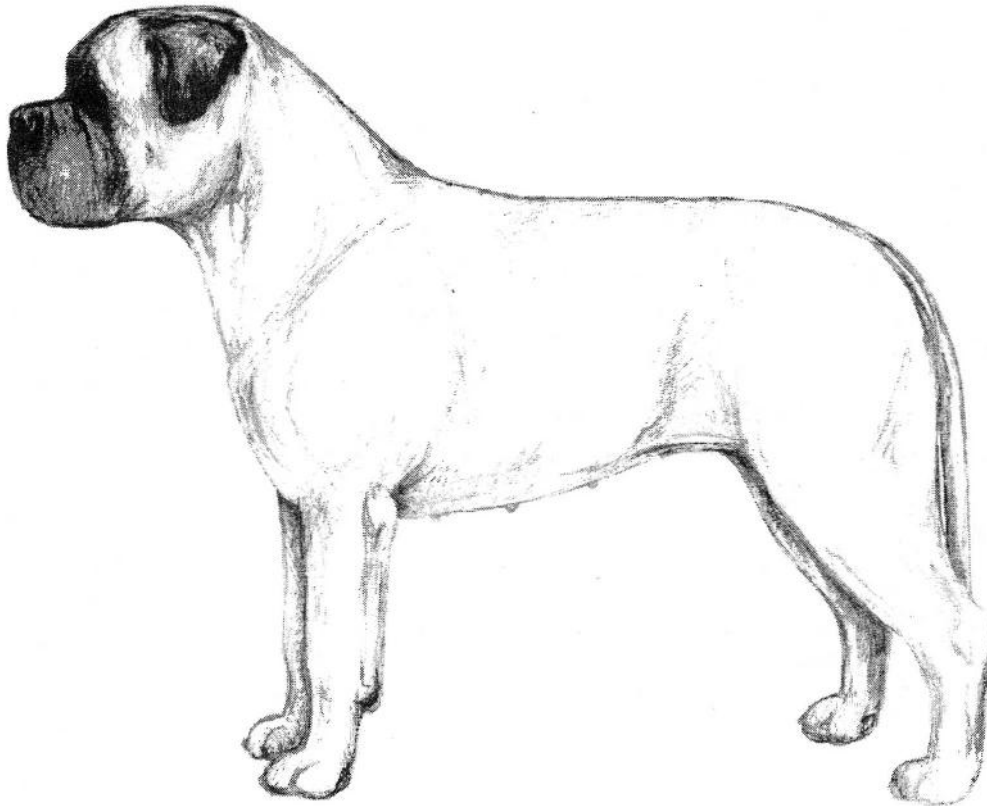
General Appearance - That of a symmetrical animal showing great strength, endurance, and alertness; powerfully built but active. The foundation breeding was 60% Mastiff and 40% Bulldog. The Breed was developed in England by gamekeepers for protection against poachers.

Since form follows function and the Bullmastiff was developed to be a gamekeeper's guard and working companion, a balanced, strong, alert animal with endurance is a must in this breed.

First impression should convey the image of a dog that by virtue of its size, substance and fit condition would be able to catch and hold a struggling assailant/quarry. Although the dog is seldom used as a gamekeeper's dog the purpose for which the Bullmastiff was developed should always be considered in the evaluation of the dog.

There should never be a question of masculinity in the appearance of the male.

Ideal Female



Females should not vary in type from the males. They should simply be a slightly smaller, feminine version of the same dog.

Size, Proportion, and Substance

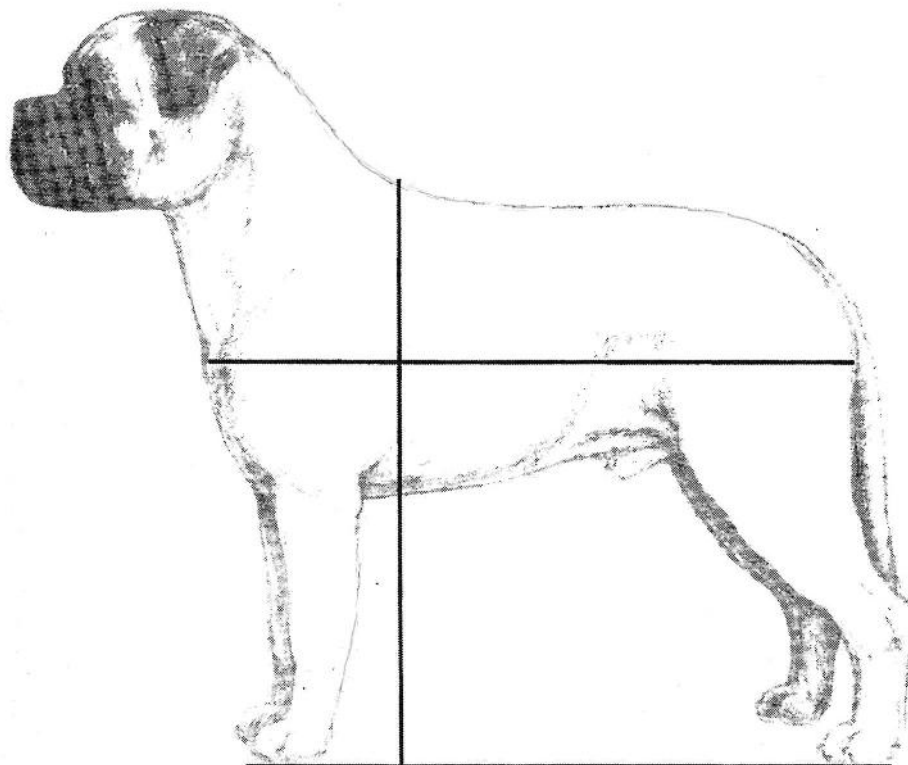
Size - Dogs 25 to 27 inches at the withers and 100 to 130 pounds in weight.

Size - Bitches 24 to 26 inches at the withers, and 100 to 120 pounds in weight

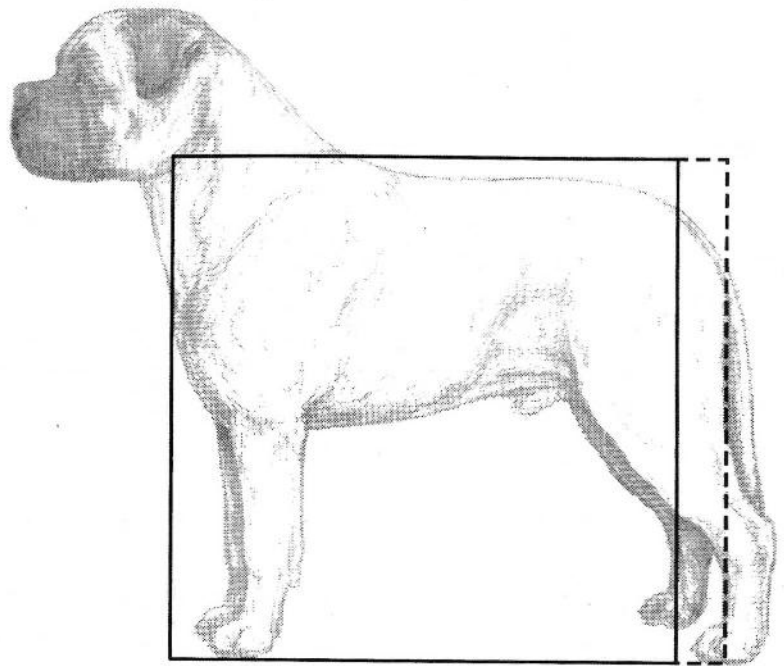
Ratio of height to weight is important. There is not a disqualification for height or weight. There are definite parameters and the extent to which an animal deviates from the high or low should be penalized to the degree it deviates. The standard for both dogs and bitches allows variances of 20 pounds in weight and 2 inches in height for each. Logically the least weight figures apply to the shortest dog. The dog carrying the top weight and the shortest height would appear cumbersome. The dog carrying the lowest weight and standing at the tallest height would appear weedy.

Substance - Other things being equal, the more substantial dog within these limits is favored.

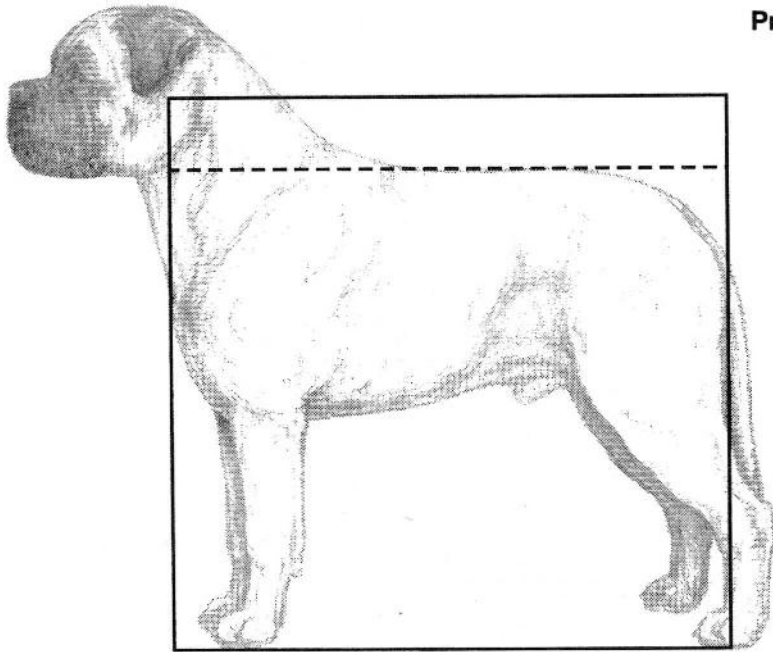
The standard specifically mentions “all things being equal, the more substantial dog within these limits is favored.” This does not mean the heaviest dog, unless the weight consists of solid muscle and proper bone combined with a balance of height and weight. Heavy, out of condition dogs that obtain their weight from fat are not substantial and are worthless as working dogs. The basic framework is bone and muscle and it is these two factors that establish the substance of the dog. Therefore, proper condition and balance of height to weight are very important.



Proportion: slightly longer than tall



Proportion: slightly longer in length than height

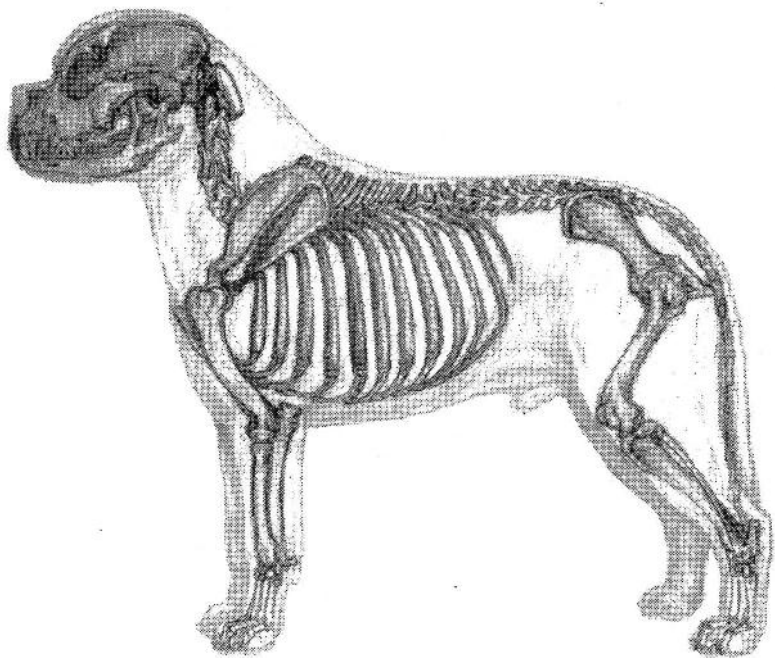


Proportion: slightly shorter at withers than tall

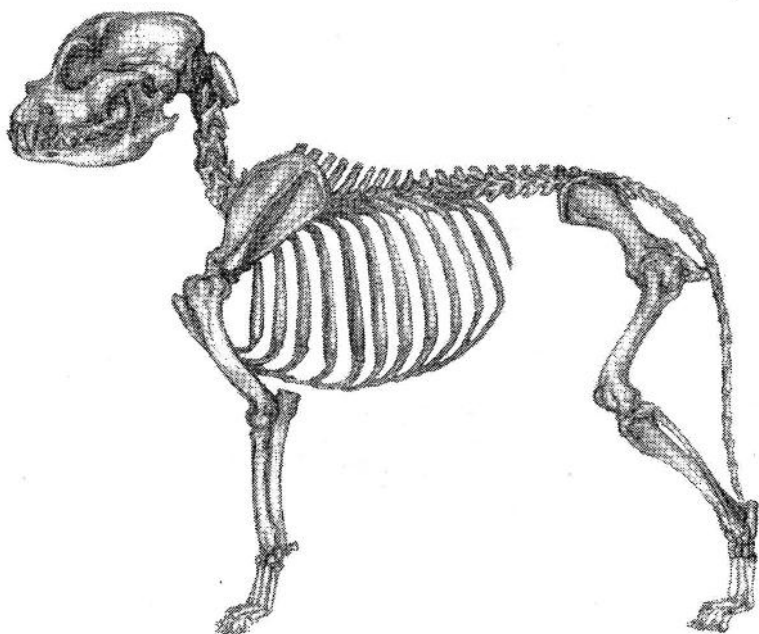
Proportion - The length from tip of breastbone to rear of thigh exceeds the height from withers to the ground only slightly, resulting in a nearly square appearance/

Although the standard states measurement is from “the tip of the breastbone to the rear of the thigh”, one should be sure to measure from bony point to bony point (breastbone to the point of the hip at the back of the thigh) for accurate and consistent measurement.

A dog bred for both substance and agility needs to have a low center of gravity. The body being just very slightly longer than tall results in a NEARLY square appearance, creating a compactness that suits the dog’s original purpose.

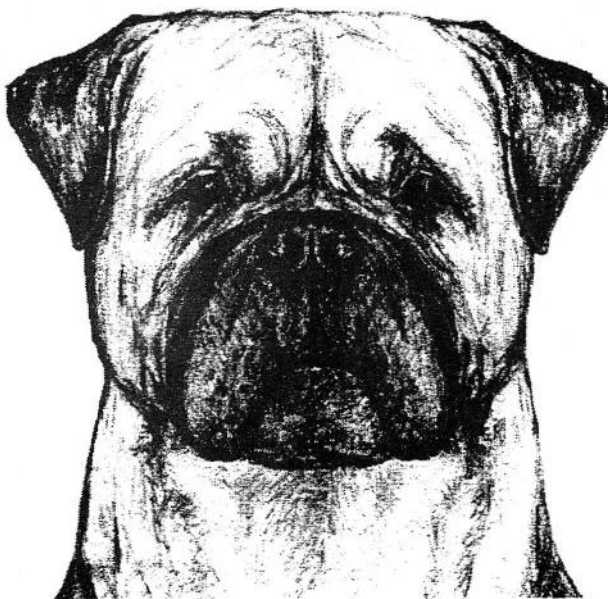


Skeleton overlaying dog



Skeleton

Head - The head of the Bullmastiff is the hallmark of the breed. Good head type is essential, not only for correct appearance, but when the headpiece is properly constructed it is entirely functional. In fact the greatest amount of detail in our standard is devoted to the head and its proper construction.



Ideal dog head

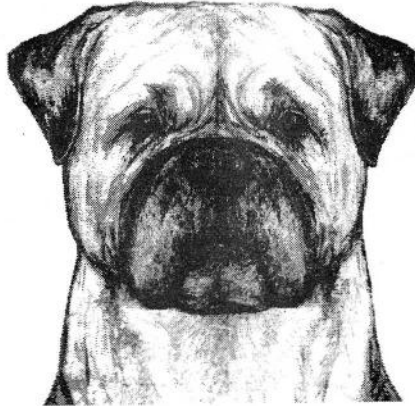


Ideal bitch head

Expression - keen, alert, intelligent . The expression should clearly convey these attributes.

Eyes - Dark and of medium size.

The eyes are one of the primary indicators of the dog's intellect. The standard does not address the issue of shape. The dark and medium sized eyes are set moderately wide apart. Eyes should not protrude nor be too closely set. Overly large or protruding eyes were deemed undesirable because they would be at risk from branches and brush when the dog worked. Eyes too closely set restricted peripheral vision as well as spoiled the expression. A deep set eye within the orbital arch/rim would be less likely to suffer injury.



Correct eye placement



Too close eye placement

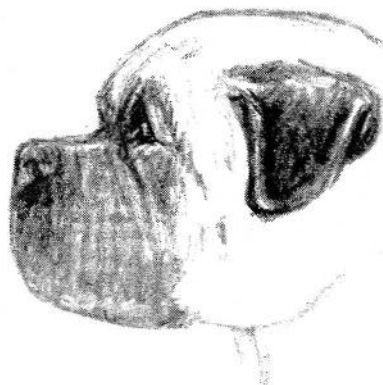


Too wide eye placement

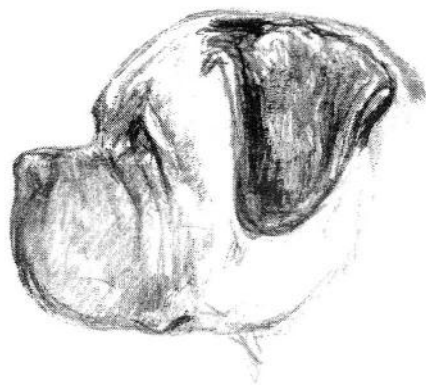
Undesirable: light eyes, yellow eyes, protruding eyes, eyes set too closely, cross eyes/strabismus.

Ears - V shaped and carried close to the cheeks, giving a square appearance to the skull; darker in color than the body and medium in size.

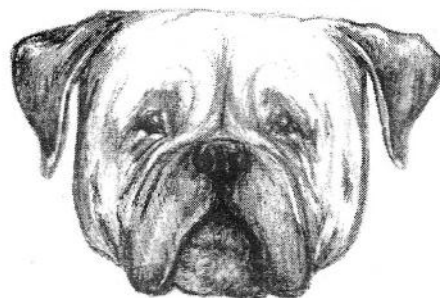
Ears are carried close to the cheek and when the dog is alert are most correct with the tip reaching level to or just below the bottom of the eye. Heavy, houndy ears, rose ears, too small, low set , or high set ears spoil the square appearance of the skull and are to be considered as undesirable.



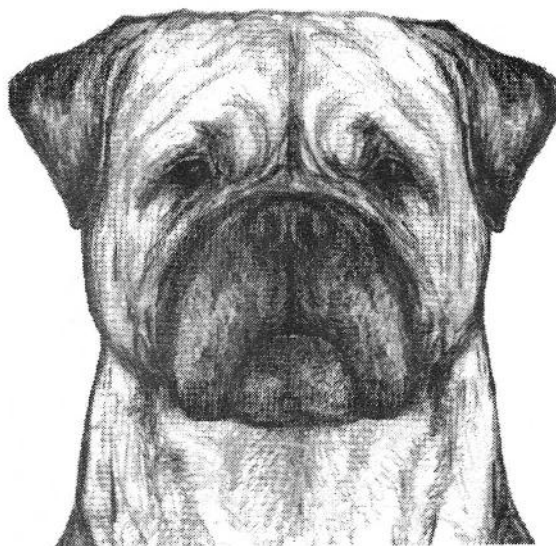
Too low set and ear



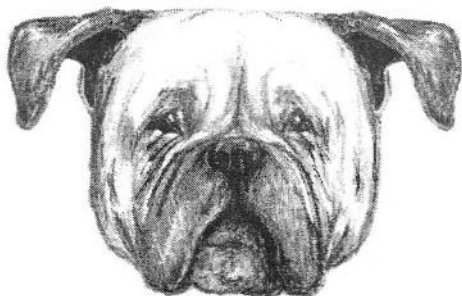
Too large an ear



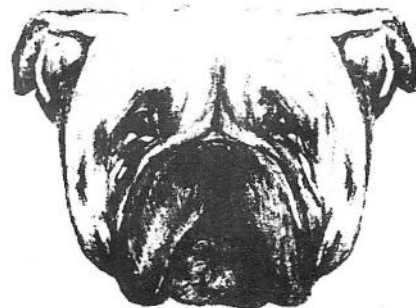
Incorrect ear carriage



Correct ear carriage



Flying ears



Rose ears

Skull - large, with a fair amount of wrinkle when alert, broad, with cheeks well developed. The strength and holding power of the jaw is dependent on the breadth and musculature of the skull and cheek. A well developed cheek is necessary to enhance the square appearance of the skull.

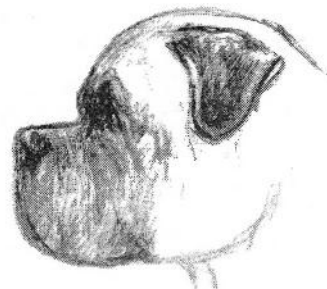
The occipital bone is set about level with the top of the ears. A Bullmastiff with backskull is incorrect. A flat forehead enhances the square appearance of the skull. A domed skull almost always goes along with low set ears.

The Standard calls for a fair amount of wrinkle when alert. This wrinkle along with body posture is the dog's indication of it's interest in something in its immediate area. Dogs may carry some furrowing on the forehead when in repose.

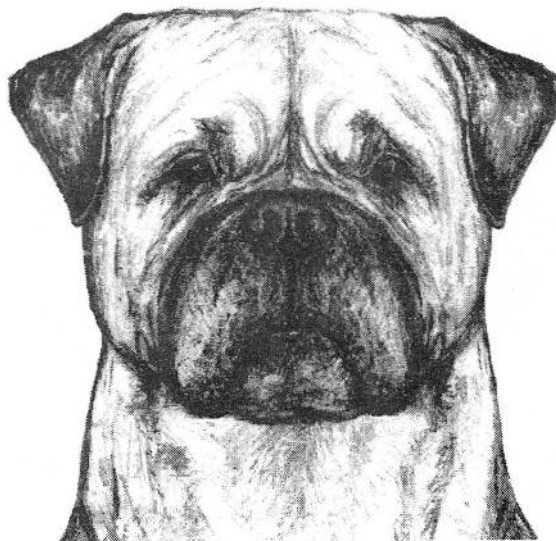
Undesirable: narrow head, domed skull, too wide skull, backskull, lack of cheek development, excessive wrinkle or folds of skin on skull.



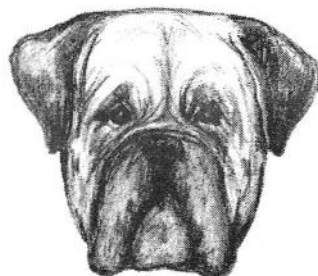
Too much wrinkle



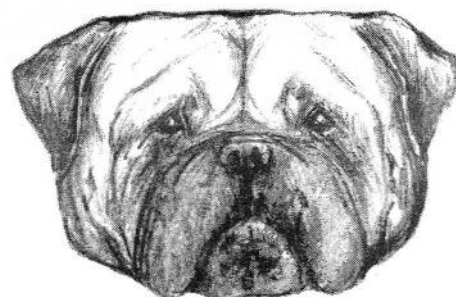
Rounded foreskull



Correct skull



Narrow skull



Too broad skull

Stop - moderate

An insufficient stop creates too plain a head which therefore lacks type due to lack of squareness. Lack of stop and lack of cheek development commonly go together.

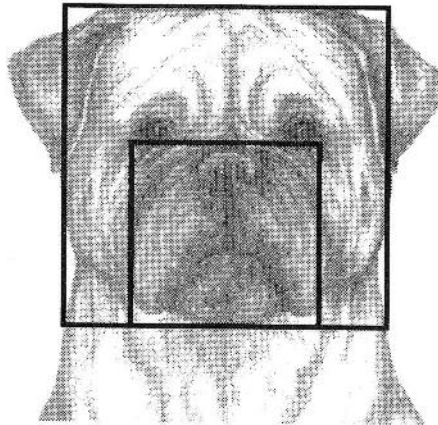
Muzzle - Broad and deep, its length, in comparison with that of the entire head, approximately as 1 is to 3. Lack of foreface with nostril set on top of muzzle is a reversion to the Bulldog and is very undesirable. A dark muzzle is preferable.

The muzzle needs to be broad and deep to compliment the strength of the skull and cheek. In viewing the head of the Bullmastiff, the muzzle is to be 1/3 the length of the entire head. As the skull is large, square and strong so must the muzzle be a smaller strong square which attaches to the skull with essentially equal breadth along it's entire length.

The strength of the muzzle should come from skeletal structure and not depend on padding alone. Lack of foreface with nostrils set on top of the muzzle is extremely undesirable because it is not only a reversion to the Bulldog, but an impediment to proper respiration. Breadth of muzzle is an important factor in the holding power of the jaw. Lack of fill under the eyes weakens the strength and breadth of the muzzle, producing a wedge shaped muzzle.

A lack of dark muzzle detracts from the overall image of the dog. Masking patterns can vary.

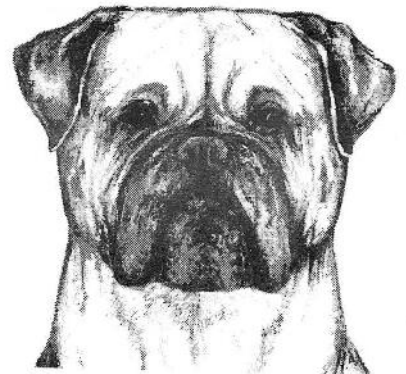
Very undesirable: snipey, too long, too short, down faced, shallow, or wedge shaped muzzles.



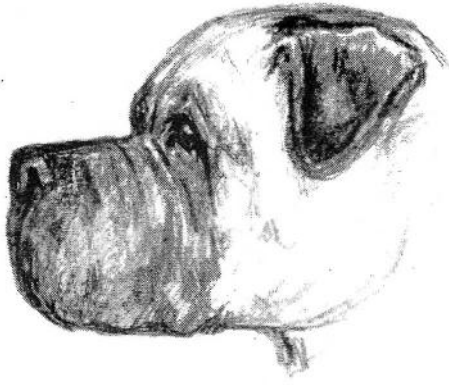
Correctly proportioned muzzle - square on square overlay



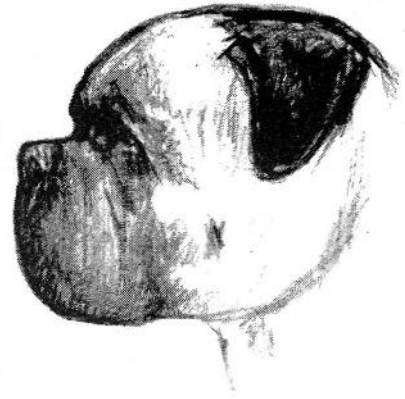
Snipey muzzle, narrow underjaw



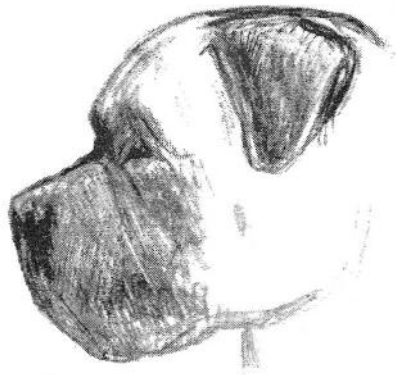
Too much repandus



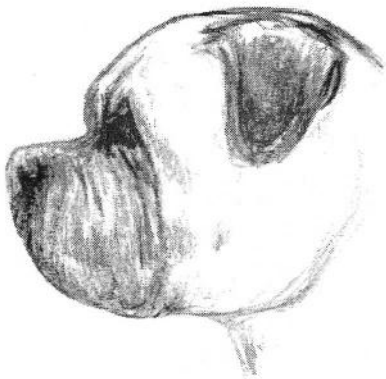
Too long muzzle



Too short muzzle



Down faced

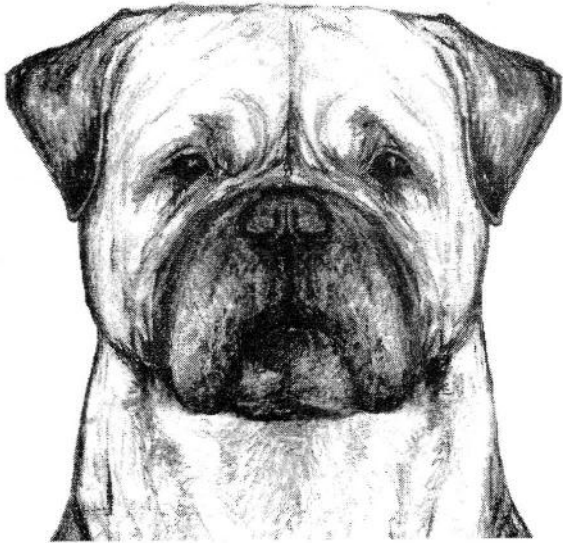


Lacking underjaw



Reversion to Bulldog

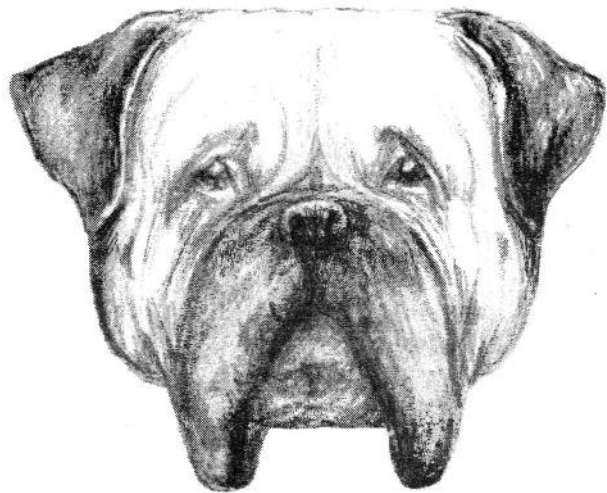
Nose - Black with nostrils large and broad.
Large, open nostrils are very important. A dog bred to hold a struggling intruder needs all the air it can take in. Stenotic (pinched) nostrils are a major impediment to normal respiration.



Stenotic nares - pinched nostrils

Flews - Not too pendulous

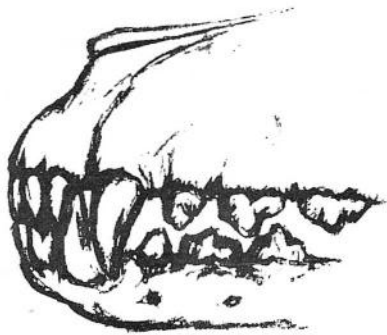
Pendulous flews not only detract for the square appearance of the muzzle but are a danger to a dog that works by holding it's adversary. The flews should be long enough and padded enough to contribute to the square appearance of the muzzle



Excessive flews

Bite - preferably level or slightly undershot. Canine teeth large and set wide apart.

As there is no punctuation between the descriptions in the sentence describing bite, there is no reason to penalize a dog that has a reverse scissors or slightly undershot bite. Because of it's Bulldog background, the Bullmastiff, with a reasonable amount of space between the upper and lower canine should be allowed. However, the amount of space should never be extreme. Severely undershot dogs should be penalized to the degree of the fault. Wry mouths are unacceptable as they are in any breed. This is a deformity. Large, wide set canines are desirable and give the dog a greater holding ability. Emphasis should be placed on the desirability of a broad underjaw.



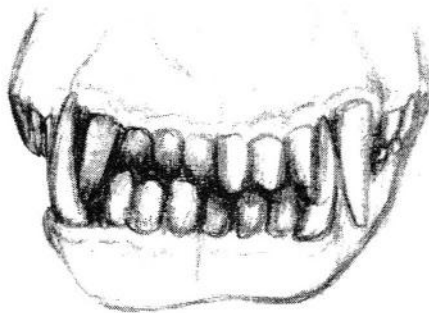
Level



Reverse scissors



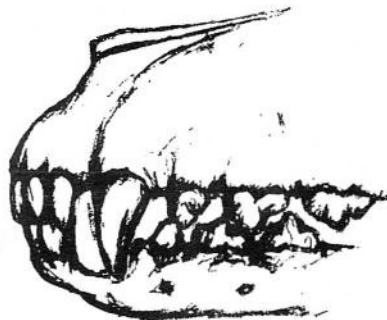
Slightly undershot



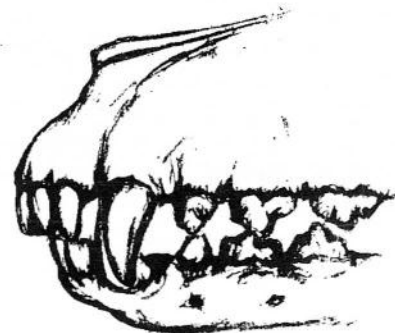
Wry mouth



Severely undrshot



Scissors (over)

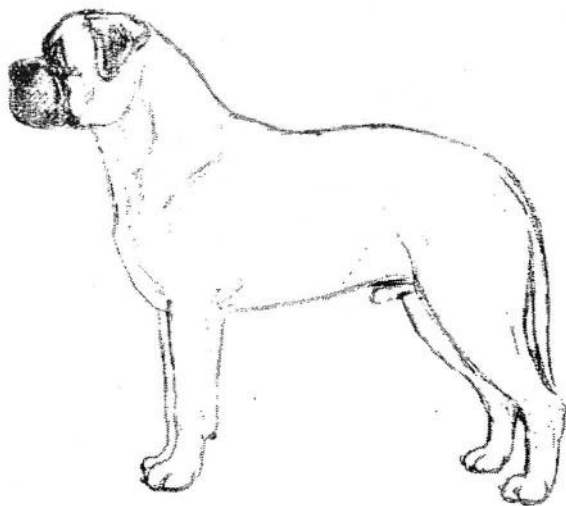


Overshot (parrot mouth)

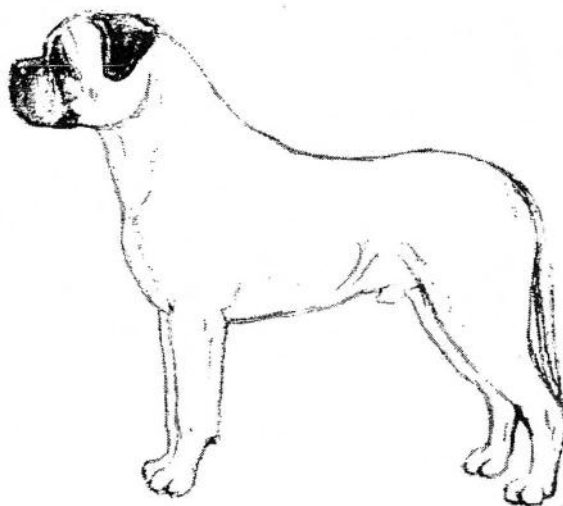
Neck - Slightly arched, of moderate length, very muscular, and almost equal in circumference to the skull.
The strong musculing and circumference of the neck are important to the support of the large and powerful skull.
Too short a neck, which results from too straight a shoulder, is restrictive. Too long a neck reduces the strength of the neck and the proper balance of the dog.

Topline - Straight and level between withers and loin.

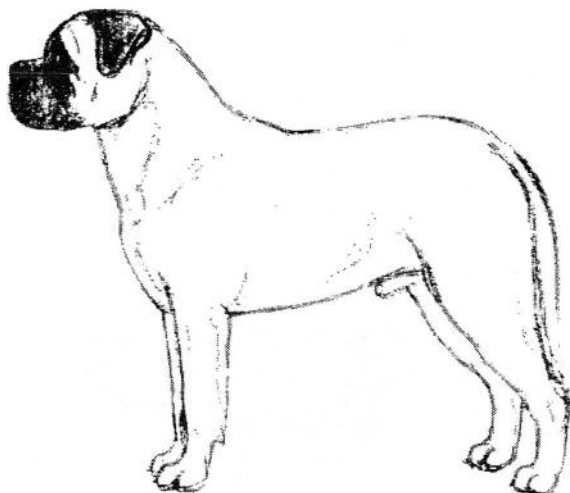
In a dog of this substance a strong spinal connection is important. Weakness in the topline interferes with the dog's ability to coordinate front and rear movement.



Roach back



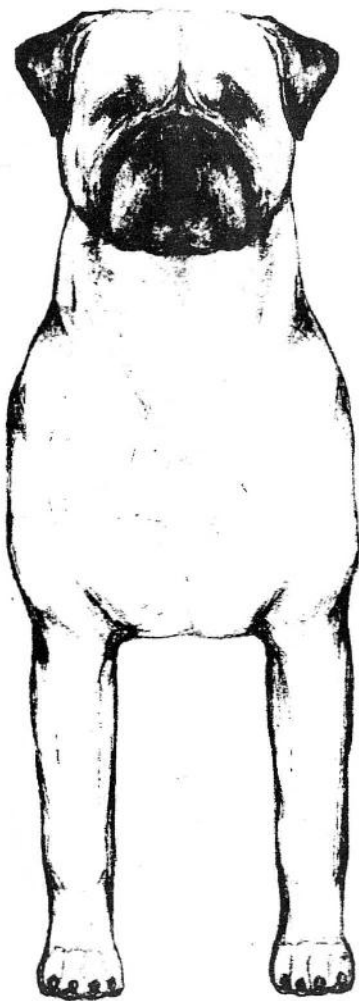
Sway back



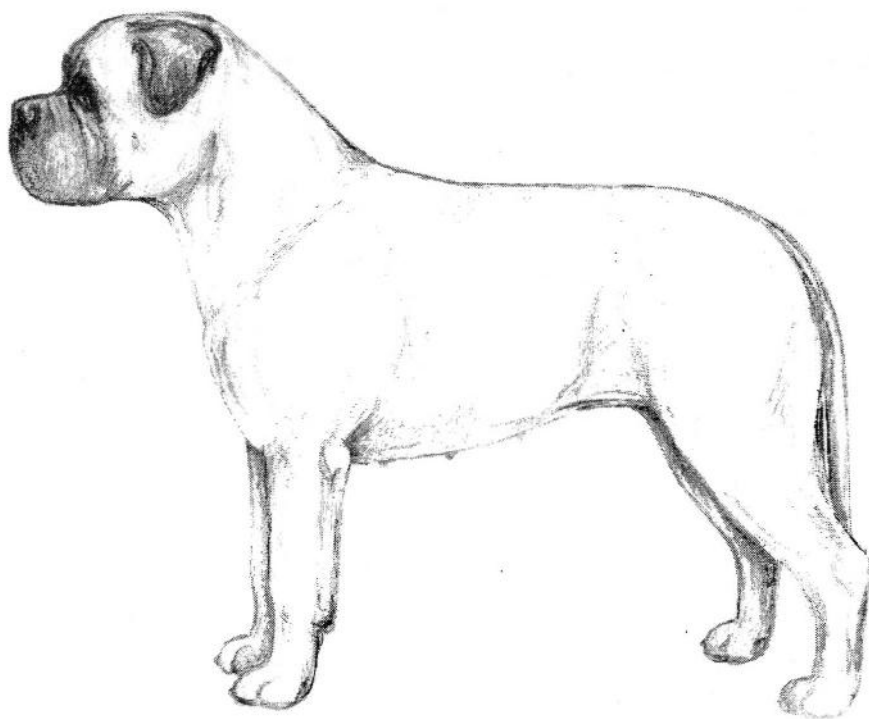
High in rear

Body - Compact. Chest wide and deep, with ribs well sprung and well set down between the forelegs
Compactness of body with a deep, well spring chest, set well down between the dog's forelegs gives the Bullmastiff an excellent center of gravity and good lung capacity needed to perform it's work - downing and holding.

Undesirable: herring gut, too long in body, shallow chest, lack of rib spring.



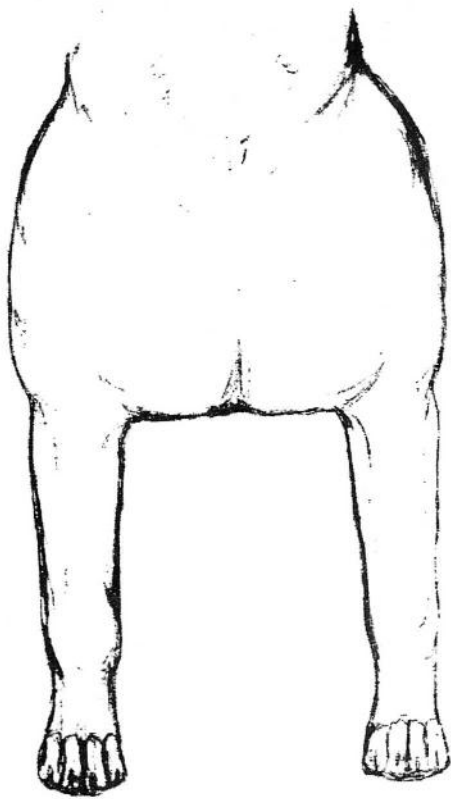
Correct front



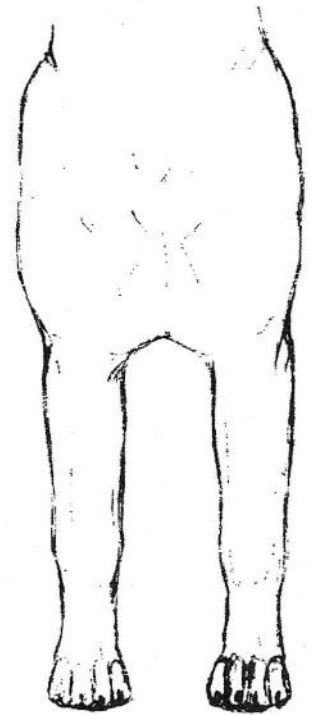
Correct side

Back - Short, giving the impression of a well balanced dog.
A short, level back is necessary to create compactness and balance.

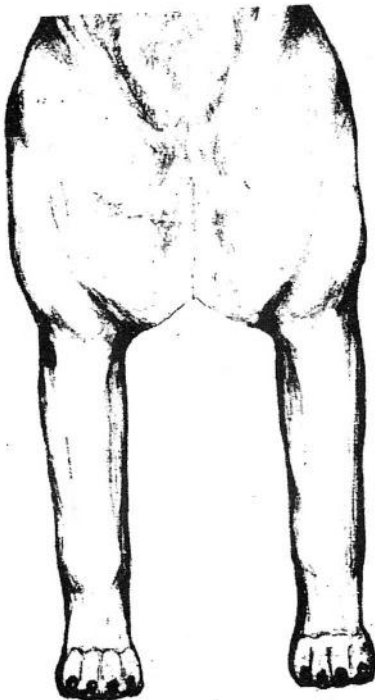
Undesirable: roached or sway back, high in rear.



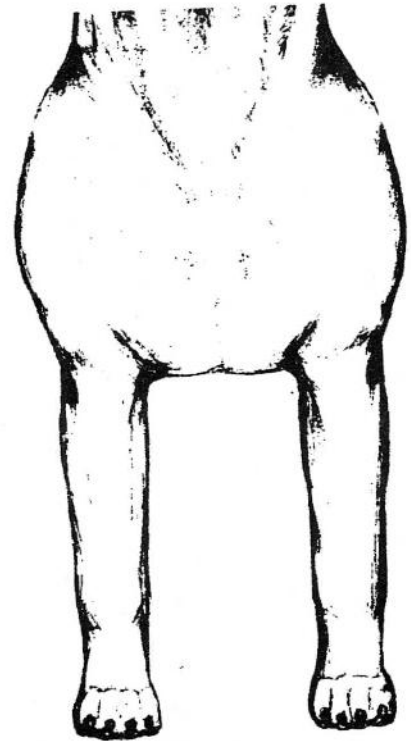
Too wide chest



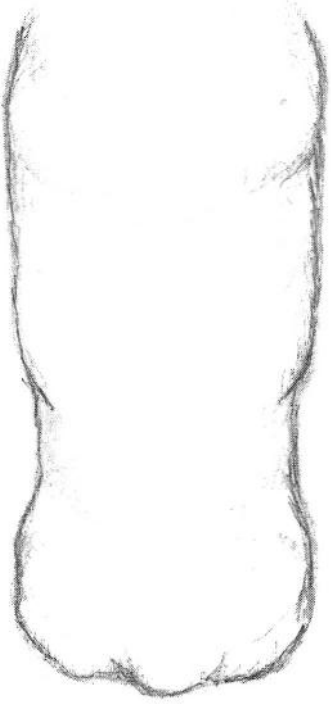
Too narrow chest



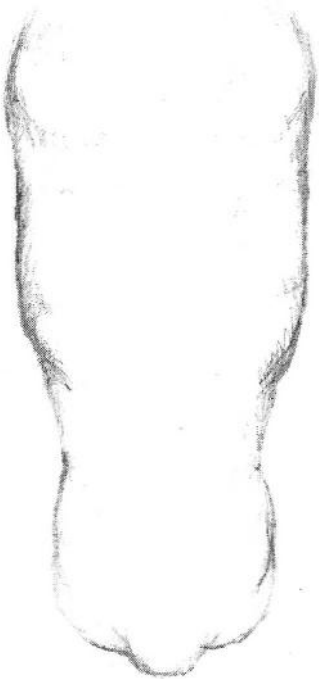
Cathedral chest (shallow brisket)



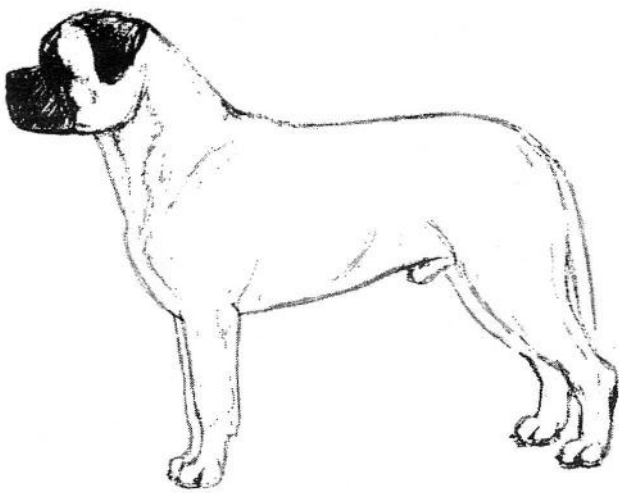
Loaded shoulders



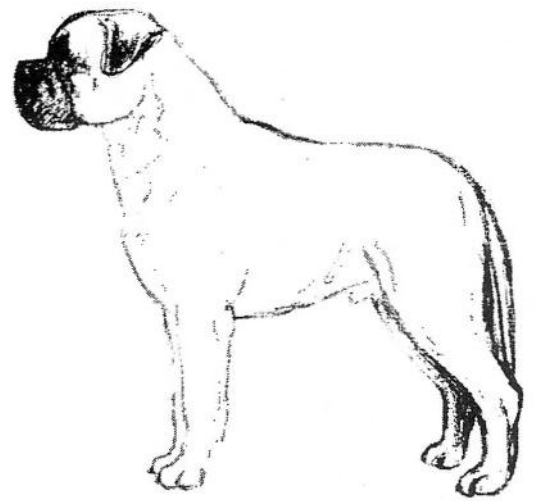
Top view - proper width front to rear



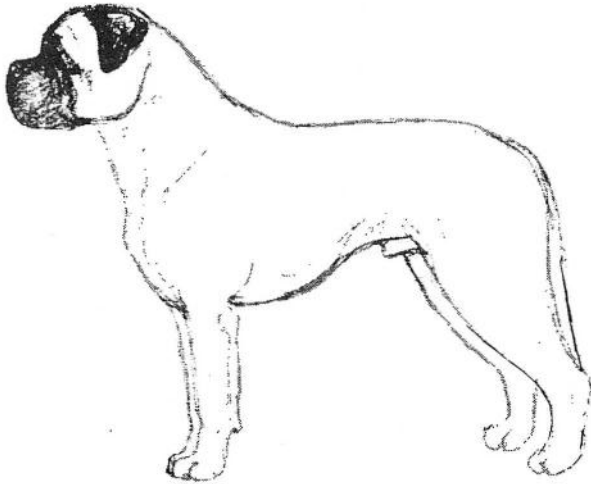
Top view - narrow rear



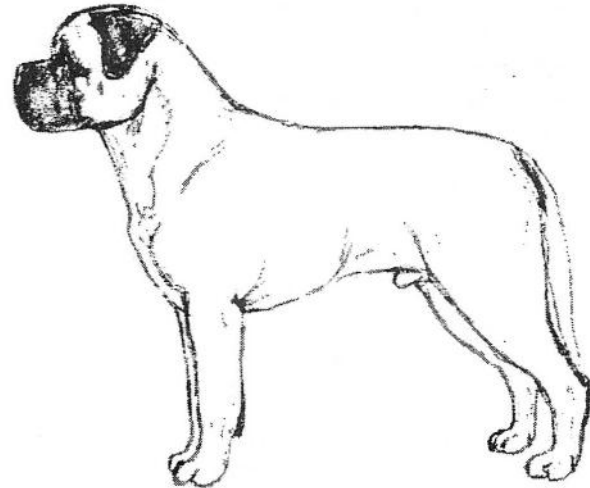
Too long body



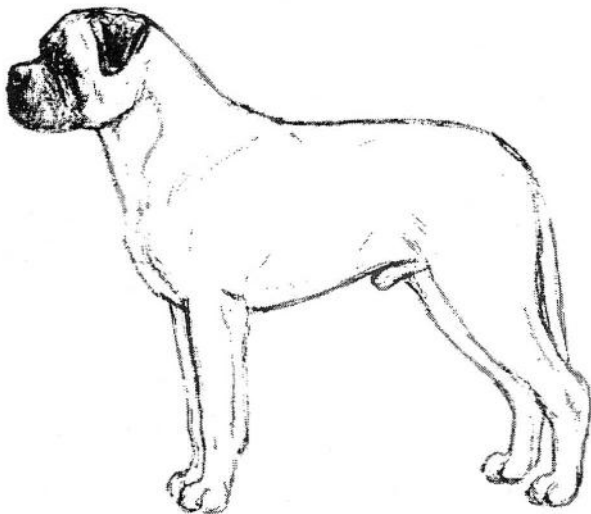
Too short body



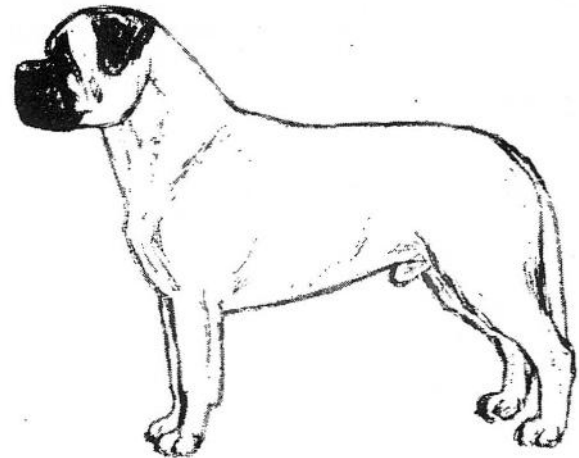
Herring gutted



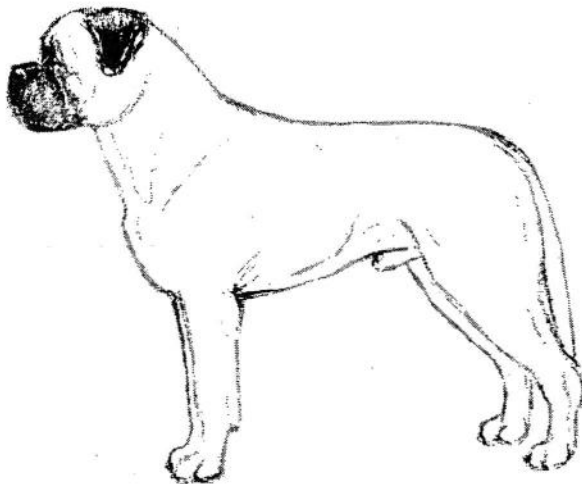
Too short rib cage



Too long on leg



Too short on leg



Lacking depth

Loin - Wide, muscular, and slightly arched, with fair depth of flank.

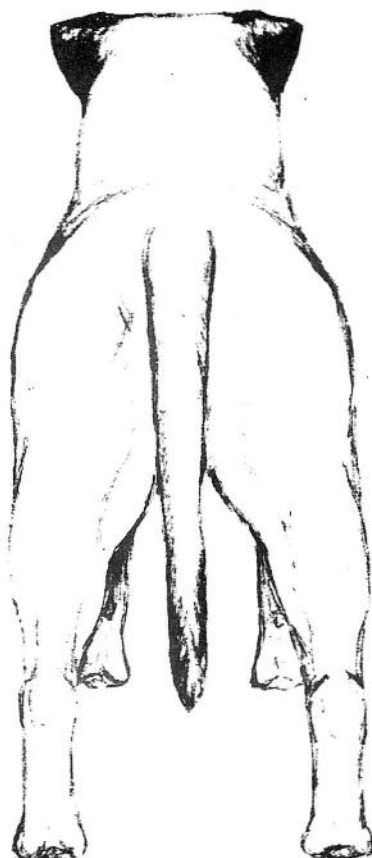
The loin is described as slightly arched. Obviously this means front to back. The purpose of this arched loin, caused by a slight tip of the pelvis, is to allow an only moderately angulated dog to reach under itself to attain drive in its rear assembly. The wide, muscular loin and fairly deep flank contribute to the overall strength of the rear, and balance with the dog's strong deep front assembly.

Tail - Set on high, strong at the root and tapering to the hocks. It may be carried straight or curved, but never carried hound fashion.

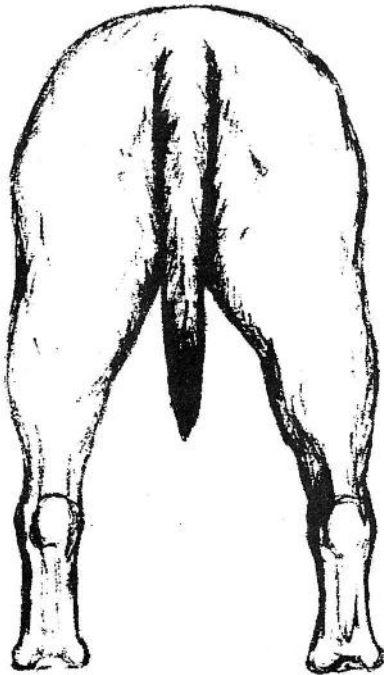
As the tail is an extension of the spine, a sturdy, high set tail root indicates the strength of the spinal column itself, something very important in supporting the rest of the skeleton of a substantial animal. A low set tail indicates a greater than desired tip of the pelvis.

A tail carried hound fashion is carried curved OVER the back. A tail carried above the level of the topline or with a curve is not improper unless the tail curves back over the body. A dog with a high set tail, when alert, should not be expected to carry its tail down. Tail position is an indication of the dog's attitude.

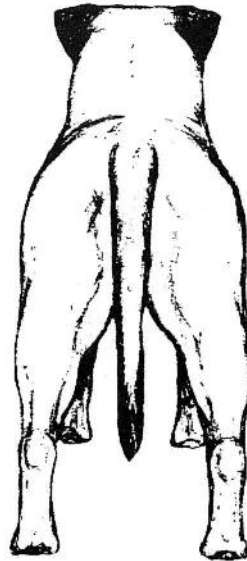
Undesirable: too short, rat tail, hound tail, or crank tail.



Correct tail



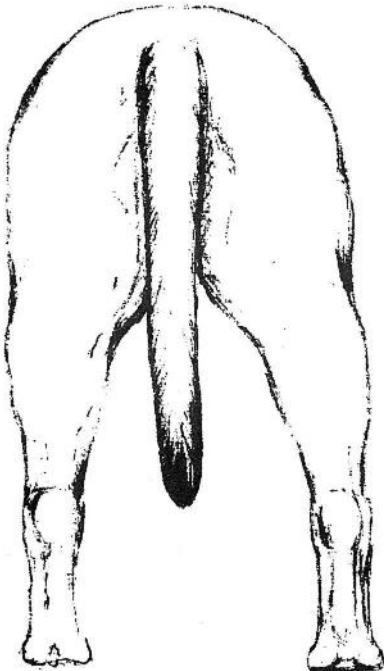
Short tail



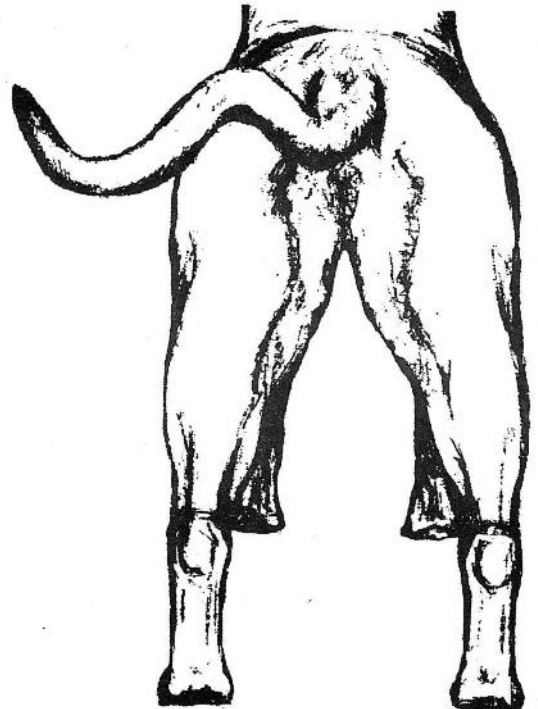
Correct tail



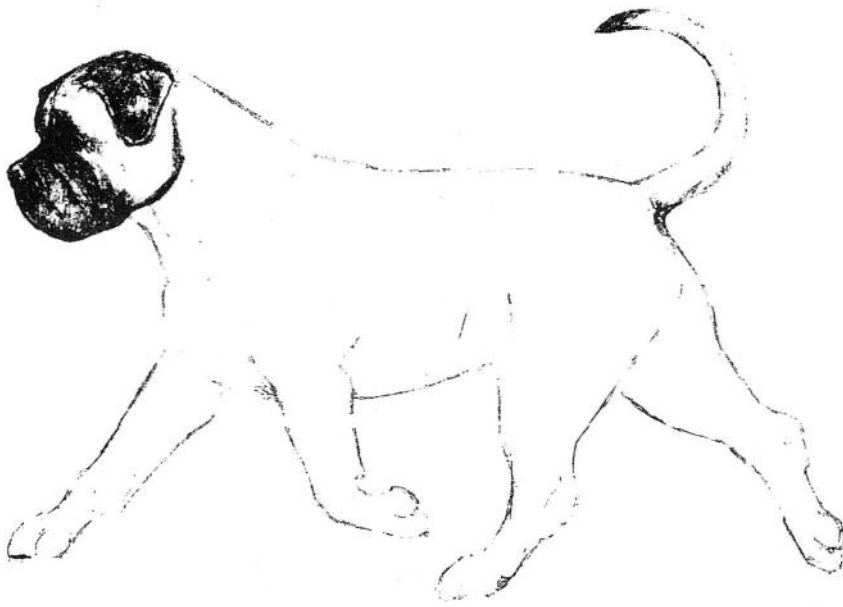
Rat tail



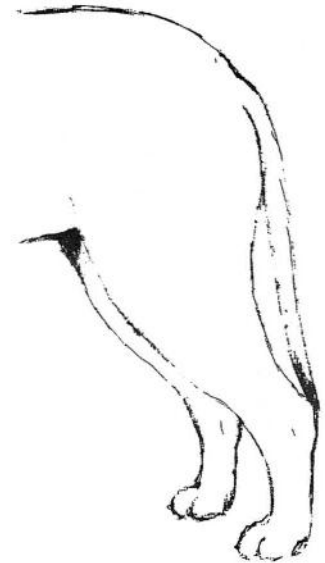
Untapering tail



Crank tail

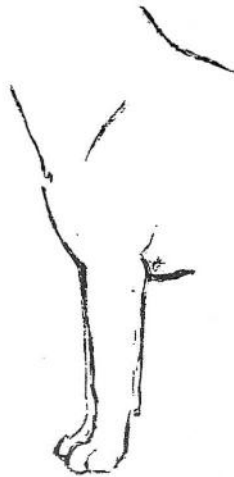


Tail carried hound fashion over the back



Low tail set

Forequarters - Shoulders muscular but not loaded, and slightly sloping.
Shoulders are only slightly sloping in accord with the moderate angulation of the dog's rear.

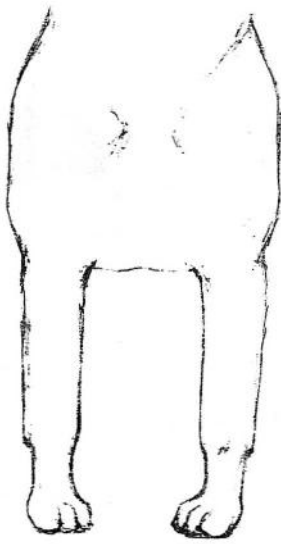


Correct shoulder layback

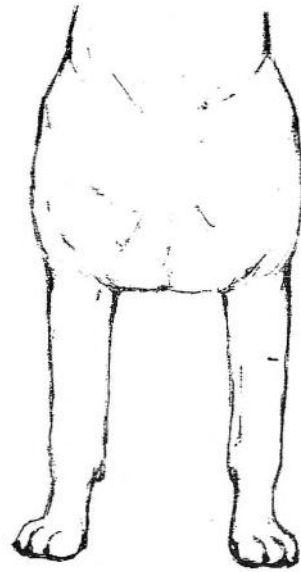


Straight shoulder

Undesirable: loaded shoulders, narrow chests, lack of brisket



Turning in



Turning out

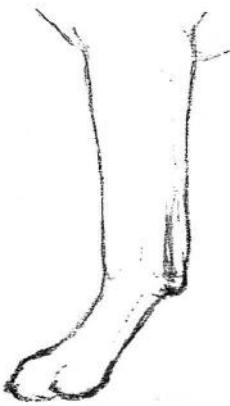
Forelegs straight, well boned, and set well apart; elbows turned neither in nor out.

The forelegs being well boned, set well apart, with properly aligned elbows and strong pasterns are a necessity in supporting the dog's substantial frame.

Undesirable: weak pasterns, elbows turned in or out.

Pasterns straight, feet of medium size, with round toes well arched. Pads thick and tough; nails black.

As the dog was intended to work on rough ground, tough, well padded feet are an important part of the dog's basic makeup.



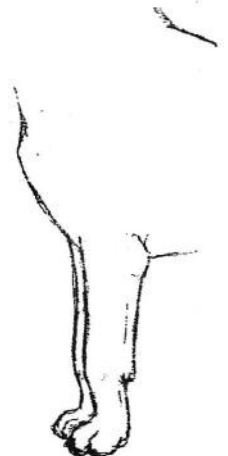
Down in pastern



Flat footed



Splay footed

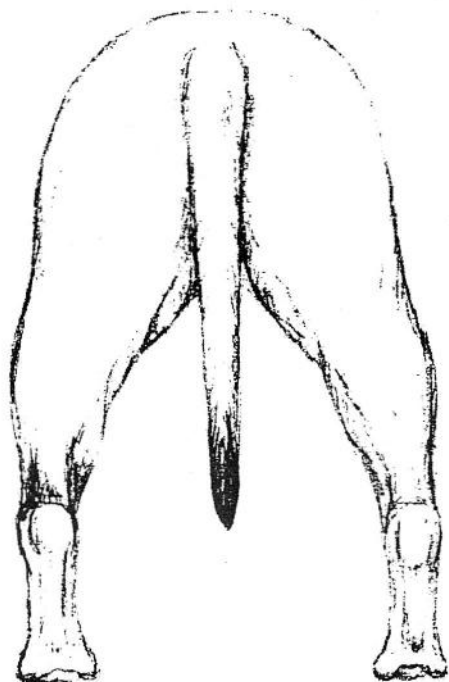


Knuckling over

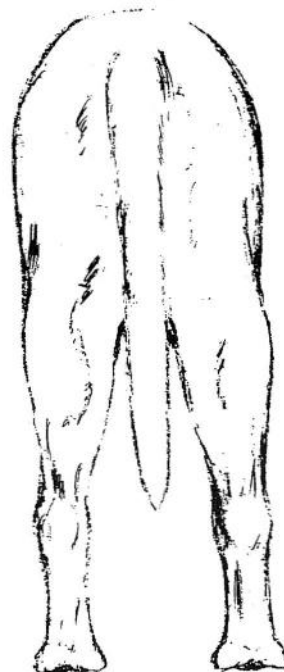
Hindquarters - Broad and muscular, with well developed second thigh, denoting power, but not cumbersome.

The hindquarters supply the drive in the dog's stride. Their strong musculature and support enable the dog to make quick turns and utilize quick bursts of speed which are necessary for it's intended work. A strong second thigh is emphasized in the standard because it is an integral part of the mechanism that produces powerful rear movement.

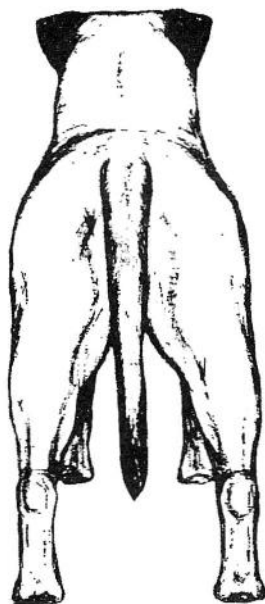
Undesirable: straight stifle and/or hock, lack of well developed second thigh, bowed femurs, narrow rear.



Too wide



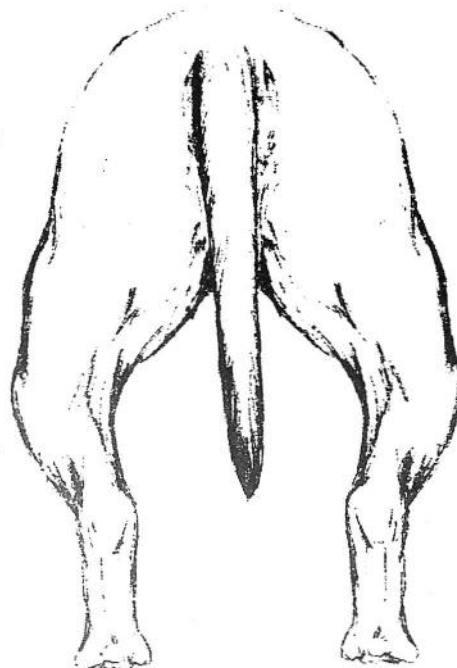
Too narrow



Correct rear



Cow hocks



Bowed femurs

Moderate angulation at hocks. Cowhocks and splay feet are serious faults.

The hocks are only moderately angulated because hock set far back would not properly support the weight of the dog's substantial body. Cowhocks cause movement that generally breaks the proper tracking of the rear legs. Splay feet are weak feet and a severe detriment to a working dog.

Consider as faults: splay feet and cowhocks.



Straight rear



Overangulated rear



Short hock



Steep Croup



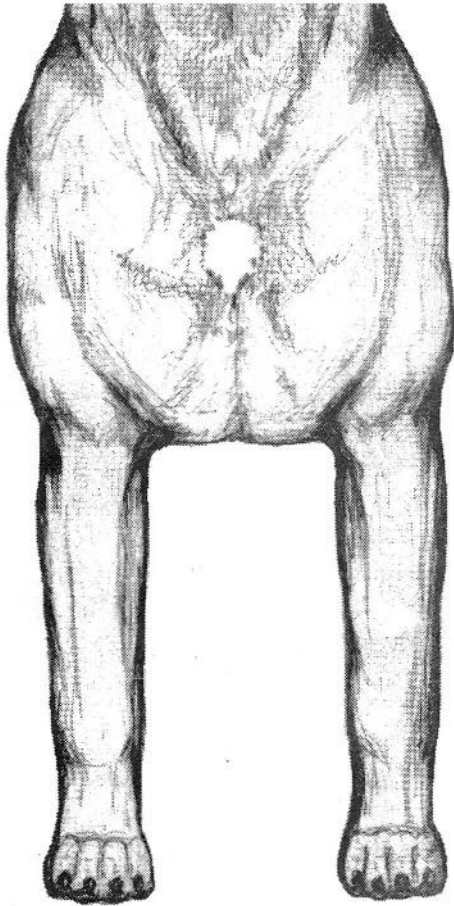
Long Hock

Coat - Short and dense, giving good weather protection.

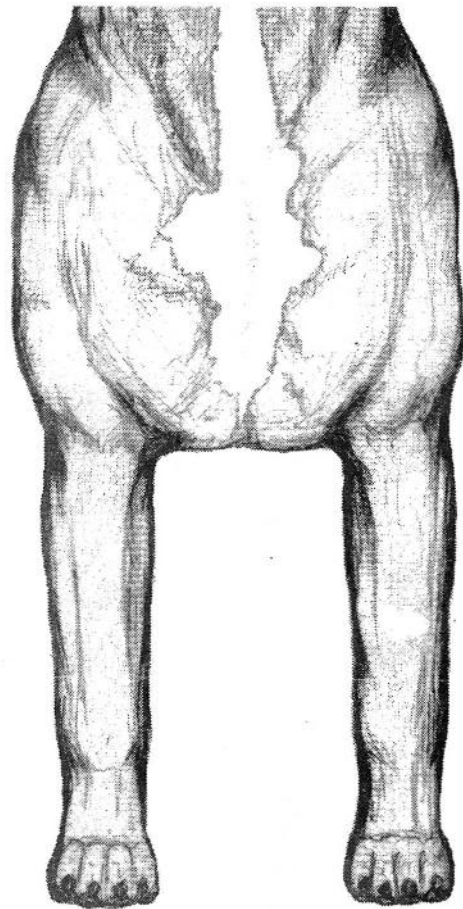
The necessity for a short, dense coat was dictated by the climate and condition in which the dog worked. While there is an undercoat for weather protection, the top coat should lay flat and be a tight, short coat. Soft, fluffy, wooly, and/or long coats are improper as they would give little protection against precipitation.

Color - red, fawn, or brindle. Except for a very small white spot on the chest white marking is considered a fault.

The Bullmastiff originally worked as a night dog. Dark color was beneficial. Brindle was the original desired color as it was the best camouflage. There is no present day color preference. Excessive white marking is discouraged.



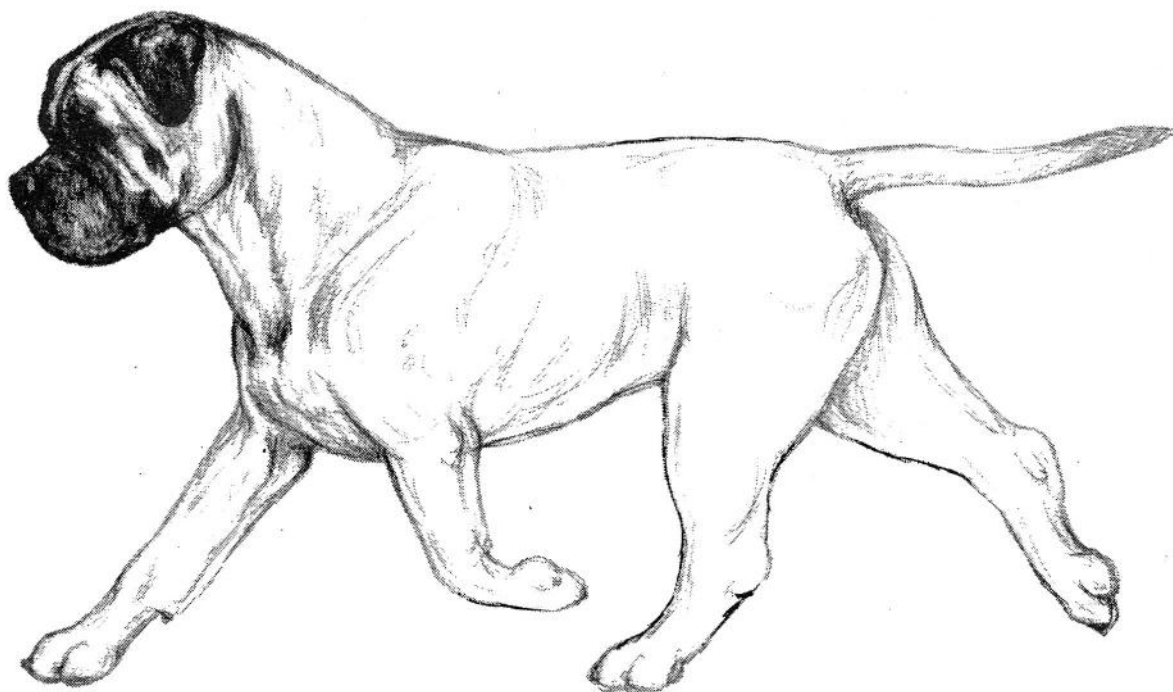
Acceptable white marking



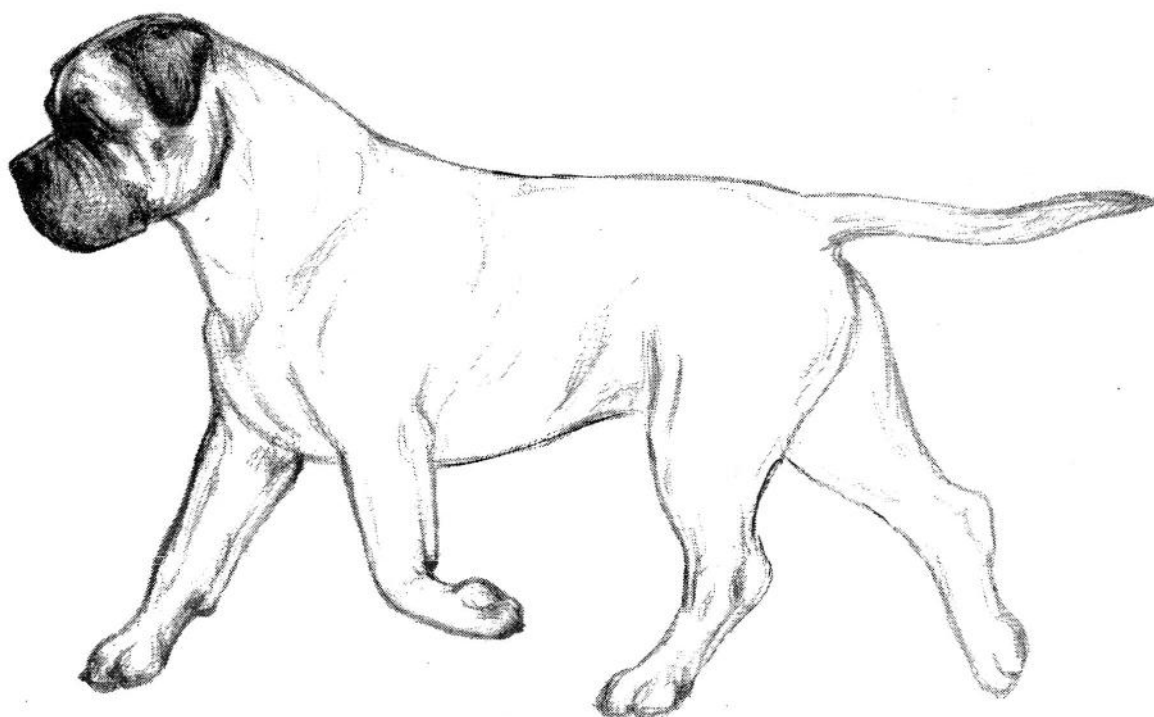
Excessive white marking

Gait - Free, smooth, and powerful. When viewed from the side, reach and drive indicate maximum use of the dog's moderate angulation. Back remains level and firm.

The standard description is quite clear. While Bullmastiffs did not work long distances at the trot, that gait is still the best indicator of a dog's soundness of movement. Efficiency of movement is important in dogs that work long hours over rough terrain.

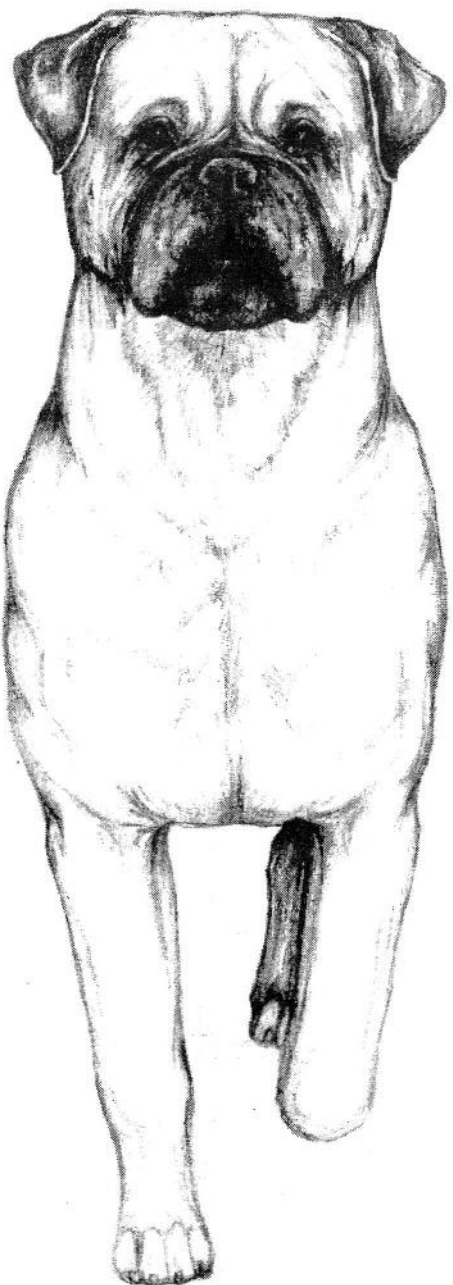


Correct extension and movement

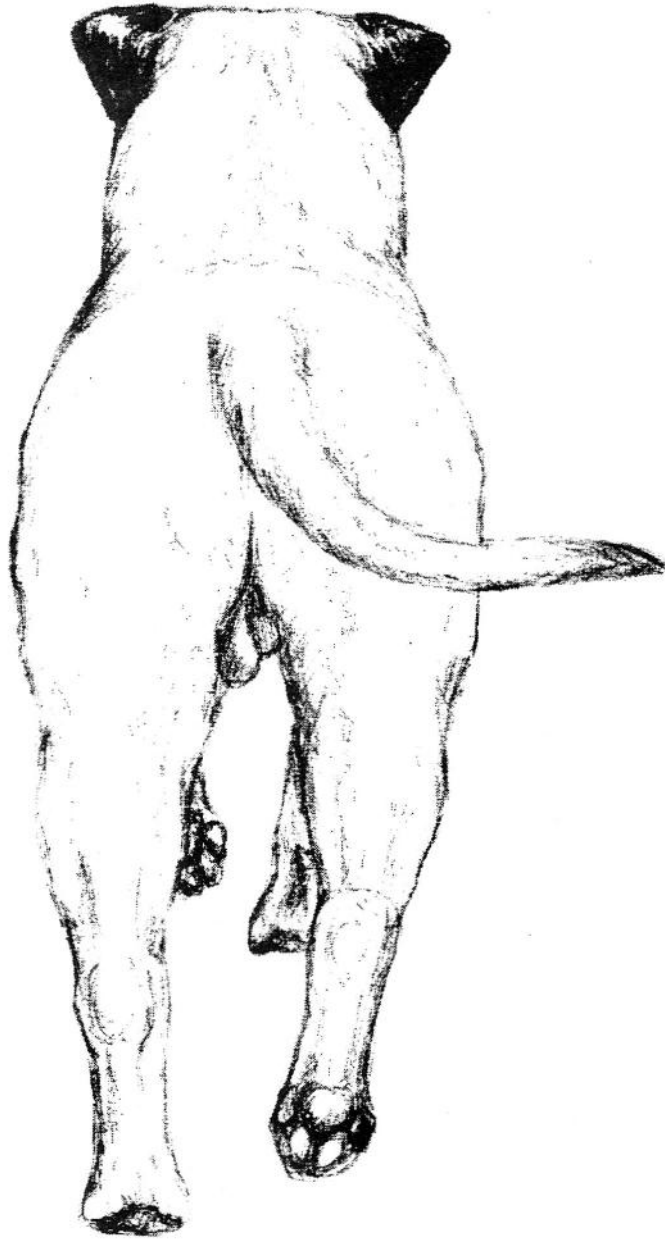


Restricted movement (lack of reach and drive)

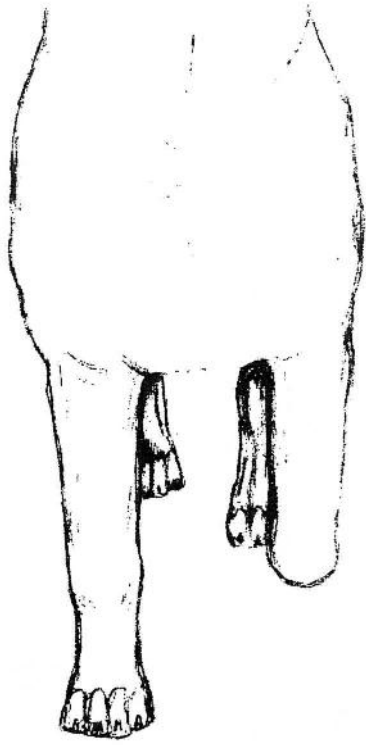
Coming and going, the dog moves in a straight line. Feet tend to converge under the body without crossing over, as speed increases. There is no twisting in or out of the joints.



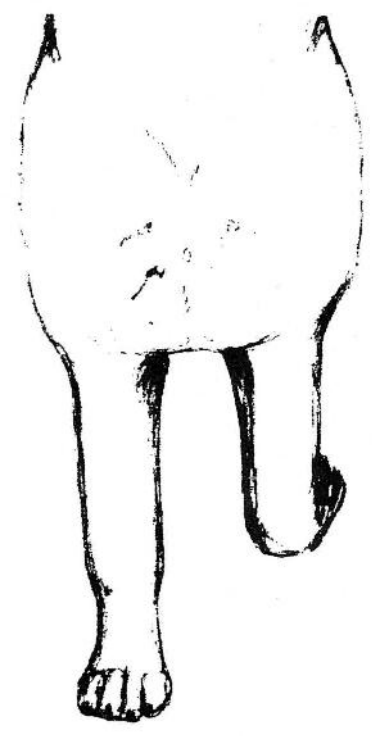
Correct movement from front



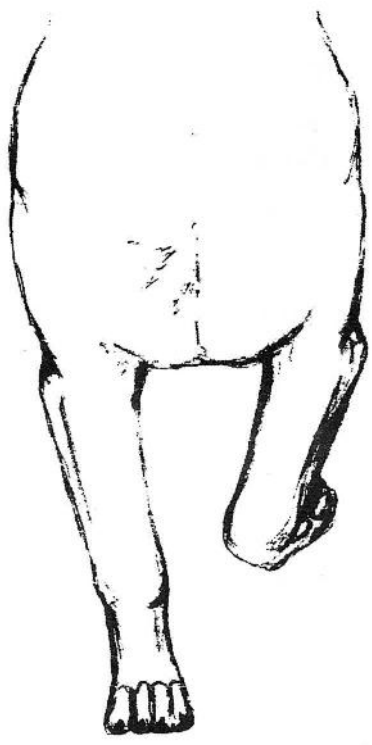
Correct movement from rear



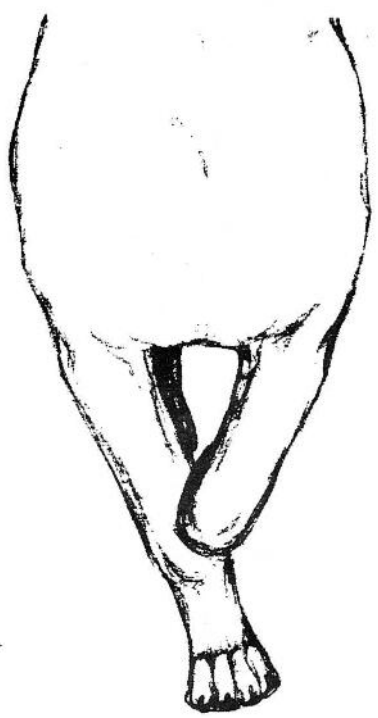
Moving wide



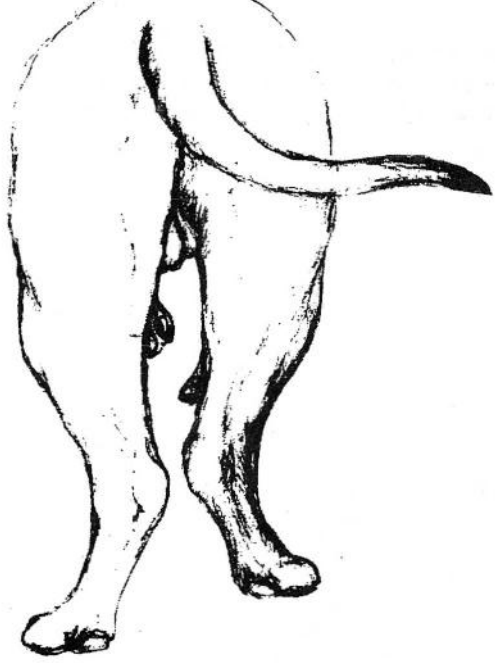
Paddling



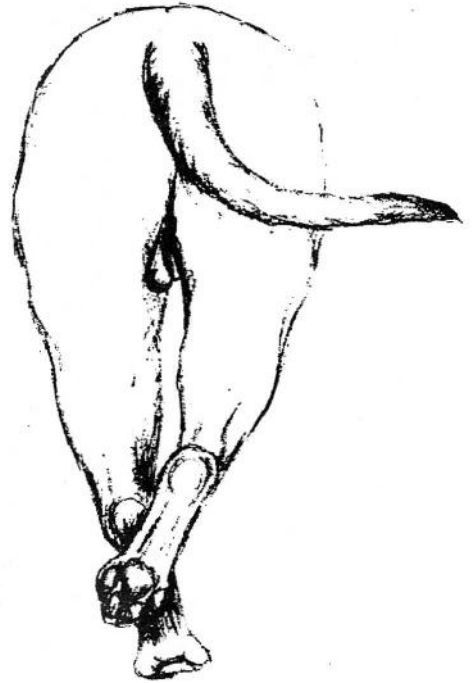
Moving out at elbow



Crossing in front



Cowhocks



Crossing in rear



Moving wide