



ILLUSTRATED STANDARD

for the CHIHUAHUA

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the P.... indicates the page within the source that contains the quoted reference.*

ILLUSTRATED STANDARD & ELABORATION

Introduction:

The choice of a Chihuahua as a companion and perhaps as a show dog is most often based upon the breed's description contained in its Standard. Many praise the traits of small size, sauciness, and loyalty, as well as the alertness that imparts guardian-like ability. Judges and breeders are the stewards of the Chihuahua qualities that the standard details and owners enjoy and treasure.

*“Luckily in the Chihuahua standard there is nothing laid down that is over-exaggerated and which could be detrimental to the breed in any way.”
(#17, p20)*

The Chihuahua Club of America, Inc. views the judging and breeding of Chihuahuas as serious and important. Breeders shape the future of the breed. Judges grade each entry's percentage of excellence and award the points that finish champions, the foremost genetic contributors to the breed.

Type, temperament, and soundness are fundamental to each breed.

The Chihuahua must rely on its breeders and judges to insure it.

The Chihuahua Club of America, Inc. has prepared this Illustrated Standard with the expectation that it will help with decisions made by judges and breeders. It is hoped that the information will aid in the recognition of the characteristics and attributes that define the Chihuahua and give the breed its uniqueness.

History of the CHIHUAHUA

Study of the breed's origin have uncovered Chihuahua-like images in many parts and times of the world, including China, Egypt, Europe, Malta, Mexico, and South America; some dating, perhaps, from the ninth century. Many historians have documented similar-appearing little dogs found in artifacts, written descriptions, and art works, including a 1400's Botticelli painting in the Sistine Chapel!

Chihuahua history in the United States began in the mid-1800's when Americans began acquiring the dogs in Mexico. Many were purchased from the area of Chihuahua, ergo, the breed's name, Chihuahua. Both varieties were popular and the presence of a molera (open fontanel) was a breed characteristic.

Maxwell Riddle in This Is the Chihuahua, writes, "Whatever its origin, the modern Chihuahua is a purely American dog. The American standard is world wide and probably every registered Chihuahua in the world traces to purely American blood." (#20, p26) In the Chihuahua Guide, author Hilary Harmar states that "the Chihuahua has been developed to its present standard by American breeders during this century (20th)." (#16, p19)

- AKC recognized the breed in 1924.
- The first three AKC registered Chihuahuas were Long Coats. (#26, p6)
- The Chihuahua Club of America was formed in February 1923 and adopted the breed's standard.
- "The AKC first recognized the varieties (with trophies) at the Sesqui-Centennial in 1926." (#23, p42)
- Smooth Coats and Long Coats were divided into varieties in 1952.
- The standard has been revised several times; 1934, 1954, 1972, and 1990.

From the original standard of 1923 until today, the words that describe the general appearance of the Chihuahua have remained the same: a graceful, alert, swift-moving little dog with saucy expression; compact, and with terrier-like qualities.

These words represent the essence of the breed and are of tremendous importance.

- The first Chihuahua was exhibited in 1884 at the Philadelphia Kennel Club show. (#24, p32)
- During the 1890's less than 10 Chihuahuas were shown in the "listed dog" class (so designated for unregistered dogs).
- The first Chihuahua champion, "Beppie" (f), was listed in the American Kennel Club's 1908 Stud Book.
- In 1916 approximately 50 were exhibited in all shows combined.
- There were 50 entries in the Chihuahua club of America's Specialty in 1923. (#234, p33)
- At the 1949 Chihuahua Specialty held in Chicago in conjunction with the Western Specialty Club's Association, the entry was 109. (#24, p73)
- In that same year, 1949, the Chihuahua was 8th in popularity in the U.S. with 7,156 registered. (#24, p38)
- In 1951, Ch. Attas' Gretchen, a Smooth Coat female, was the first Chihuahua to win an all breed Best in Show.
- In 1975, the first Long Coat to win an all breed Best in Show was also a female, Ch. Snow Bunny d'Casa de Cris.
- The first CCA rotating specialty was in 1977 in Atlanta, Georgia. (#10, p19)
- In 1987, the AKC registered 21,398 Chihuahuas; almost 15,000 competed in AKC shows and 265 earned championships.
- For the year 2000, the breed ranked 8th in popularity; 43,096 were registered; 388 attained championships, 20 earned obedience titles.

The Chihuahua has consistently ranked among top ten breeds in popularity and leads the Toy Group in the number of championships attained each year.

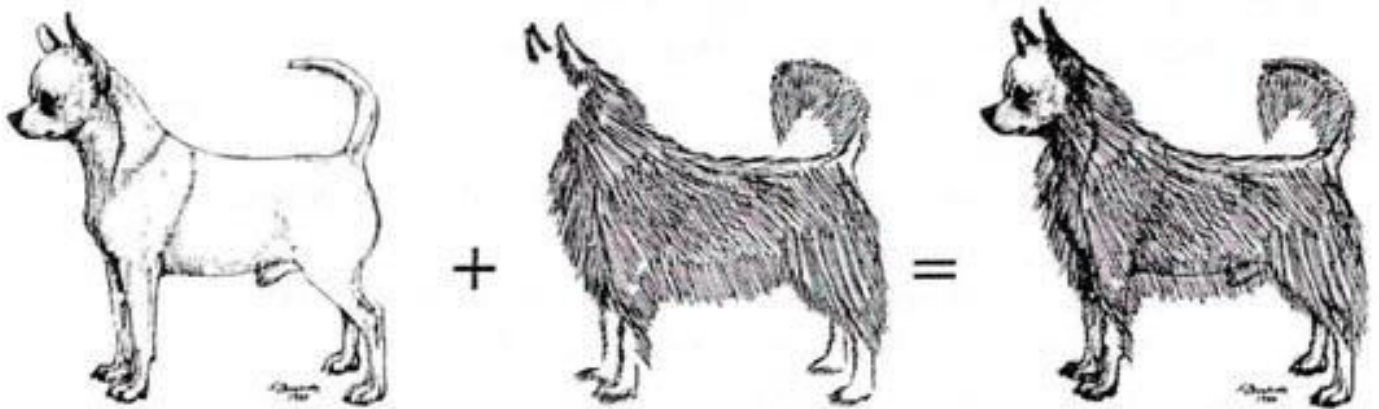
***The popularity and diminutive size of the breed
require uncompromising adherence by judges and breeders
to the descriptions in the standard.***

This publication does not constitute any change in the existing Official Standard adopted by the Chihuahua Club of America in 1990. It is simply an interpretation.

THE CHIHUAHUA STANDARD WITH ILLUSTRATION AND ELABORATION

The Chihuahua is exhibited in two varieties, Smooth Coat and Long Coat.

The two varieties are based SOLELY on COAT – everything else is IDENTICAL. Do not forget that **the two varieties are the same breed under their coats.** Strengths of one variety are the same in the other; an unwanted weakness in one is not acceptable in the other.



Artwork by NANCY SHONBECK

Smooth Coat

+ Coat

= Long Coat

Because the Chihuahua standard does not specify measurements, ratios, etc., **a variety of styles of Chihuahuas will be seen.** The standard is specific about how all the parts are related to each other and how the parts should fit and work.

As is evidenced by the photos included in this publication, no one style is the only correct one. Wherever possible, the photos that illustrate correct examples are dogs that have won specialties or have been nationally ranked. Although the style of the dogs may be different, each is correct.

Long Coat Chihuahua Champions



E. Ruth Terry, "believes in a slight range of acceptability, relative to the ideal, for each part of the dog. The parts are combined to form a whole dog that comes within satisfactory parameters, but may exhibit slight variations from the standard in type, character, balance and soundness. The range of acceptability must not be extreme, but rather deviate just slightly from the ideal." (#8, p64)

Smooth Coat Chihuahua Champions



Although the Chihuahua is quite small, the standard describes and requires a dog that is constructed sturdily, gaits efficiently and correctly, is pleasant to look at and live with, and truly is a big dog that lives in a little body.

The 1985 FCI Standard states, “its diminutive size, however, does not excuse any deformity, deficiency, or lack of harmony in any of the parts.” (#8, p43)

When evaluating the Chihuahua, except for disqualifications, and deviations of the bite as specified, **one fault is no worse than another; a better approach is to add up the good qualities and discern which dog is closest to the ideal.** If, instead, the judge concentrates on faults, the dog that wins may have the least faults, but may not have the most desired qualities, and may not be the best dog in the ring.

Emphasis should not be placed on one fault or virtue to the detriment of seeing the total dog, which is complete only with all of its parts. Personal preference to a particular style Chihuahua should not affect the evaluation process. The standard, the condition of the dogs, and showmanship are all considered when judging. A lesser dog should not win simply based on showmanship; **a very good Chihuahua should not lose because of less pleasing ring presence.**



A Long Coat Champion



A Smooth Coat Champion

Judges should **approach a Chihuahua on the table in a straight-forward manner**, NOT TENUOUSLY. The examination should be done deliberately without being heavy handed.

If there is concern regarding the dog's "stability", the judge should first offer the back of the hand. The breed may not behave perfectly on the table, but should not appear aggressive or excessively shy.

Extremely **quick, unexpected movements by the judge may distress this small breed** that is now several feet off the floor, is being approached by a stranger, and is expected to exhibit terrier-like temperament qualities.

Should a judge wish to compare dogs, **they may be re-examined on the table, perhaps two at a time.**

It is preferred that judges do not lean down over the dogs on the floor to re-examine.

To further compare heads or expression, exhibitors may be asked to pick up the dogs and present their heads to the judge.



Expression and temperament are more accurately judged when the Chihuahua is not on the table, but is interacting (sparring) with other dogs in the ring.



*In this publication, the **words of the standard are presented in bold, underlined print** prior to the appropriate elaboration.*

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

A graceful, alert, swift-moving little dog with saucy expression, compact, and with terrier-like qualities of temperament.

From the original standard of 1923, through revisions in 1934, 1954, 1972, and 1990, the above words have remained the same. They present a description of the essence of the breed and are of tremendous importance.

Each of these introductory words is essential to the breed standard and helps develop the mind's eye image of the ideal Chihuahua. An individual must have a clear mental picture that incorporates all of these attributes in order to evaluate the Chihuahua.

The **Chihuahua should project the attitudes of self-importance, confidence, and self-reliance.** Although the smallest breed, it has substance and should not appear fragile. The breed is known for its agility and fearlessness, and its cheerful, slightly haughty, demeanor. **A Chihuahua that resembles another breed (except in color or markings) is not correct.**



SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE – WEIGHT:

A well balanced dog not to exceed 6 pounds.

The ideal Chihuahua exhibits balance in all respects. No individual feature should appear to be exaggerated or so prominent that it detracts from an impression of overall balance.

“Vigor, symmetry, and soundness within a small compass is our object.”
(#24, p80)



SIZE – little dog, compact.

WEIGHT – not to exceed 6 pounds.

DISQUALIFICATION – any dog over 6 pounds in weight.

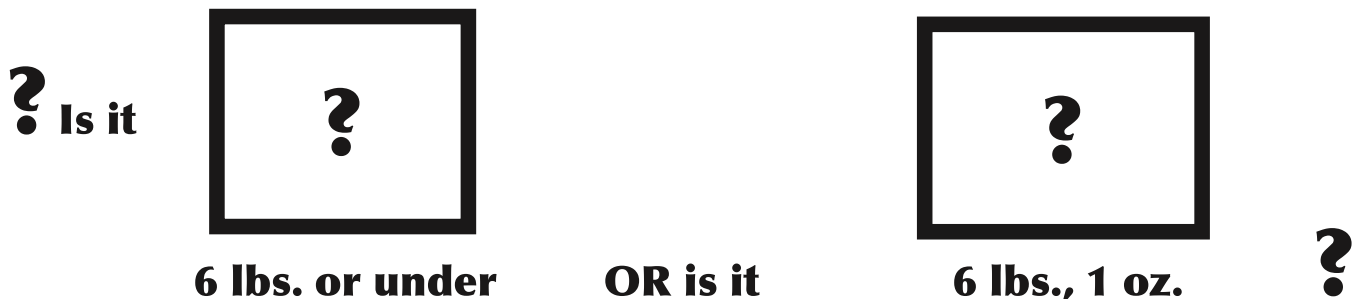


Although one of the **distinctive features** of the Chihuahua **is its small size**, the importance of that feature is **in comparison with other breeds, not in relation to other Chihuahuas.**

Size does not indicate weight; some little dog weigh heavy, some large ones very light. Although *the condition* of the dogs *is* a consideration, if they are **6 lbs and under, NO PREFERENCE may be given TO SIZE, no matter how LARGE or SMALL.**

The **disqualification is based upon WEIGHT not size.** The physical **size is irrelevant and should have no influence upon judging.**

A Chihuahua over 6 pounds **must** be disqualified. **When unsure of weight, ask the superintendent for the scale.**



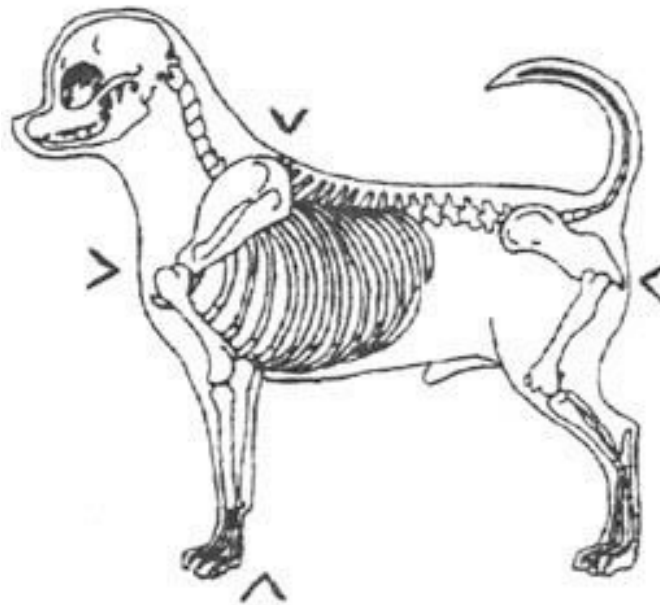
Chihuahua exhibitors complain that larger dogs often lose to lesser quality small dogs and believe the losses are due to the hesitancy of judges to call for the scale to verify weight. **Exhibitors much prefer the weighing of their dogs to losing because of a judge's uncertainty.**

If judges notify the superintendent prior to the judging time for Chihuahuas that a scale may be needed at the ring, there should be minimum delay in the schedule but maximum benefit to the breed. If the scale is used, it is unlikely that it will be needed again that day.

PROPORTION – a well balanced, compact, little dog. The body is off-square; hence, slightly longer {than tall} when measured {the BODY, NOT the BACK} from the point of shoulder {NOT the withers} to point of buttocks than height at the withers. Somewhat shorter bodies are preferred in males.

The human hand can be used to measure the body to height proportion.

BODY MEASUREMENT POINTS



Even though somewhere shorter bodies are preferred in males, **body height and body length must NEVER be the SAME**, because the dog would not be the required slightly longer than tall.

Although the standard calls for the body to be slightly longer than tall, the impression of **overall balance without exaggeration** will be affected if a dog appears very short or overly long in back, or too short or too long legged.

The 1985 FCI standard states that “the distance from brisket to withers is the same as to ground.” (#8, p43)

The fact that the Chihuahua is a small dog does not eliminate the need for all parts to work together in coordination and balance. **(No suggestion of “dwarfism” is acceptable.)**

SUBSTANCE – compact; not to exceed 6 pounds.

“Compact **refers to the union of various body parts, i.e., firmly joined.** It does NOT mean “cobby” which relates to overall body shape...”
(#13, p34 – 35)

The body should have **the feel of substance** with moderate chestiness and good depth of brisket; it should not be tube-shaped or **weedy**. Not as slender as an Italian Greyhound, nor as full-bodied as a Pug.



HEAD

A well rounded “apple dome” skull, with or without molera.

A domed skull is “rounded or arched in all directions and in varying degrees. In the Chihuahua it is at its most extreme.” (#13, p122)

The ideal Chihuahua head is truly apple domed. Most sources describe the Chihuahua’s skull shape to be that of a cooking apple; the roundness is irregular, permitting the required domed width between the ears. The **skull** should be **clearly rounded from stop to occiput** and **between the ears**. (The occiput is discernable but not prominent.) The structural roundness of the skull does not include the cheek muscles which should be relatively lean.

UNDESIRABLE: Flat, receding, exceedingly domed skulls (skulls that appear hydrocephalic) or lacking in stop.

Unlike most of the other toy breeds, a **MOLERA**, (an open fontanel), **is ACCEPTABLE** in Chihuahuas and is **NOT a concern for judges**.

Because **the presence of a molera is of no consequence**, there is **no need for judges to feel for it; better to feel for the rounded skull**. (The molera was *required* in the original 1923 breed standard.)

Although some may say the Chihuahua is a “head” breed,

**it truly needs all of its
Chihuahua-like parts.**

REMEMBER,

The standard describes a
well balanced little dog,

NOT a HEAD STUDY.



EXPRESSION – Saucy

This **impudent look is one** of the **terrier-like qualities** of temperament that is required of the Chihuahua. A timid, frightened, or truculent expression is not desirable.

EYES – Full, but not protruding, balanced, set well apart – luminous dark or luminous ruby. (Light eyes in blonde or white-colored dogs permissible.)

Blue eyes or a difference in the color of the iris in the two eyes, or two different colors within one iris should be considered a serious fault.

The globular **eyes reflect the saucy, impudent attitude**. The large, round eyes are **set wide apart on the level of the stop and the lowest part of the ears**.

Light colored eyes and eye rims that match or blend with coat color and ruby eyes are as common and acceptable in light-colored dogs as are dark eyes and eye rims.

UNDESIRABLE: Almond, beady, bulging, slit-like, too small or obliquely placed eyes, excessive “white” showing in the eye.

STOP – Well defined. When viewed in profile, it forms a near 90 degree angle where muzzle joins skull. A Chihuahua head with little stop appears less round and very plain and is not desirable.



MUZZLE – Moderately short, slightly pointed.
Cheeks and jaws lean.

A variety of muzzles is seen in the Chihuahua. **The correct muzzle appears moderately short** (a short muzzle is “one that is shorter than half the total length of the skull”) (#13, p96) – and **tapers slightly** from jaws to the nose. “Acutely tapering muzzles are referred to as ‘pointed’, in contrast to those ending in a blunt squared-off fashion.” (#13, p96)

The muzzle should be low on the rounded skull and **should meet the skull with a very definite indented stop** at approximately a right angle. The cheeks and jaws are cleanly muscular; lean, but not flat. The lips should be tight, without flews; they are not pendulous.

The tongue should not be visible when the mouth is closed.

UNDESIRABLE: Muzzles that are snippy (pinched and without enough lower jaw), very blunt (the opposite of slightly pointed), dish-faced, or down-faced. A muzzle that is too broad and cheeks that are too filled and muscular giving the impression of coarseness. A muzzle that is too narrow with pinched in cheeks lacking muscle and lower jaw is too fine. Extremely short muzzles may be too blunt and not slightly pointed. Muzzles that are too long usually do not have enough stop and appear “foxy” and plain faced.

There should be no suggestion of an expression that resembles a Pug or a Toy Manchester Terrier.

NOSE – Self-colored in blond types, or black.
In moles, blues, and chocolates, they are self-colored.
In blond types, pink nose permissible.

The **color** of the nose **may blend with** the color of **the coat or be black. Partially pigmented noses** are not uncommon and **are of little concern.**

One of the unwritten but popular descriptions used by fanciers is that “the nose should be almost the size of the eye.” (#16, p51)

ALL ARE CORRECT



Correct when ALERT.

Correct in REPOSE – often seen when judge approaches

Thinking about being a stud dog!

EARS – Large, erect type ears, held more upright when alert, but flaring to the sides at a 45 degree angle when in repose, giving breadth between the ears.

DISQUALIFICATIONS – Broken down or cropped ears.

The noticeably large ear needs to fit the head. An ear so large as to create an unbalanced head piece is not desirable. An ear that appears anything but large is also faulty. The tips of the ears may be slightly rounded or slightly pointed.

The lowest part of the ear, the eyes, and the stop should be at the same level on the head. Ear set (placement on skull) **and carriage are both important.** Although the ears are *set on* low and wide, they **are correctly *carried* higher “when very alert at nearly 11:00 and 1:00.** If the ears aim close to noon, they are usually set too high. Ears aiming to 9:00 and 3:00 are likely set too low.” (#8, p66)

The ears do a great deal toward creating the ideal expression, but **judges should not expect the ears to remain alert at all times.** When the Chihuahua is gaiking, relaxed, or tense, the ears may be held back along the skull. When the dogs are on the table, the ear is most often flared at 45 degrees to the skull. These carriages are normal and acceptable and should not be faulted.

The alert carriage can be observed while baiting the dog or when the dog interacts with others in the ring. **The ability to get the ears into the alert position is important; it is not important that the ears constantly be held alert.** Once judge has evaluated the ear placement and carriage, a dog should not be penalized for not maintaining the alert carriage while in the ring. **The standard describes both carriages as correct.**

UNDESIRABLE: Weak or tipped ears, hooded/cupped ears, unmistakably too large or too small ears.

A broken down ear, one that cannot be held erect, is a disqualification.

BITE – Level or scissors. Overshot or undershot bite, or any distortion of the bite or jaw, should be penalized as a serious fault.

The standard **permits two** bites, **level or scissors**. Correct dentition and structural development is specified.

Faults of the bite and teeth should clearly be a consideration when evaluating the Chihuahua, however, it is not a breed that requires a strong, powerful bite for any described purpose.

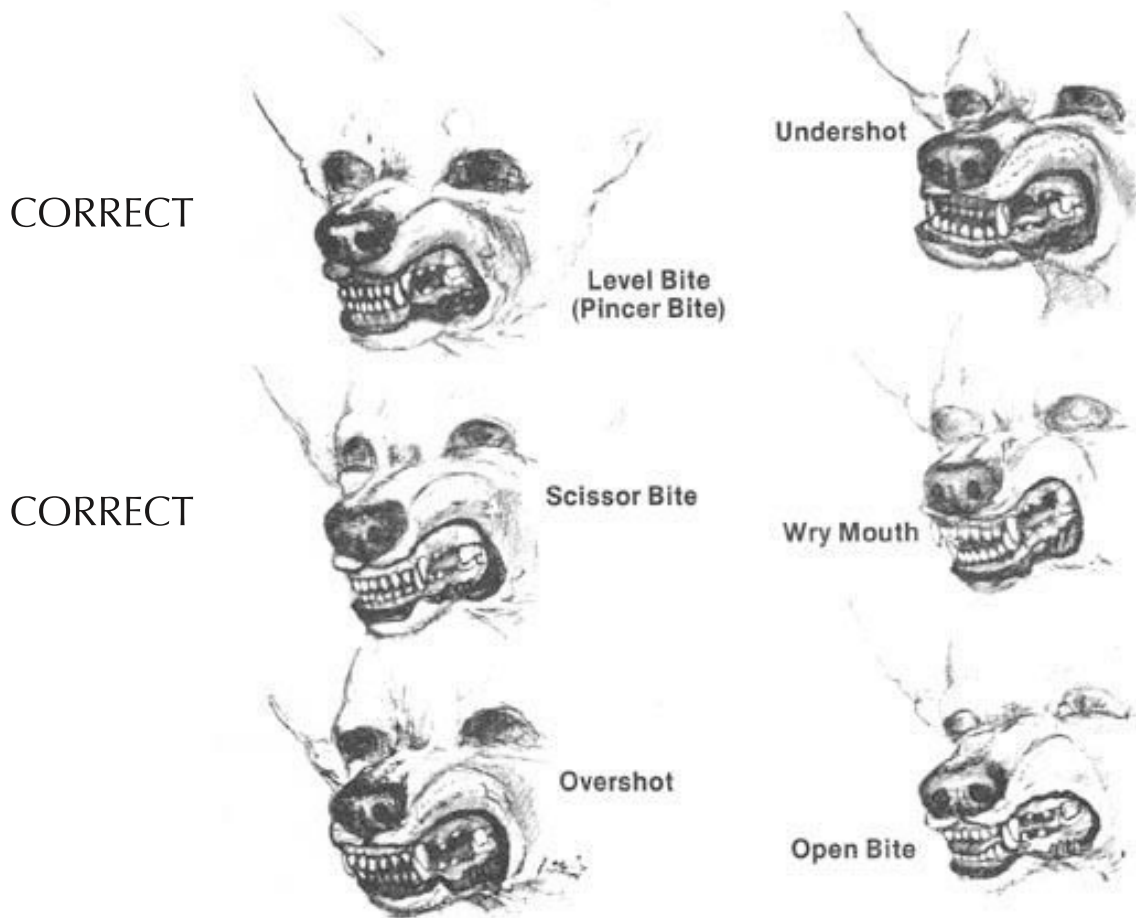
If the deviations, such as overshot, undershot, wry, evident tongue, are visible when the mouth is closed, they should certainly be considered when evaluating expression.

“Most judges show reasonable tolerance towards minor imperfections, but penalize heavily in severe cases... jaw development... is probably of greater importance than actual incisorial alignment.” (#13, p23)

“The brachycephalic (short muzzled) formation of the Chihuahua jaw is prone to deviation from the norm exhibited by those dogs having balanced muzzle/skull proportions resulting in ineffective and even missing premolars in our desirable shortened muzzle.” (Nancy Shonbeck)

An undershot bite with a pronounced lower jaw suggests a bulldog’s expression; an overshot bite results in a receding lower jaw that appears weak and suggests a bird. These formations are not typical of the Chihuahua and should be heavily penalized.

The Chihuahua Bite



Artwork by NANCY SHONBECK

Our standard accepts either a scissor or level bite as illustrated.

- Scissor bite exists when the inner surface of the upper incisors cover the outer surface of the upper half of the lower incisors.
- A level pincer situation exists when the cutting surfaces of the upper and lower incisors meet edge to edge.
- Overshot refers to the upper jaw jutting over the lower one so incisors do not touch portraying a weak, receding jaw line.
- Undershot is the opposite with upper incisors behind the lowers, even if contact is made, resulting in a truculent expression.
- Wry mouth results in a twisted, deformity of the jaws.
- An open bite prohibits contact of incisors with the mouth firmly closed; the tongue usually protrudes to some extent.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

NECK – Slightly arched, gracefully sloping into lean shoulders.

A Chihuahua must have enough length of neck to permit a slight arch and a graceful slope into the shoulders. The neck should **blend smoothly into the shoulders and into the chest cleanly** without excess skin, wrinkles or dewlap.

Good length of neck is necessary for the preferred uplifted head carriage when gaiting. The **perception of neck length** may be **affected by the ruff** that is **preferred in both varieties**. The ruff, with its slightly stand off coat on both the Smooth and Long Coat, should not be misinterpreted as a lack of neck or too short neck.

UNDESIRABLE: Dogs with heads that appear to be set on at the shoulders; a short, thick neck, a too long neck, or a ewe neck.

TOPLINE – Level.

According to Spira's Canine Terminology, the topline would be more correctly referred to as the "backline", the portion of the entire topline that begins behind the withers and ends at the tail. **The back should be level.**

Occasionally a slight depression or rise may occur behind the shoulder where the heavier neck coat (referred to as the mantle) meets the shorter body coat; this slight variation is due to coat, NOT structure. When evaluating the backline with the hand, **no dip or rise at the shoulders should be felt; the juncture should be level.**

UNDESIRABLE: Low shoulders, roached or sway backs, high rears, rounded rears, low tail sets, and backs that slope upward or downward.



**BODY – Ribs rounded and well sprung
(but not too much “barrel-shaped”).**

The body should have **the feel of substance with definite rib spring** that provides ample room for the heart and lungs. It should **not** be **tube or barrel-shaped**. Loaded shoulders should not be confused with a well-sprung rib cage. A front that is too narrow may be caused by a rib cage that is too flat; a rib cage that is too round may be the cause of a front that is too wide.

The Chihuahua needs an **ample chest with good depth of brisket** that reaches close to the elbows; there should be perceptible, although slight, tuck up.



TAIL – Moderately long, carried sickle either up or out, or in a loop over the back, with tip just touching the back. (Never tucked between legs.)

DISQUALIFICATION – Cropped tail, bobtail.

The tail is the finishing touch of a deserving specimen. Although the standard does not mention the set of the tail, the back is level, thus **the Chihuahua tail should not appear low set.**

There is **no ideal carriage. Carriage may be up, out, or in a loop over the back.** These **three tail carriages may affect the perception of body length**, thus hindering the ability to determine the proportion and balance of the dog. (*see illustrations, next page.*)

If, after gaiting the class, there is a question of body length, the dog may be re-examined on the table and the **slightly off-square body proportions** verified by measuring with the hand from the desired points.

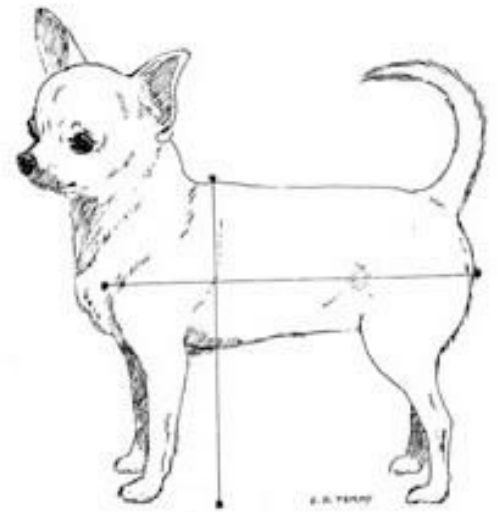
The **tail** should **never** be **tucked between the legs**; that objectionable carriage is **not typical of the preferred terrier-like qualities of temperament.**

The **preferred tail is** described as a **sickle**; “a tail carried over the back in **loose semi-circular fashion**, but not snapping flat against the back.” (#13, p134)

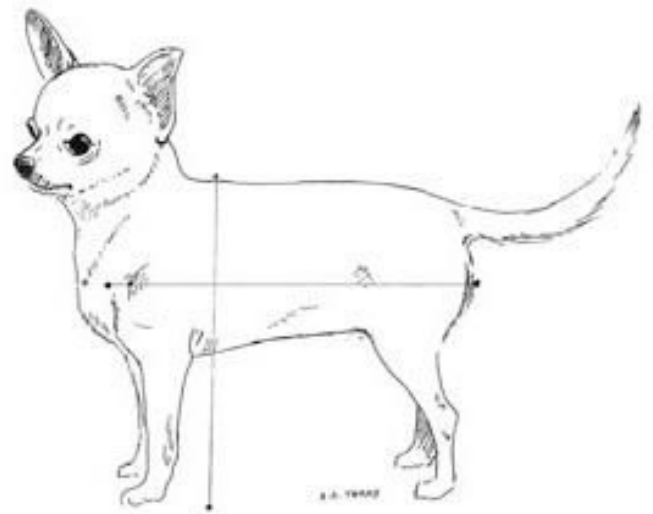
Additional descriptions of the tails of both varieties are included in the discussion of **COAT** on pages 30 and 31.

UNDESIRABLE: **tucked between the legs**; too short; low set; carried flat against the back.

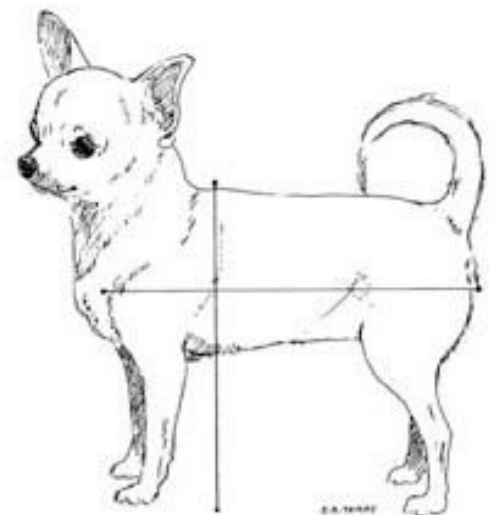
Dog in correct proportion seems just right because tail is carried sickle up. Check the measurements; they are correct. - Terry



Dog in correct proportion may seem too long in body when tail is carried sickle out. Check the measurements; they are correct. - Terry

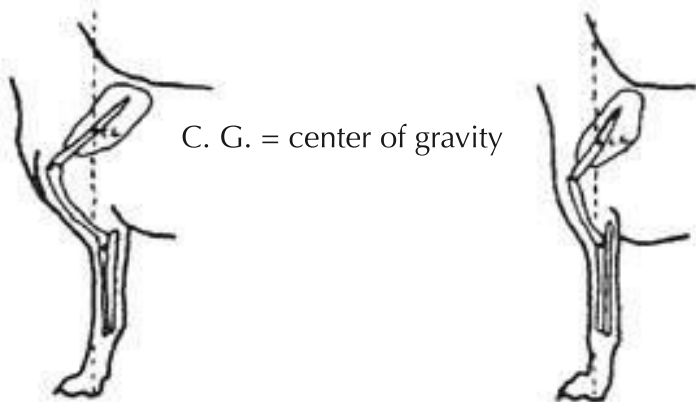


Dog in correct proportion may seem short in body when tail is up and over, touching the back. Check the measurements; they are correct. - Terry



FOREQUARTERS

SHOULDERS – **Lean, sloping into a slightly broadening support above straight forelegs that set well under, giving a free play at the elbows. Shoulders should be well up, giving balance and soundness, sloping into a level back. (Never down or low.) This gives a chestiness, and strength of forequarters, yet not of the “Bulldog” chest.**



Correct - balanced front

Incorrect - “terrier” front



The shoulder and foreleg angulation, combined with the well-sprung rib cage, creates room for the **required chestiness** and permits **good depth and width of brisket** that extends close to the elbow.

“Free play at elbows” is actually “free action”, meaning a strong, easy, elastic movement. It **does not mean** the Chihuahua is **out at the elbows, loose at the elbows, or tied in at the elbows**; these are undesirable and faulty. The **elbows are held close to the chest wall**, but permit unrestricted front movement.

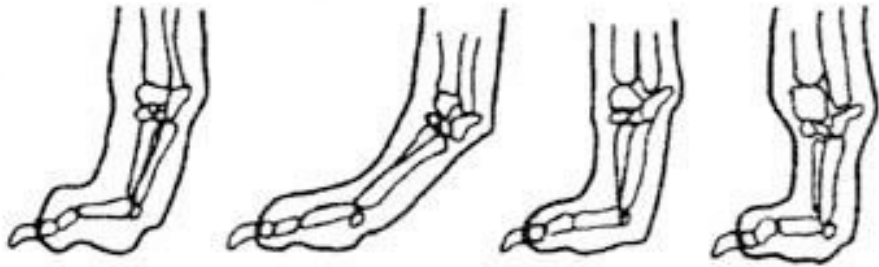
The angulation of the shoulders and front assembly permits **excellent reach during gaiting.** The Chihuahua is **a swift-moving little dog.** The shoulders slope smoothly backward, are well laid back, and combine with forelegs that are set well under. This construction permits a **reaching front movement comparable to that of many working breeds.**

UNDESIRABLE: Narrow chests; dip at withers; forelegs that are out at the elbows; bowed forearms; feet that turn out; and fiddle fronts.

PASTERNS – Fine.

The pasterns have a **gentle slope with no evidence of knuckling over**. Although slender, the **pasterns are strong and flexible**. The removal of front dewclaws is optional.

UNDESIRABLE: Broken-down or weak pasterns.



Correct

Broken Down

Straight

Knuckled Over

Permission granted to The Chihuahua Club of America, inc, by the artist, E. Ruth Terry



FEET – A small dainty foot with toes well split up but not spread, pads cushioned. (Neither the hare nor the cat foot.)

The feet with their distinct toes, are small, neat, slightly oval, and well-padded. The strong nails are kept short enough to avoid affecting movement.

UNDESIRABLE: Too large, splayed or flat, toeing in, pointing east-west.

HINDQUARTERS

Muscular, with hocks well apart, neither out nor in, well let down, firm and sturdy. The feet are as in front.

The **firm, muscular rear legs** should be **strong**; their angulation with the pelvis corresponds to that of the forearms and shoulder. **Here**, the word **“hock” refers to the entire rear pastern**. The point of hock should be as close to the ground as possible while remaining **perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other**.

The **rear feet** are **well-padded with each toe distinct** and are not flat. Rear dewclaws may be removed.

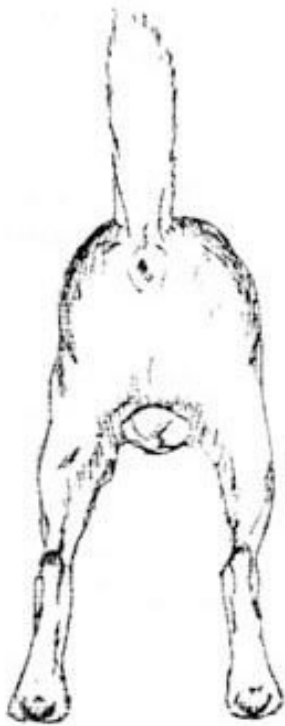
UNDESIRABLE: Straight rears lacking angulation; rears exhibiting stifle problems; rears with sickle hocks. Overly long hocks, a rear that is tucked under, and a stance that is too wide or too narrow are also faulty.

Rear feet that do not point straight forward indicate structural problems such as cow hocks or barrel hocks.

Patella luxation is a structural fault that is seen in the breed. “In one type, the patella slips, the hock joint becomes straight and the joint at the foot over-flexes to compensate. Movement may not be effected, but the patella will slip if the dog stands still very long. In another, the patella slips out of the grooves of the joint. If gaiting, the dog may skip or hop until the patella slips back into the groove. This type may also be seen when the dog stands up on its rear legs.” (#16, p56)

HINDQUARTERS

From rear: CORRECT standing position – shows that rear is strong and muscular.



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In profile: CORRECT standing position – shows that rear is strong and muscular.



In profile: INCORRECT – shows patella luxation. (Patella has slipped, hock joint is straight and the point at the foot is overflexed to compensate.)

COAT

The Chihuahua is a breed shown in two coat varieties, Long and Smooth. There **must be a distinct, easily recognizable coat difference between the varieties. A long coated specimen must be truly long coated.**

The **two varieties are based SOLELY on COAT – everything else is IDENTICAL.** Do not forget that the **two varieties are the same breed under their coats.**

Whiskers may be trimmed, but it is not required. Some trimming for neatness may be performed on both varieties; it should not appear radical, but of course, will have no effect on structure.

Both varieties experience seasonal shedding periods. The lack of coat that results is different from the bareness that requires a disqualification in Long Coats.



SMOOTH COATS – The coat should be of soft texture, close and glossy. (Heavier coats with under coats permissible.) Coat placed well over body with ruff on neck preferred, and more scanty on head and EARS. Hair on TAIL, preferred furry.

The coat of a Smooth needs little elaboration. There is **no disqualification** in Smooth Coats **involving the coat**. The coat of a blue Chihuahua may be more scanty than that of other colors.

A **Smooth Coat** with the **preferred ruff on the neck** and the **preferred furry tail** will likely have the permissible undercoat. (The ruff on the neck of the Smooth Coat should **not** be trimmed off.)

The tail coat of a Smooth Chihuahua is distinct in the Toy Group. This **unique tail coat has long-been a breed characteristic**. It is said that the completion of the original standard was delayed due to disagreement regarding the description of the tail. Many authors caution against the loss of this trait.

The **coat continues from the body onto the tail and becomes furry with stand-offish hair on the sides, widening towards the center of the tail and narrowing to a point at the tip. Although it appears flatish from the underside, this is a result of coat, not structure.**

UNDESIRABLE: A thin round tail, a “rat” tail, and an overly curly tail.

Tail carriage is described on page 23.



LONG COATS – the coat should be of soft texture, either flat or slightly curly, with undercoat preferred. Feathering on feet and legs, pants on hind legs and large ruff on the neck desired and preferred.

DISQUALIFICATION – In LONG COATS, too thin coat that resembles bareness.

The **Long Coat ranges** in appearance from **heavily coated to much lesser amounts**. The coat **texture** should **never** be **that of a Smooth**. The undercoat is not dense enough to cause the coat to “stand off” from the body. **There are specific places that the longer coat should be present**, including fringing on ears, feathering on feet and legs, pants, a ruff around the neck and a plumed tail.

The feathering on the feet of a Long Coat is often trimmed for neatness. This is acceptable but not required.

The **disqualification for lack of coat in Long Coats** emphasizes that the **coat is the singular difference between varieties**.

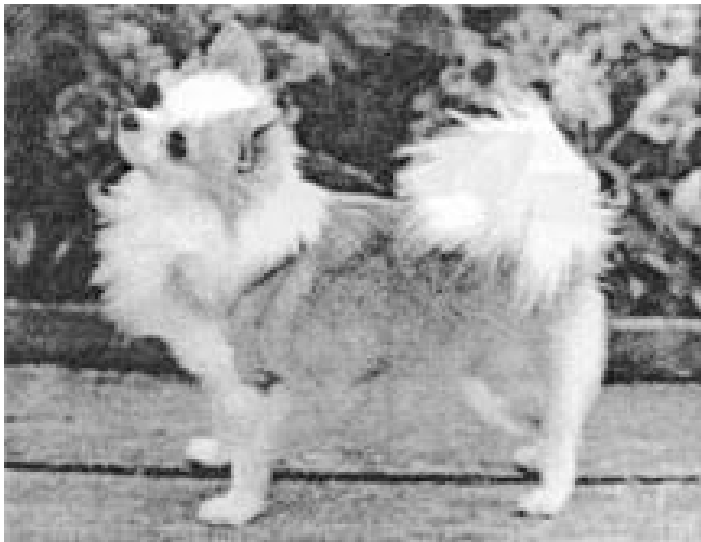
EARS – Fringed. (Heavily fringed ears may be tipped slightly if due to fringes and not to weak ear leather, never down.

The ears of a Long Coat must have fringes; they should not be smooth-coated ears.

Most Chihuahua fanciers have never seen the ears of a Long Coat tip due to the weight of fringes on the ears.

TAIL – Full and long (as a plume).

The tail carriage is described on page 23.



COLOR

Any color – Solid, marked or splashed.

No color is preferred; all colors are acceptable. There are no **mismarks.**

Markings can be misleading, however; a black spot may appear to be a dip in the back or obscure the tail set. **Assessing the proportion** of those with black and tan markings may be difficult because their legs may appear too short; the height/length ratio may be verified by measuring with the hand while the dogs are on the table for examination.

Evaluation of heads and expressions may be a challenge if only one eye is ringed with color or if one eye has a different eye rim color than the other.

Differently marked pants or rear legs, or one white leg or foot may interfere with the **perception of movement.**

“A judge must not fault a dog for color or markings.” (#5, p74)



These dogs all “measure” the same. If you use your hand to measure each dog as it is on the table, you will have no “question” when they gait.

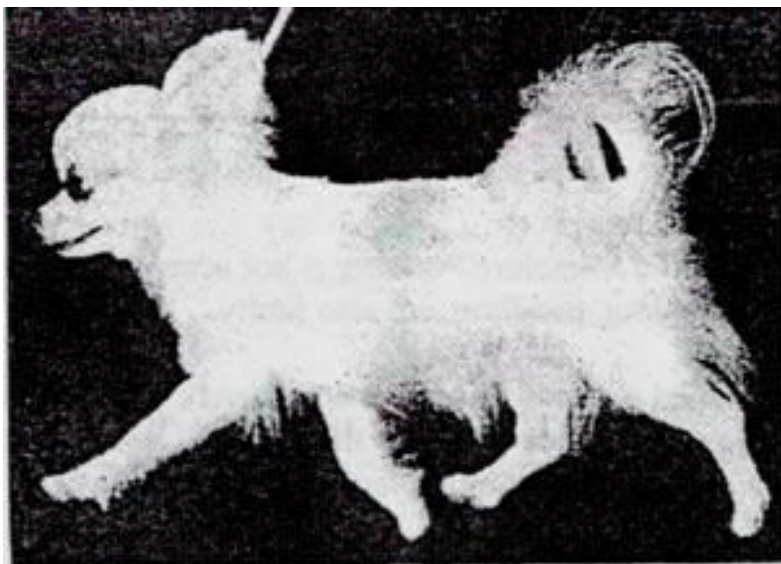
GAIT

The Chihuahua should move swiftly with a firm, sturdy action, with good reach in front equal to the drive from the rear. From the rear, the hocks remain parallel to each other, and the foot fall of the rear legs follows directly behind that of the forelegs.

The legs, both front and rear, will tend to converge slightly toward a central line of gravity as speed increases. The side view shows good, strong drive in the rear and plenty of reach in the front, with head carried high.

The topline should remain firm and the backline level as the dog moves.

A truly deserving Chihuahua **must be able to move swiftly**. A sound Chihuahua can move right around the ring with **head held high**, without restricted movement in the rear or high stepping in the front. The **length of stride in front is equal to that of the rear**. The gait should appear smooth, confident, and effortless, with no bouncing, hesitancy, etc., and **no sign of weakness**.



The **Chihuahua is a double tracking breed**, even with an increase in speed. Although the feet may approach a central line, **it should not single track**. The movement is that of a reaching, driving, **working breed in miniature**.

The Chihuahua should **move true coming and going**. Care needs to be taken with a white foot or feet on a colored dog. Because of the white color, it may seem that the foot is being placed incorrectly; however, **if the going away movement is watched, it is easy to verify from the rear that a foot is or is not being thrown out in front**.

Pads of the back feet should be visible as the dog moves away from the judge. **Legs should move parallel to one another**.

“There are at least three reasons why soundness should be insisted upon in a breed not called upon for work. One is structural consistency; to be a good dog, a Chihuahua must look like a dog and move like a dog. Second, the movement of a dog is handicapped and impeded by his unsoundness. Thirdly, unsoundnesses are heritable; unsound parents beget unsound progeny.” (#24, p64)

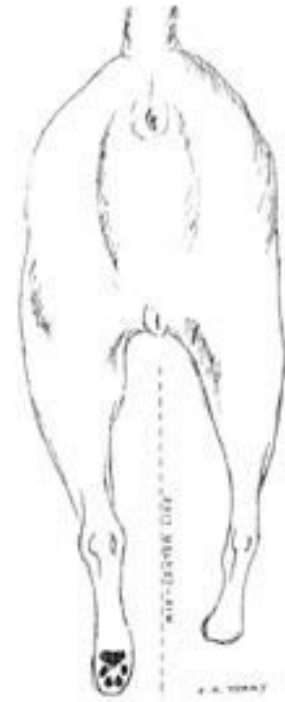
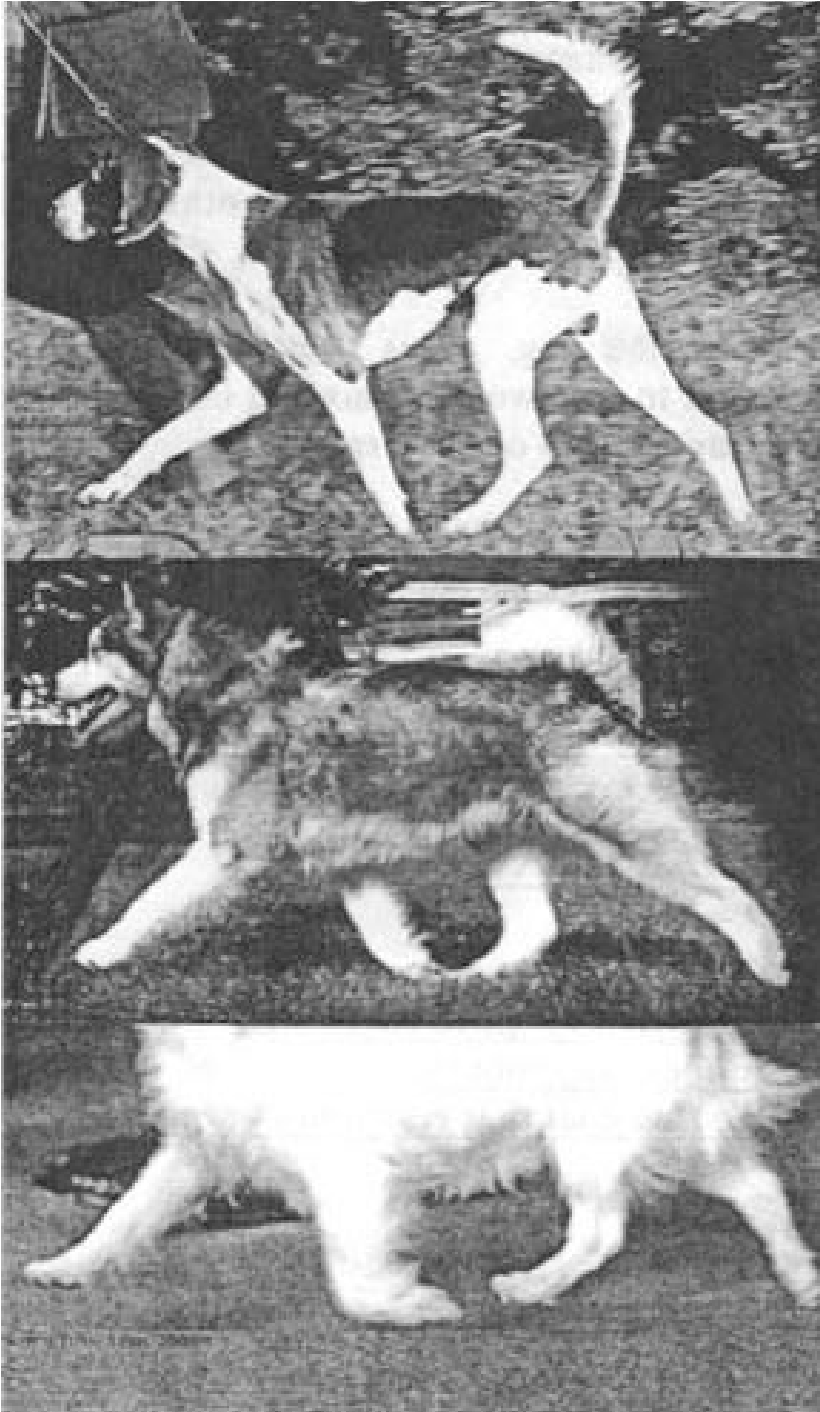
UNDESIRABLE:

The hackney gait of the Miniature Pinscher is not acceptable; goose-stepping, winging, pounding, paddling, are also faulty.

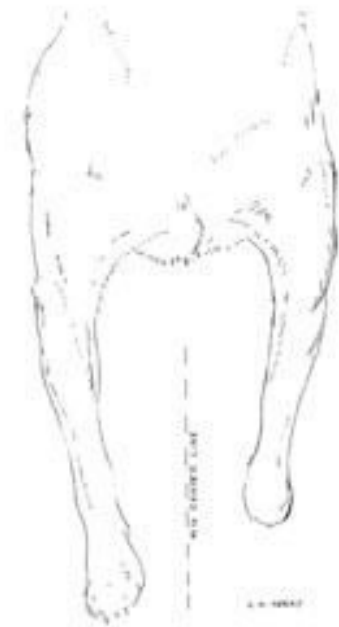
An overly angulated rear may cause the appearance of crouching when standing and when gaiting, a lack of follow through will be evident. Rears should not move wide with toes pointing toward one another. There should be no crossing over, side-winding, or overreaching.



A WORKING DOG ?



Moving away, with the line of convergence. Note that the front legs are directly behind the rear legs and cannot be seen. Convergence is determined by the speed of the dog, but the dog still double tracks.



Front movement showing line of convergence. Note that the rear legs are directly behind the front legs and cannot be seen. The amount of convergence is determined by the speed of the dog. Chihuahuas double-track, even when converging.

CHIHUAHUA !!!!

TEMPERAMENT

Alert, with terrier-like qualities.

Chihuahuas should approach others (dogs and people) with **confidence** and interest, even impudence, with **no evidence of shyness** or fright. The flattening of ears against the head is a greeting behavior and should not be interpreted as fear or hesitance.

The true **temperament** of each dog is more accurately observed when it is interacting in the ring **with the exhibitors and other dogs** than while being examined on the table.

Chihuahuas may “spar” in the ring. This does not mean actual fighting. It is **not** at all **unusual to see two dogs** nose to nose **exhibiting the very alert** challenging posture typical of terriers.

The standard requires that **the tail never be tucked between the legs**. A tail that is tucked is faulty as it indicates the opposite of the required terrierlike temperament.

DISQUALIFICATIONS:

- Any dog over 6 pounds in weight.
- Broken down or cropped ears.
- Cropped tail, bobtail.
- In LONG COATS, too thin coat that resembles bareness.

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CONCLUSION

The Chihuahua is seen in a variety of types. Breeders and judges should **look for that animal which is unmistakably a Chihuahua.** An animal **that closely resembles another toy breed lacks type and should not be considered.**

No dog is without fault. Some faults are so serious that they must cause elimination from the show ring. In the Chihuahua, these faults are the breed's disqualifications and those faults the AKC prescribes must eliminate any dog of any breed from competition. Other faults, (such as patella luxation and bites) although not disqualifying, can be quite serious and should receive thoughtful evaluation.

Many dogs have strengths that the standard describes as ideal. While the recognition of weaknesses in an entry is important, **it is the presence of the desired traits that create breed type.**

The ability to recognize the ideal and the closeness to it must be developed by breeders and judges prior to selecting breeding stock and/or dog show winners.

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the p.... indicates the page within the source that contains the quoted reference.

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