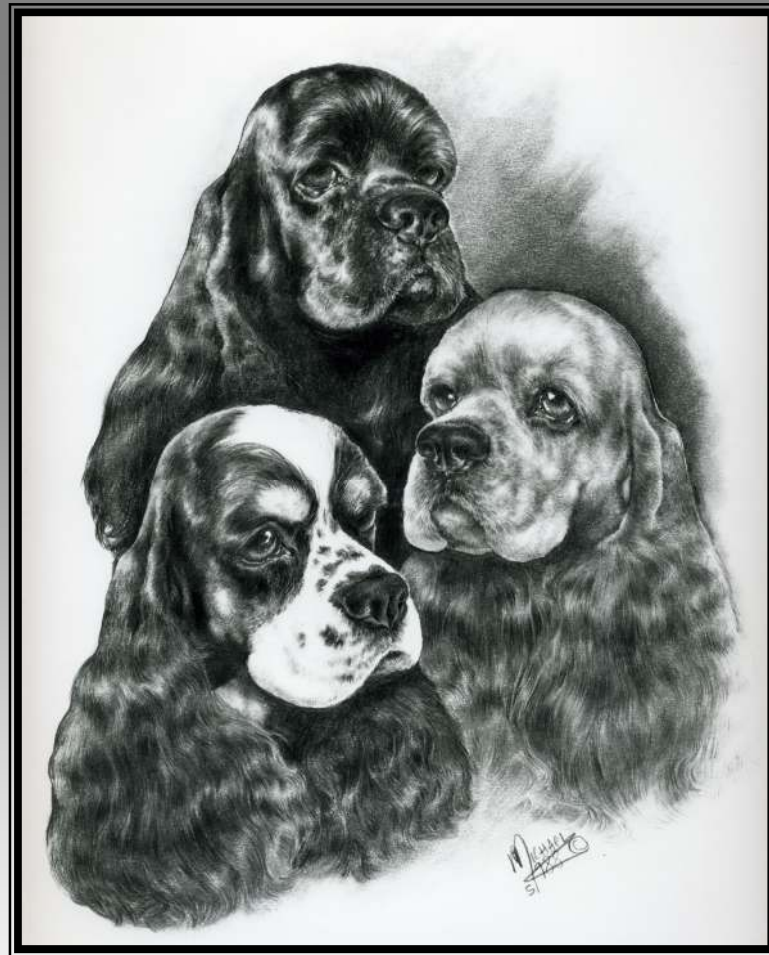


# *The Cocker Spaniel*



*Presented by*

*The American Spaniel Club*

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*Program Development and Design by K-Lo Designs, Kathy Lorentzen*

# *The American Spaniel Club*

- Offers grateful thanks to-
  - Julie Virosteck and David Kittredge
    - For their assistance in gathering photos and information for this presentation.
  - Bill Gorodner and Lloyd Alton
    - For graciously allowing ASC to utilize photographs and artwork from their book, *The World of the Cocker Spaniel*.
  - All the breeders and owners who so willingly supplied photos and expert advice.

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*ASC is pleased to feature the artwork of Eileen Weston and the late Michael Allen in this presentation.*

# *History of the Cocker Spaniel*



- Spaniels were originally divided as land and water spaniels.
- Among the land spaniels, terms such as 'springing spaniel', 'cocking spaniel', 'field spaniel', etc. were used to define different styles of dog and the game they hunted.
- Frequently, the different 'breeds' were born in the same litter and the differentiations were made by size, weight and coloring.
- The term 'Cocker' was given to the smallest, most compact of this family . The name came about because the dogs were proficient at hunting woodcock.

# Ch. Obo II

- The first Cocker strain to become well known and to make definite strides toward the breed becoming recognized as separate and distinct in England was the Obo kennel of Mr. James Farrow.
- In America, a Mr. Pitcher imported a bitch named Chloe II, who had been bred to the English dog Obo.
- A puppy from that litter, named Obo II, was to change Cockers for all time. He was more sporting and functional in type than the dogs that preceded him, and he became an important winner and the first dominant stud dog in the breed. He completed his American Championship in 1883.





# *The Next Level*



**RED BRUCIE**

Red Brucie displayed his great type qualities for a producer at a young age. As a sire Red Brucie helped take the Cocker breed to its next level. Photo courtesy The English Cocker Spaniel Club of America, Inc.



- The great stud dog, Red Brucie, helped to take the Cocker Spaniel to the next level. He sired the dog on the right, Ch. My Own Brucie, who was Best In Show at Westminster Kennel Club in 1940 and 1941.

# *The Cocker and English Cocker*

- The American Spaniel Club was established in 1881. The English Cocker Spaniel Club of America was formed in 1935. Through the extensive research of Mrs. Geraldine R. Dodge, the pure English lines of descent were separated from the Cocker of the United States, and the American Kennel Club recognized the separation of the breed in September of 1946.



*Interpreting the Breed  
Standard*





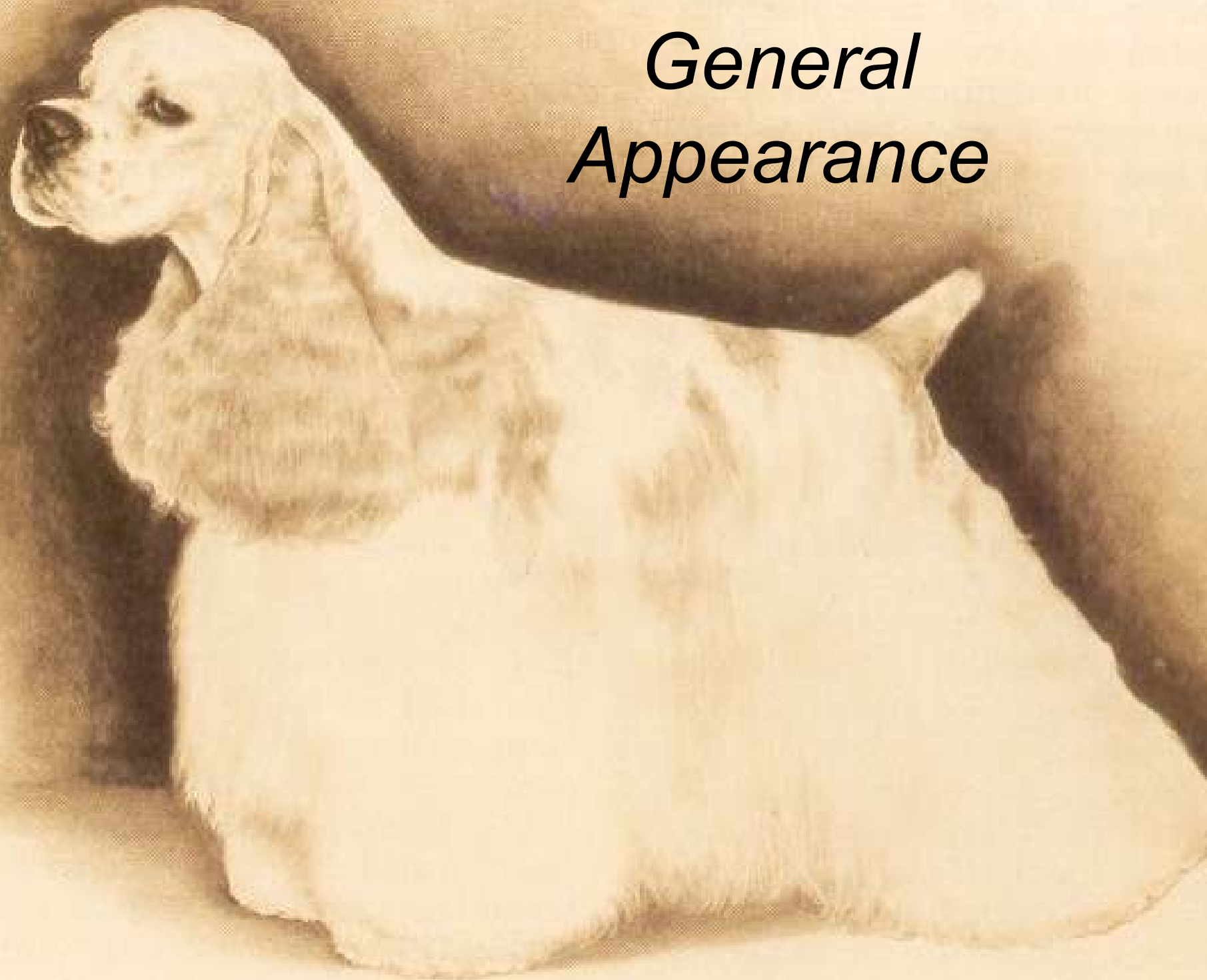
# *Always Take It Back to Function*



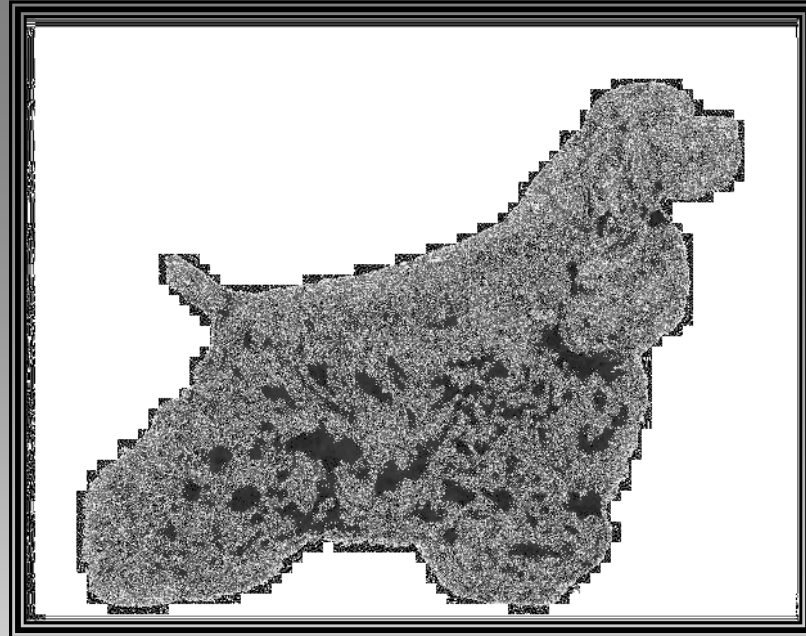
The Cocker is a flushing spaniel, bred to go under cover to flush and retrieve game. When judging the breed and attempting to determine placements, if you are in doubt always ask yourself 'which dog has the characteristics that would allow him to easily and efficiently do the job for which the breed was created'. Remember that the breed standard was written to describe the dog most capable of performing. (The old adage, 'form follows function').



*General  
Appearance*

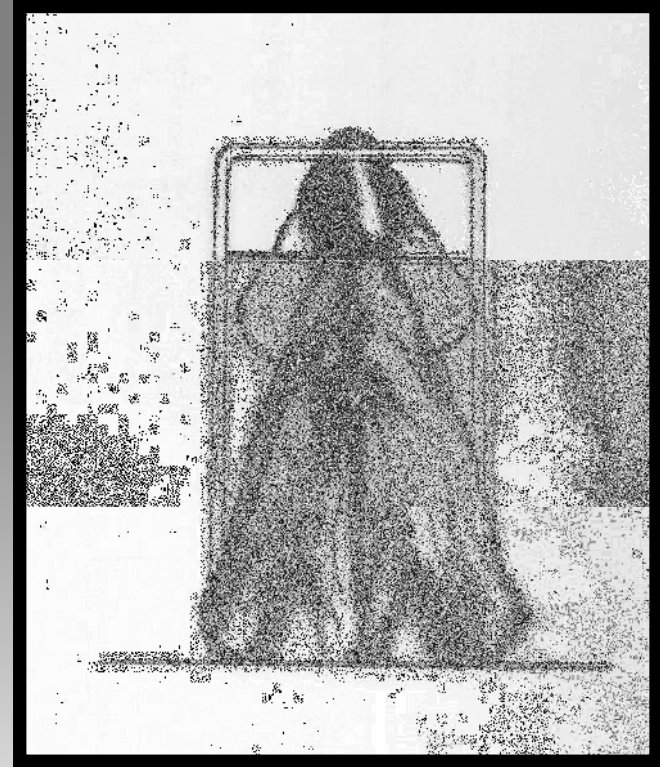
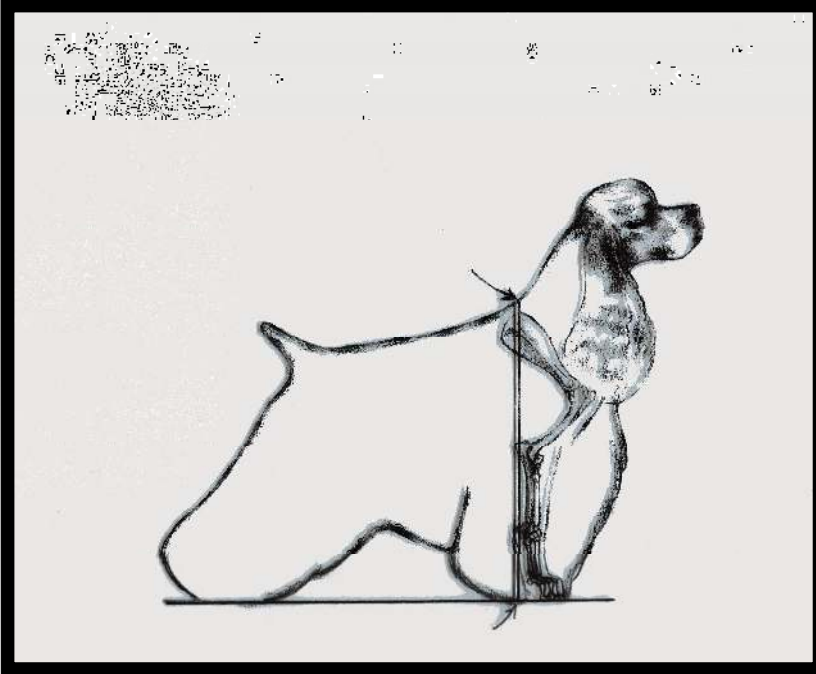


# *Important Points*



- Sturdy and compact, in complete balance and of ideal size.
- Stands well up at the shoulder with a topline sloping slightly towards strong, moderately bent, muscular quarters.
- A dog well balanced in all parts is more desirable than a dog with strongly contrasting good points and faults.

# Size



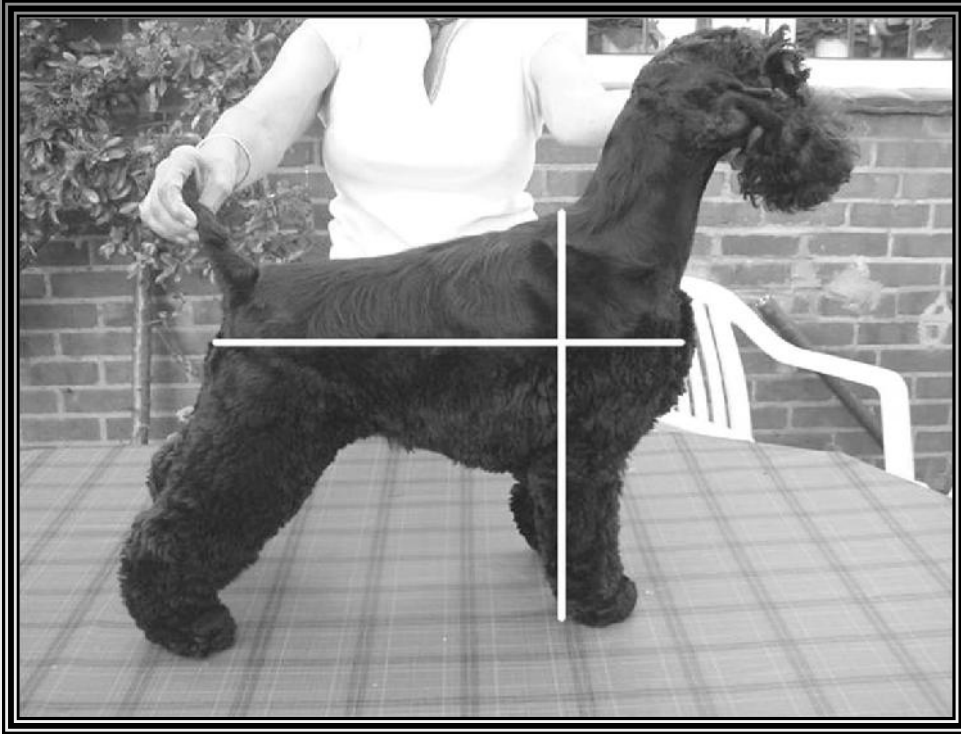
Ideal height at the withers for an adult dog is 15 inches. For an adult bitch, 14 inches. Height may vary one-half inch above or below this ideal.

A dog whose height exceeds 15 ½ inches or a bitch whose height exceeds 14 ½ inches shall be disqualified.

An adult dog whose height is less than 14 ½ and an adult bitch whose height is less than 13 ½ shall be penalized.

***WHEN IN DOUBT PLEASE MEASURE!***

# *Proportion*



- Measuring from the breastbone to the point of the buttocks, and the top of the withers to the ground, the Cocker should be slightly longer than tall.
- The body must be long enough to permit a straight and free stride, but the dog should never appear long and low.
- 'Long and low' is the drag of the breed and must be avoided. The Cocker should always appear well up on leg.



# *How Coat Can Affect Proportion*



- Coat can make a dog look longer in body, or shorter on leg, than it is in reality. You have to get your hands on the dogs and learn to visualize what is under the hair.

# *Substance*



The standard describes the Cocker as 'sturdy' with strong bone and musculature. When you are examining the dogs on the table, you must feel for the bone and muscle under the leg hair. These two photos of the same dog, shaved on one side and coated on the other, illustrate correct bone and substance.



# *Heads*



# *Head/Body Proportion*

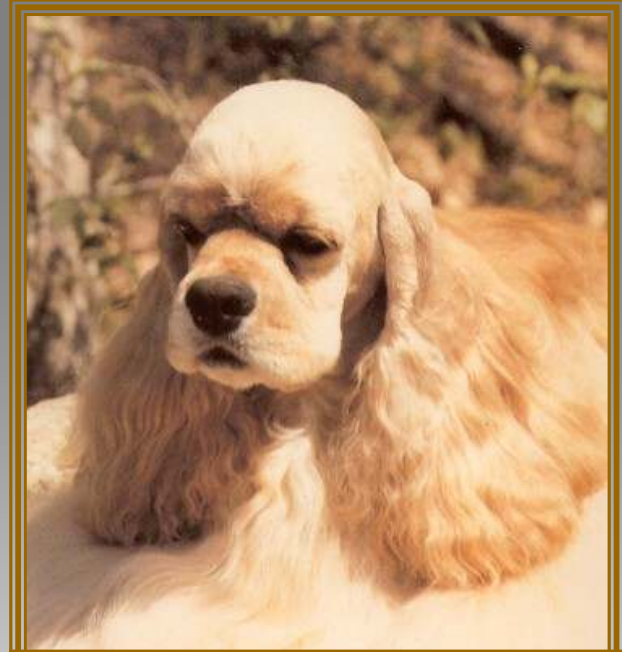


- The size of the head must always be in correct balance and proportion to the size of the dog. The female's head is more feminine and smaller than the male's head, but each should balance with the body upon which it is set.
- The Cocker Spaniel head is a thing of beauty and a hallmark of the breed.
- A correct head is a critical component of breed type.



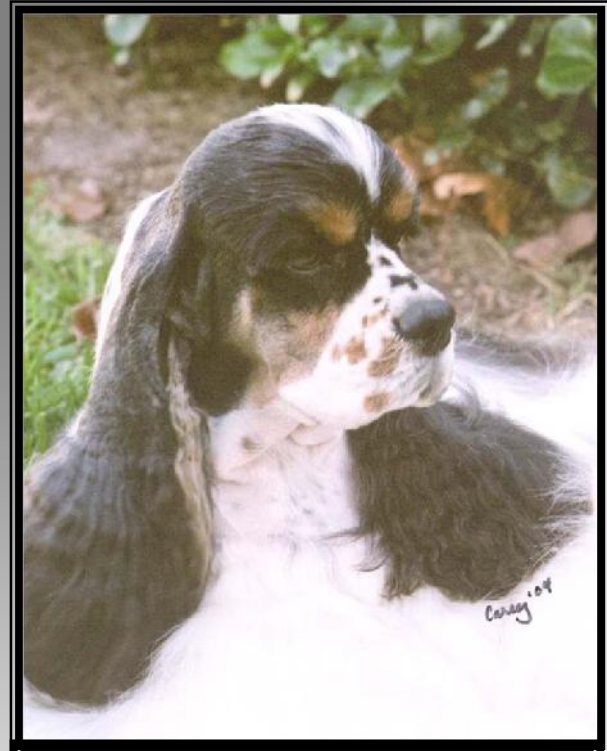
# Skull

- The skull is rounded, but not exaggerated. It should have no tendency towards flatness.
- The eyebrows are clearly defined and there is a pronounced stop.

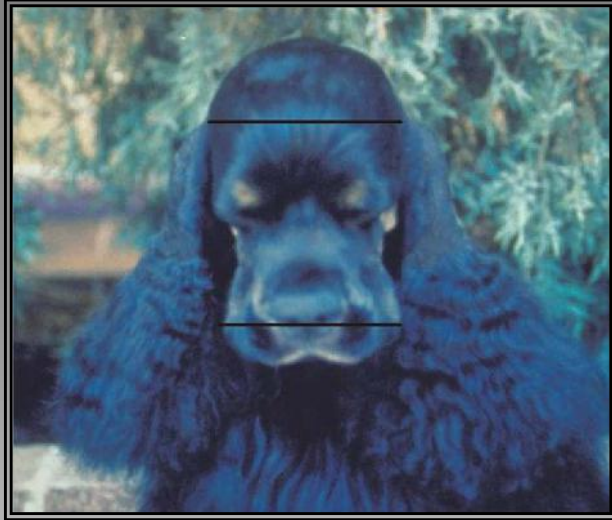


# *Chiseling*

- The bony structure beneath the eyes is well chiseled with no prominence in the cheeks.

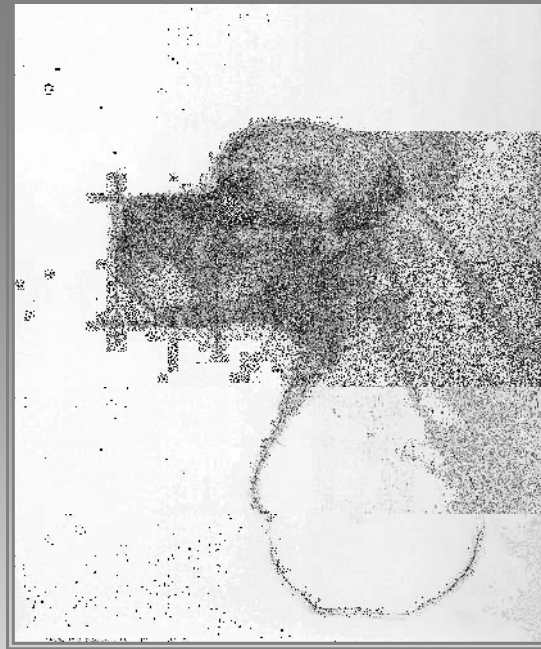
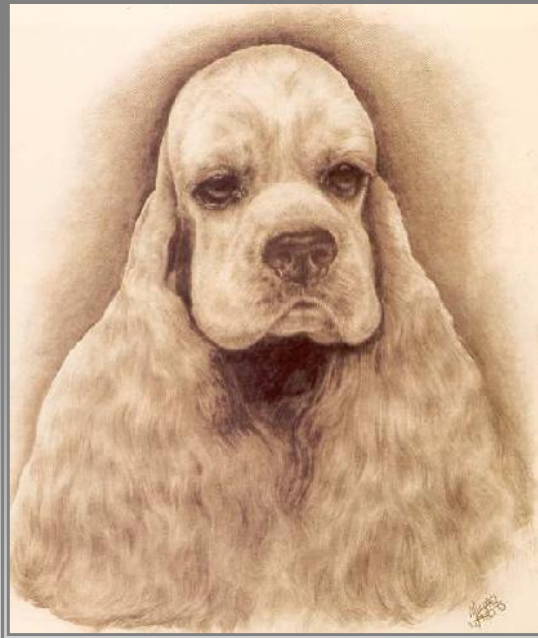


# Muzzle



- The width of the lower portion of the muzzle should be approximately the same as the width of the widest part of the skull.
- There should be sufficient lip to cover the lower jaw, and the lips should have good cushion.
- The muzzle should be deep, with square jaws and a strong underjaw.

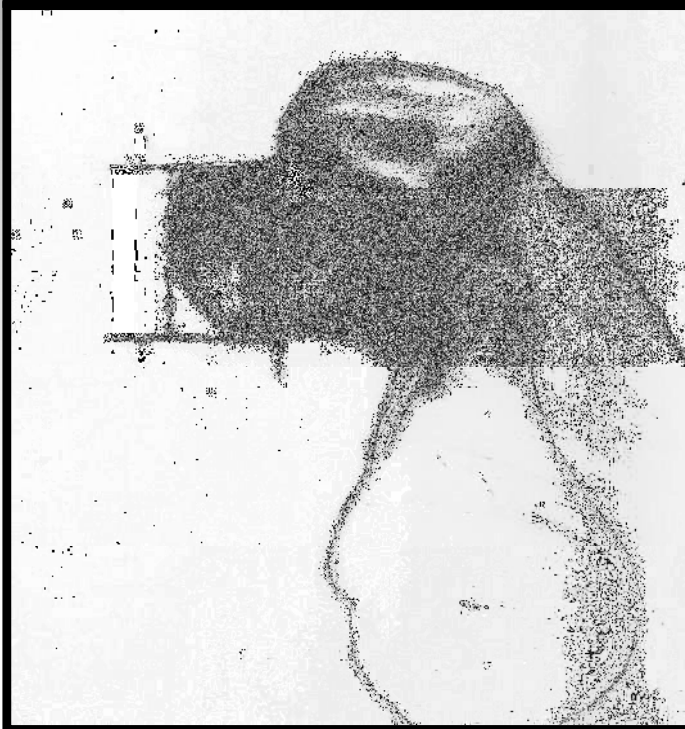
# *Points to Remember About Head Shape*



- When you look at the head from the front, it should give the impression of greater depth than of width.
- When you look at the head in profile, the distance from the stop to the tip of the nose should be one half the distance from the stop up over the crown to the base of the skull.

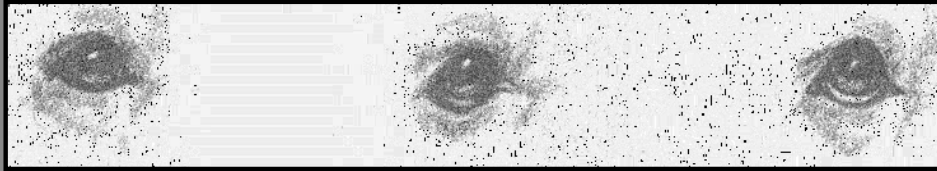


# *Specific Concerns*



- Muzzles that lack in length and depth and that have shallow lips without correct cushion are becoming more and more prevalent in the Cocker.
- Remember that this is a sporting breed and as such must have enough length and depth of foreface to be capable of carrying a game bird.

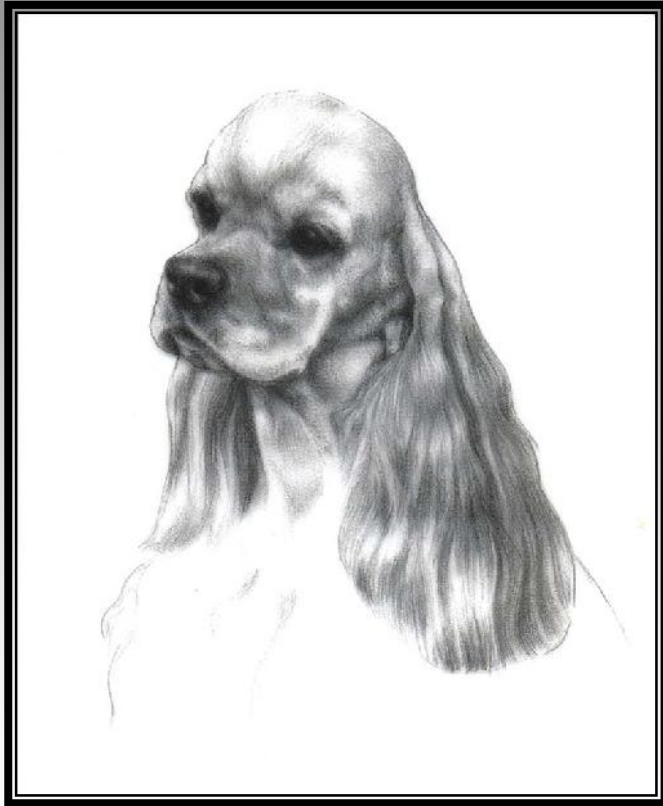
# Eyes



Correct

Loose

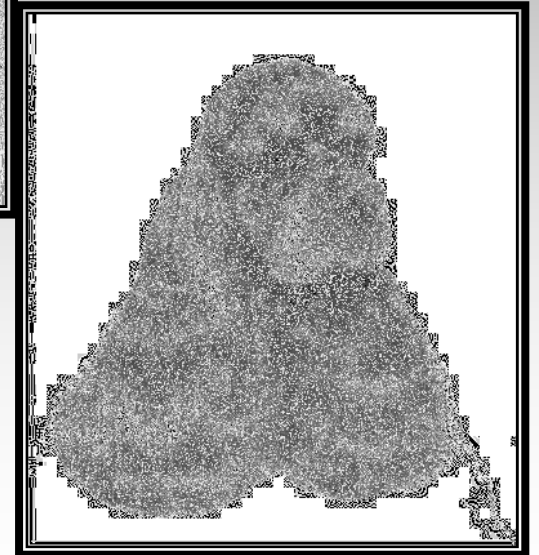
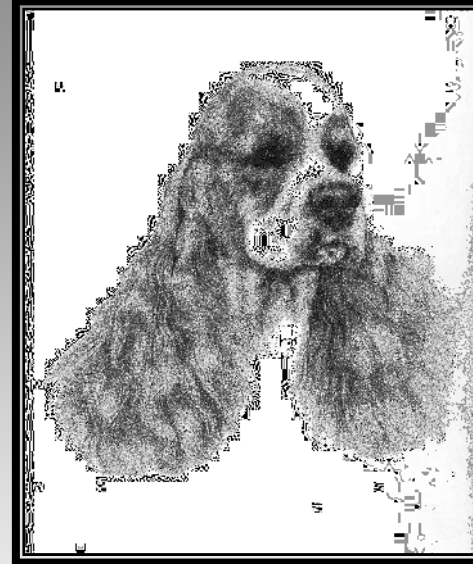
Round



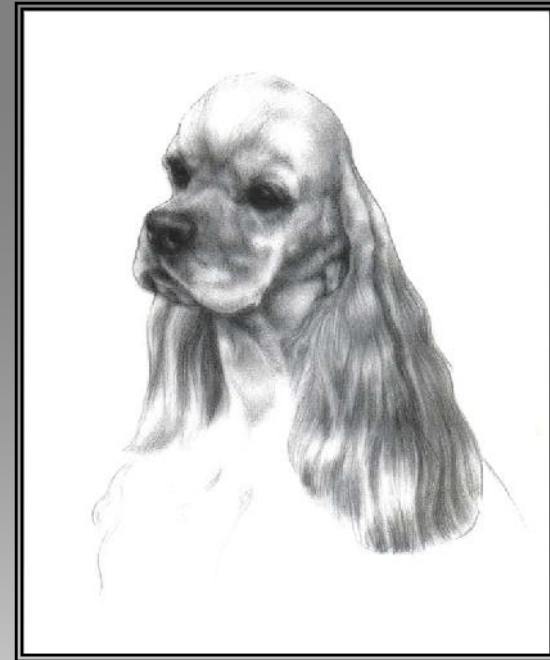
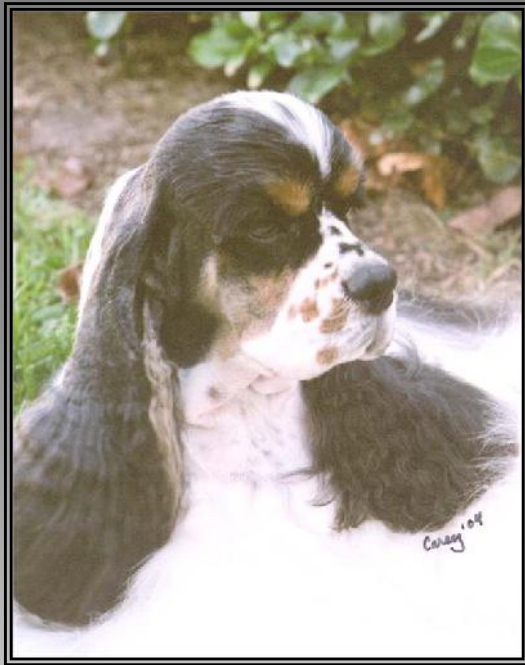
- The eyeballs are round and full and look directly forward.
- The shape of the eye rims gives a slightly almond shaped appearance; the eye is not weak or goggled and they should not appear to be 'bug eyes'.
- The color of the iris is dark brown and in general, the darker the better.

# *Expression*

- The beautiful Cocker expression is one of the best-known characteristics of the breed. The eyes are the most important feature in attaining correct expression.



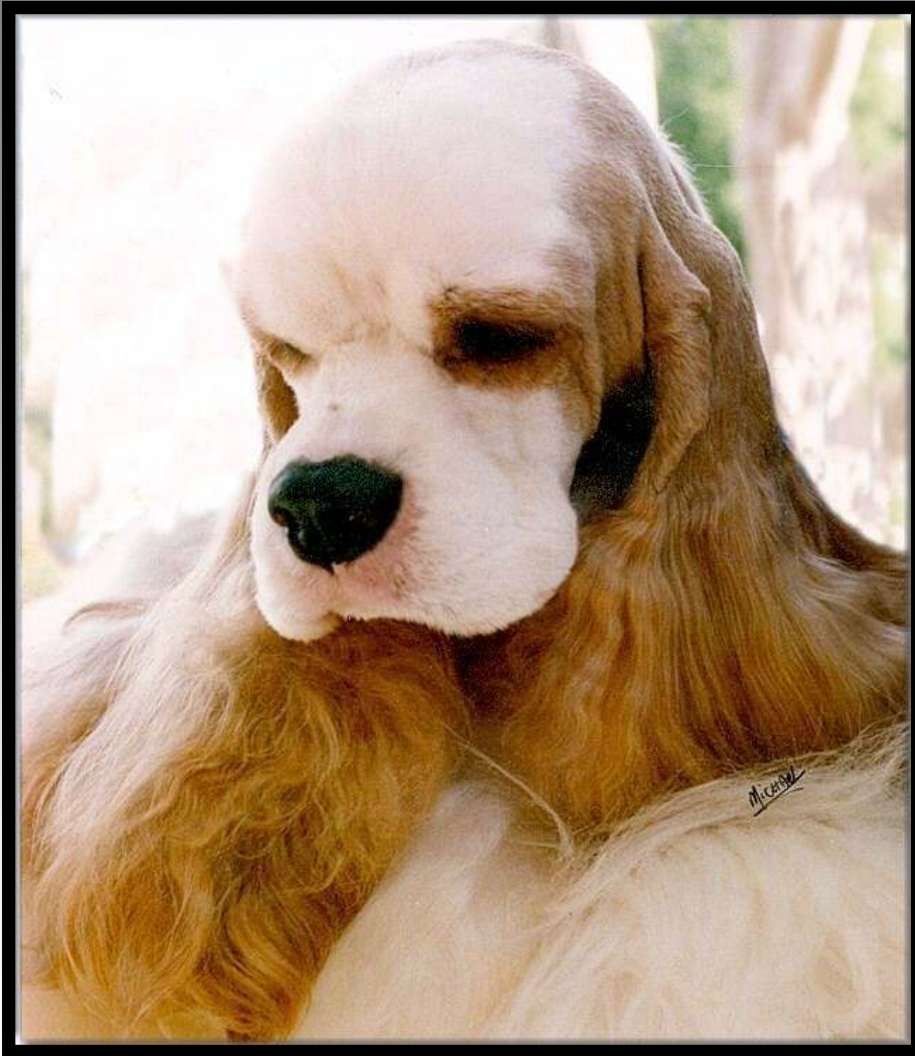
# Ears



- Long and lobular with fine leather. Placed no higher than a line to the lower part of the eye.
- More importance should be given to ear placement than ear length.
- When the highest point of the ear is at or below eye level or set on with a downward angle toward the back of the skull, the ears will look long and low set and will give a soft look.



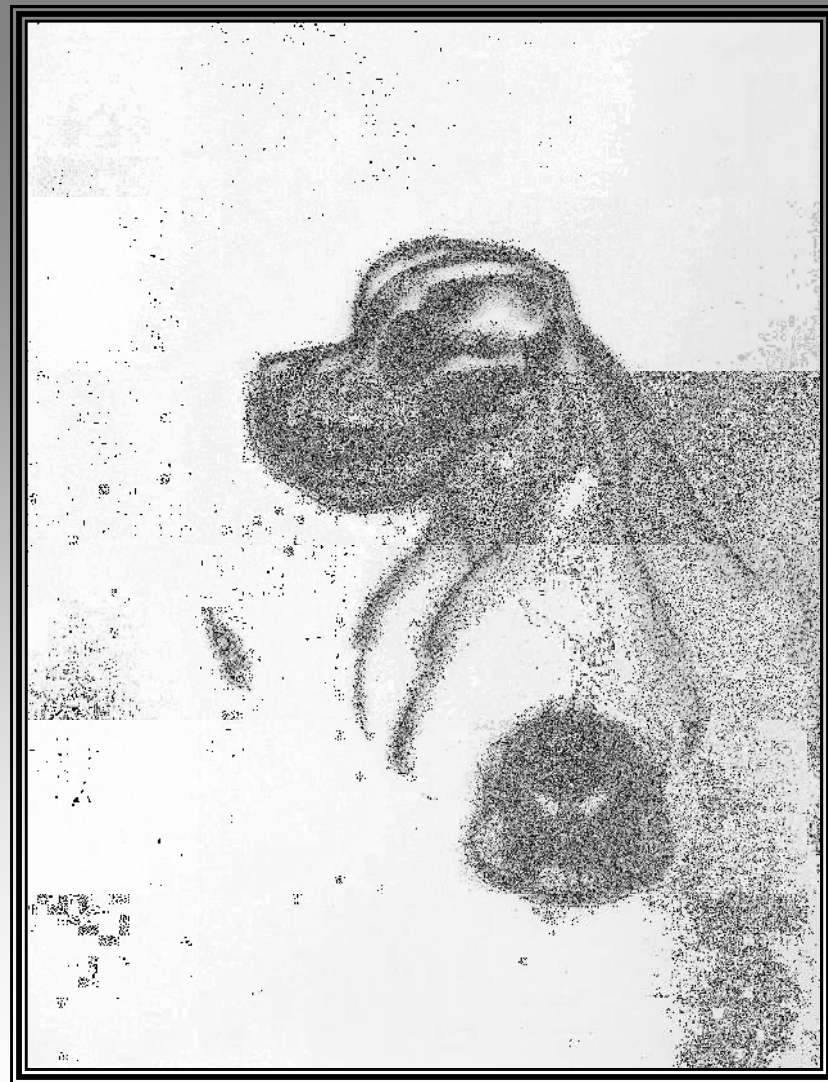
# Nose



- The nose should be large enough to balance with the size of the muzzle and foreface, and have well-developed nostrils typical of a Sporting Dog.
- Nose is black in the black, black and tan and black and white dogs. In the other colors it may be brown, liver or black, the darker the better. The color of the nose harmonizes with the color of the eye rim.

# *Teeth*

- Teeth are strong and sound, not too small and meet in a scissors bite.
- The mouth must be large, with good sized and well formed teeth, which enables the Cocker to carry a game bird.
- Tiny toy-like teeth should be penalized

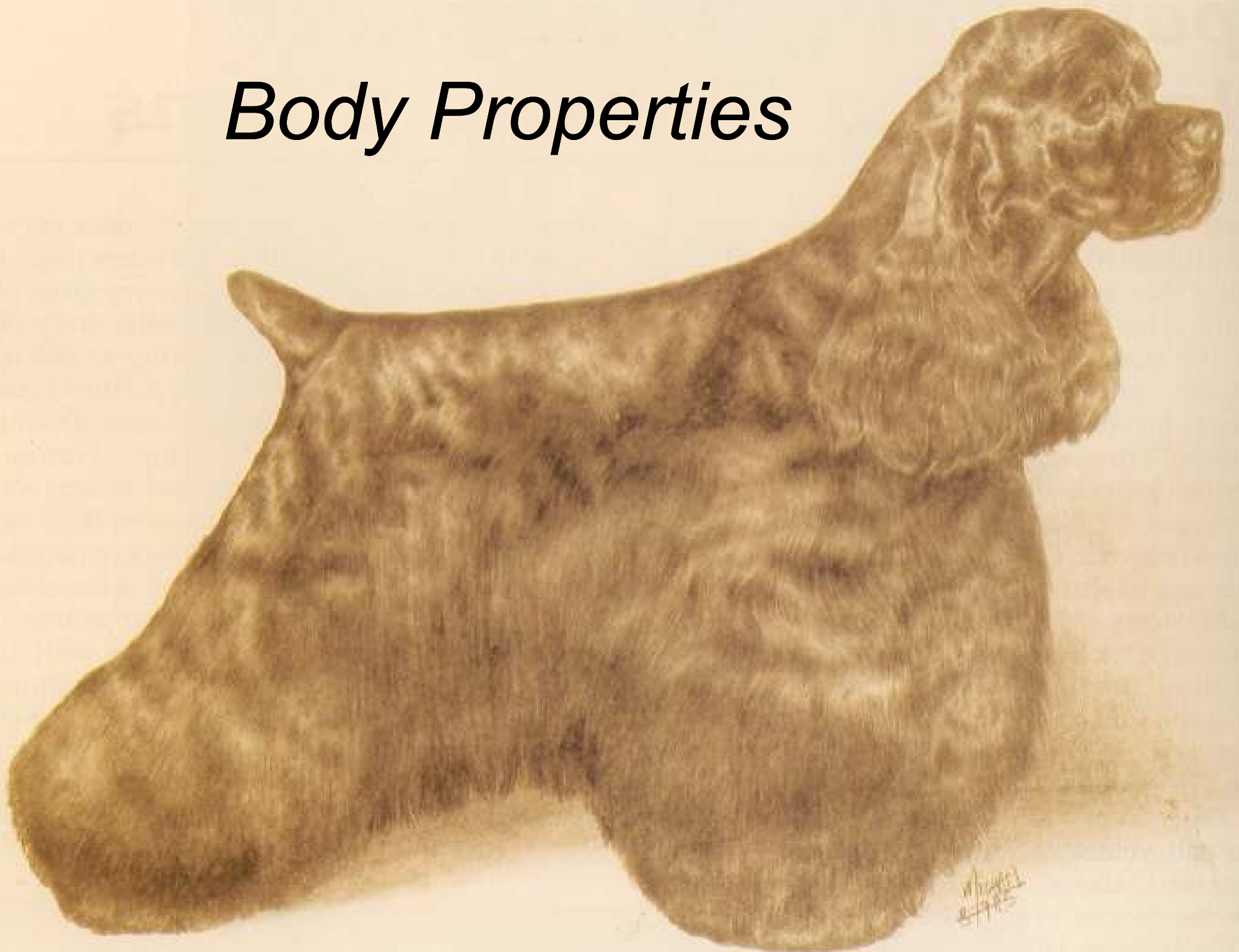


# *Head Function*

- This photo of “Madison”, owned by Trish Jackson, clearly illustrates why it is so important for the Cocker head to satisfy the requirements of the breed standard.



# *Body Properties*





# Neck



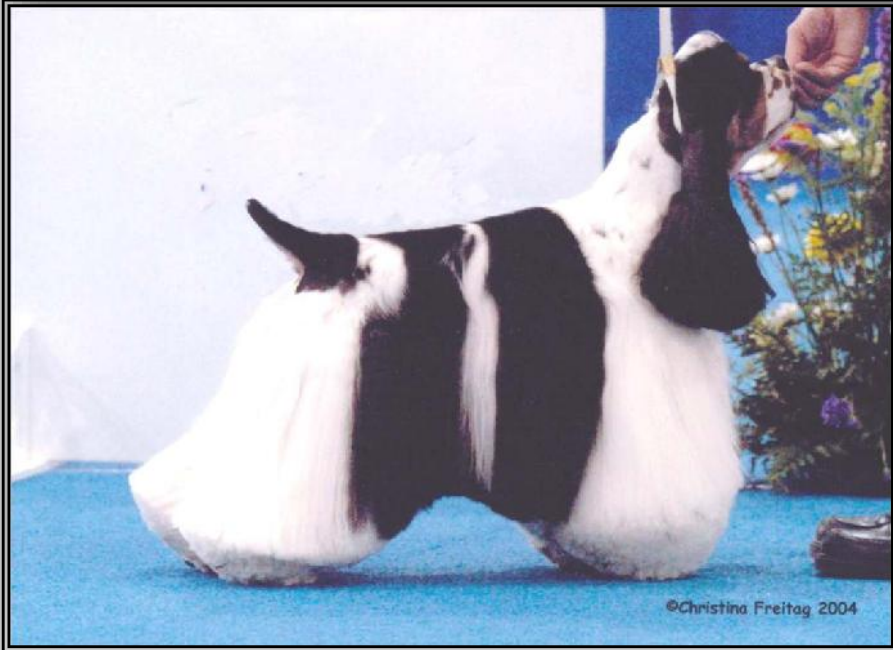
- Long enough to allow the dog to easily reach to the ground.
- Clean and muscular.
- Free from throatiness.
- Slightly arched at the crest .
- All Cockers have the same number of vertebrae in their neck. The amount of neck that is expressed is based upon the length and slope of the shoulder blade. The more forward placed the shoulder blade, the shorter the neck will appear.

# *A Study in Contrast*



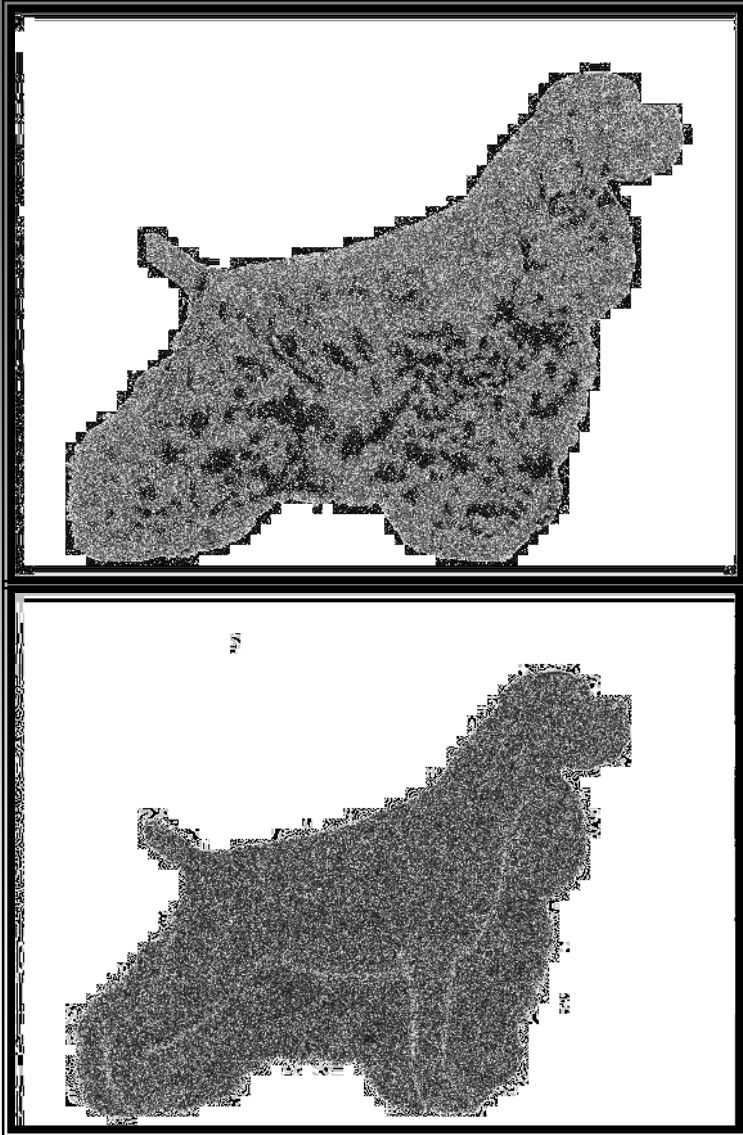
- The Cocker on the left has a short neck that abruptly joins with the body. The Cocker on the right has a proper length of neck that fits smoothly into the shoulder assembly. The flow of neck into shoulder is very important.

# *Topline*



- The standard calls for a slightly sloping topline. The tail is set on and carried on a line with the topline, or slightly higher. The topline should be firm and 'one-piece'.
- The topline should be the same moving as it is standing, and the relative height to length proportion of the dog should be the same when the dog is in motion as it is when the dog is standing.

# Body

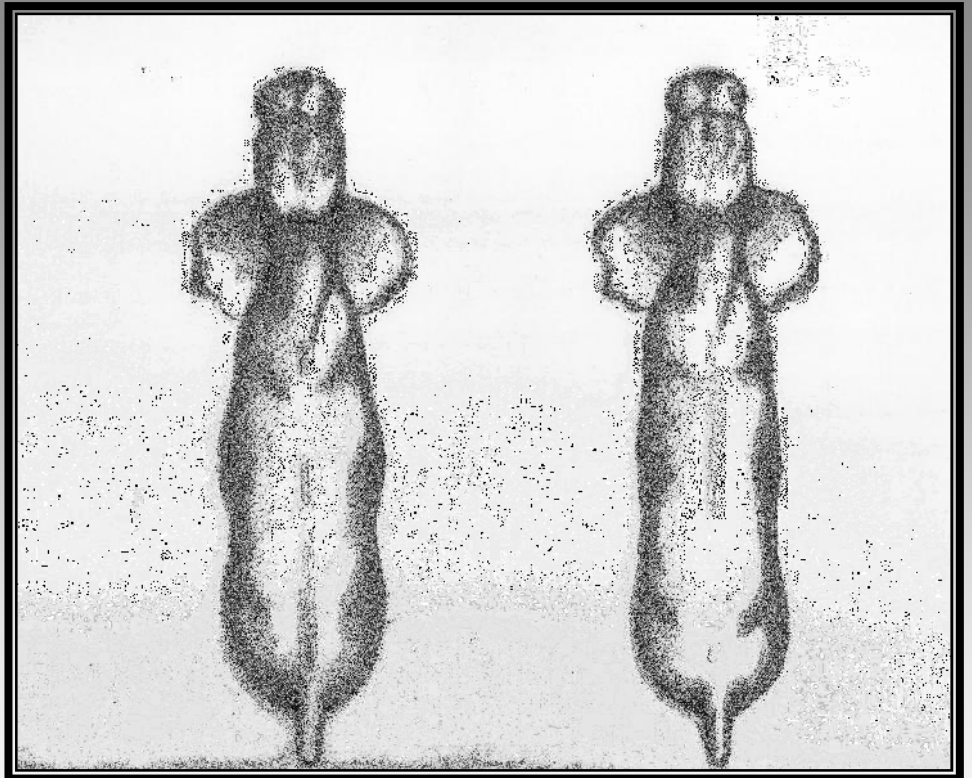


- The chest is deep, at least to the elbow. Forechest should be well-developed and broad, but not so wide as to interfere with the action of the front legs.
- Ribs are deep and well sprung and should be long, with the ribcage reaching far back to join with a short, strong loin.

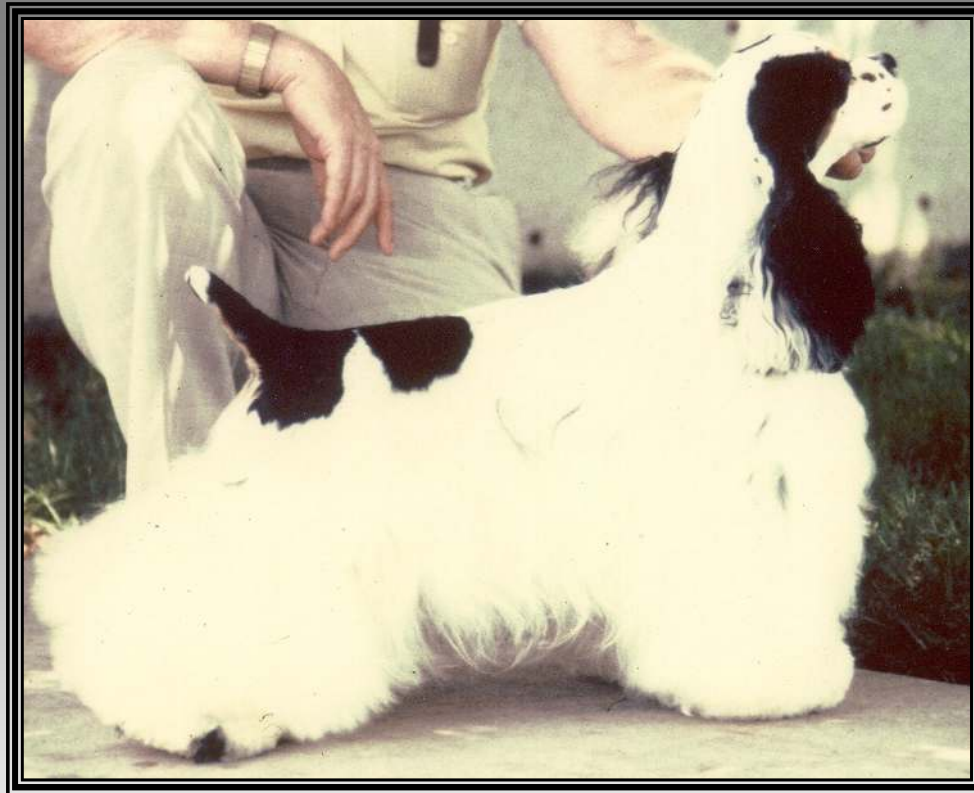


# *From Above*

- Always look down on the Cocker when you are judging.
- The broadest parts of the dog should be the center of the ribcage and the muscling over the hips, which should be approximately the same width.
- The illustration on the left shows correct body and rib spring. The illustration on the right shows a dog with inadequate spring of rib.



# *Tail Set*



- The Cocker Spaniel tail set is unique among the flushing spaniels. The Cocker tail should come right off the topline, as a continuation of the spine.
- In all the other flushing spaniels (Clumber, Sussex, Field, English Cocker, American Water Spaniel, English Springer and Welsh Springer) there should be a gentle rounding of the croup to a somewhat lower tail set than in the Cocker.

# *Tail Carriage*



- Correct tail carriage should indicate the merry attitude of the Cocker Spaniel, but should never be so high as to appear Terrier-like. Extremely high tails are the result of a flat croup, which causes problems with the rest of the hindquarter construction.

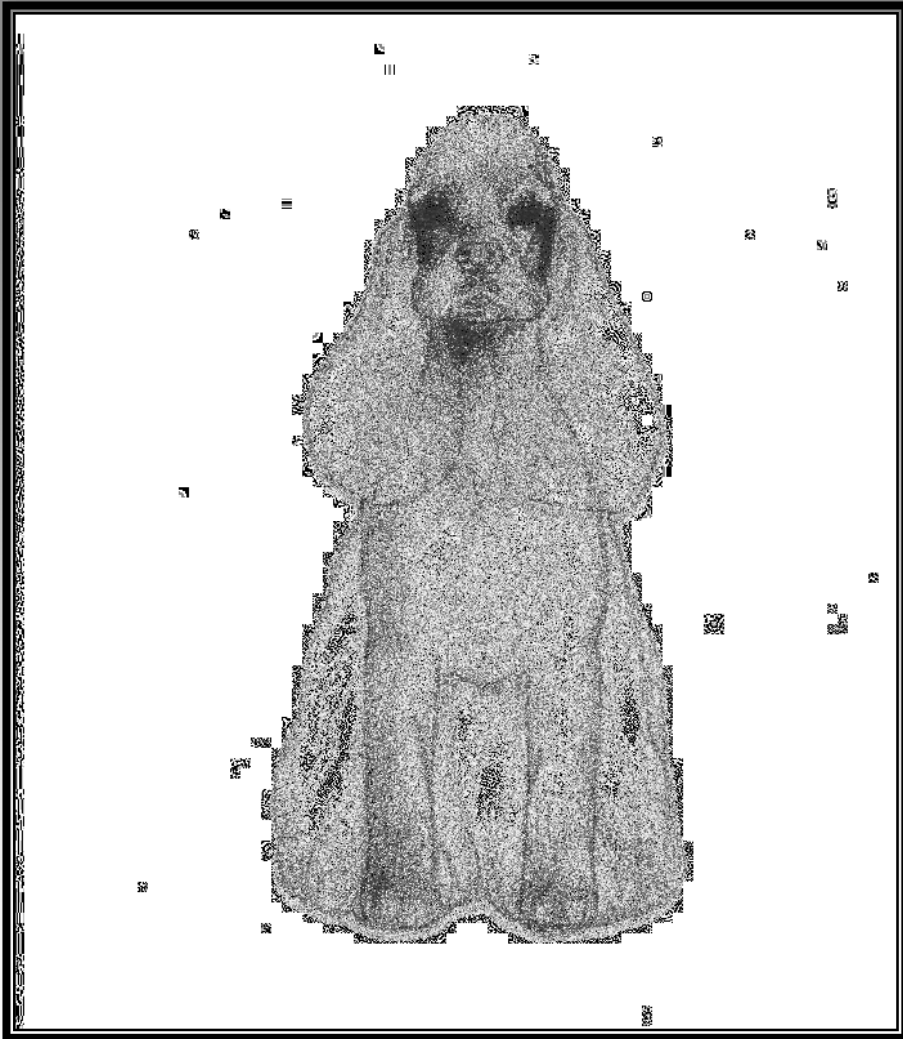
# *An Example*



- Croups that are too flat cause high tail carriage. Flat croups also limit the ability of the rear legs to come forward under the body, thereby shortening the length of step that a dog can take.

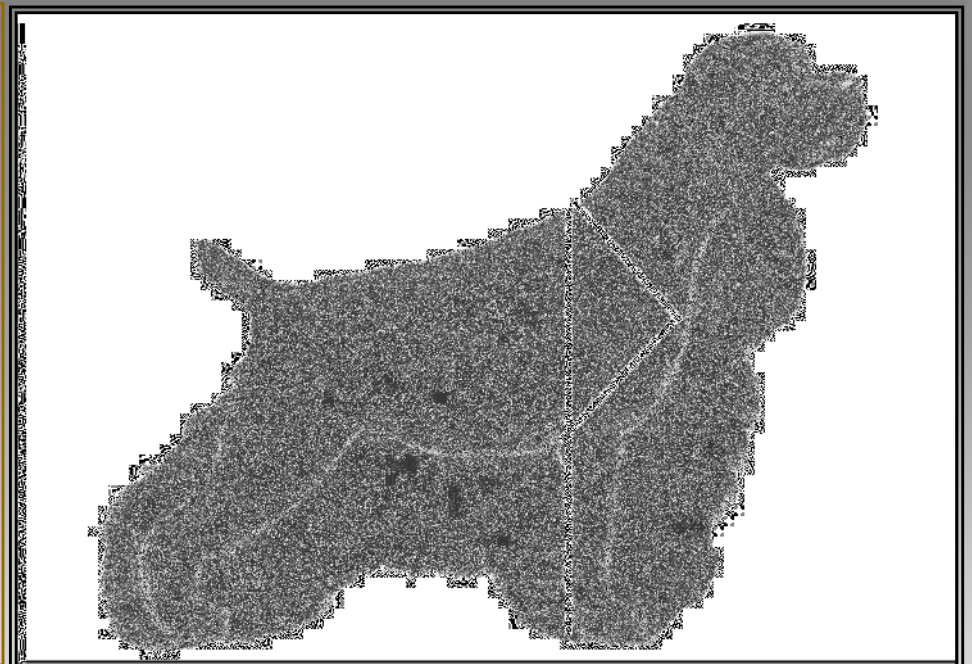
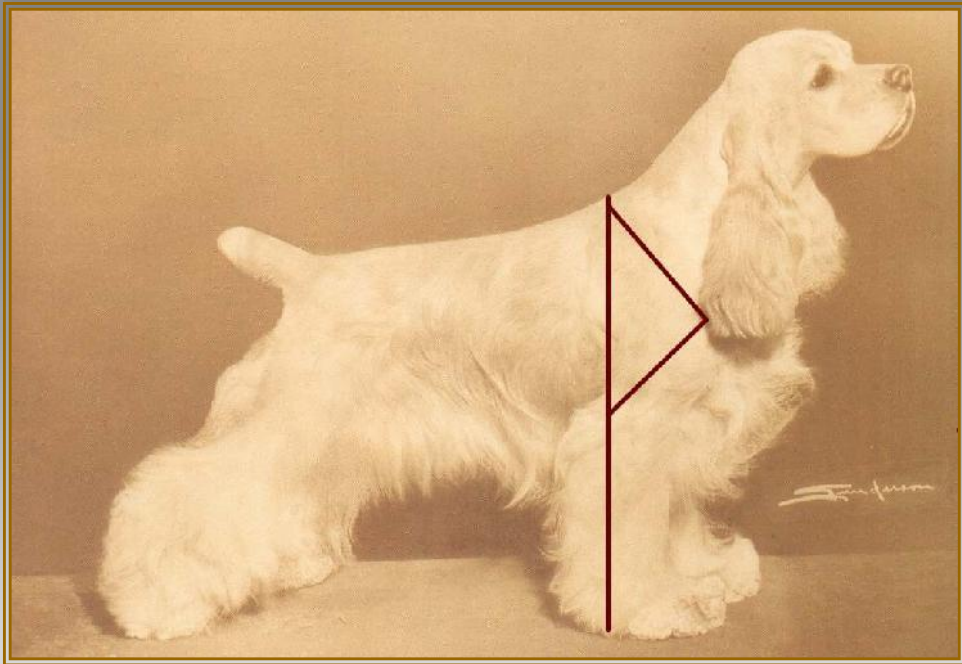


# *Front Assembly*



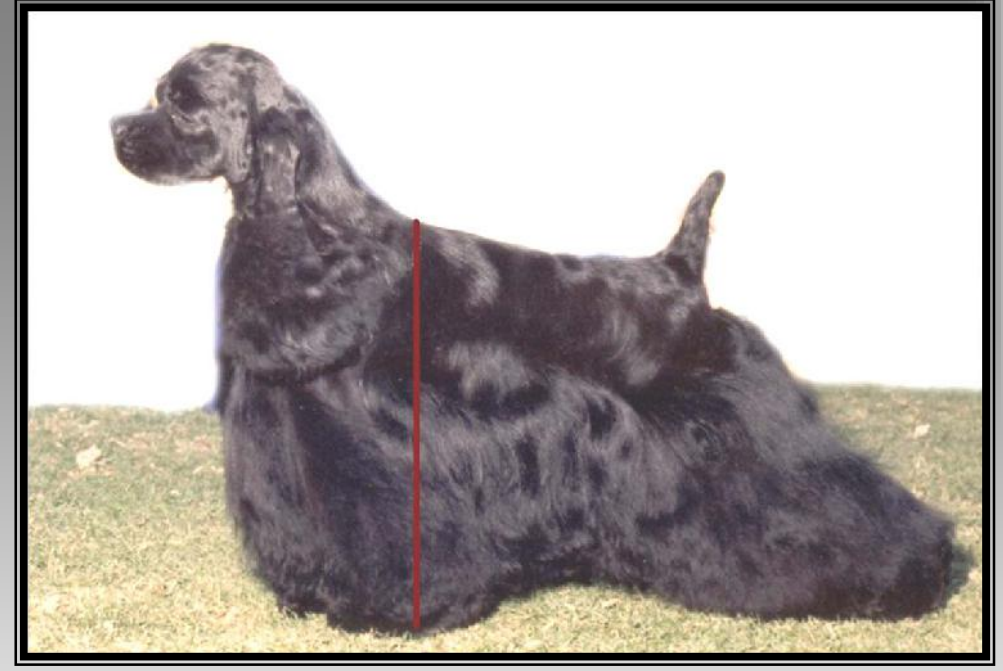
- Forelegs are parallel, straight and strongly boned.
- Muscular.
- Elbows are held close to the body.
- Pasterns are short and strong.
- Dewclaws on front legs may be removed.

# *Shoulders*



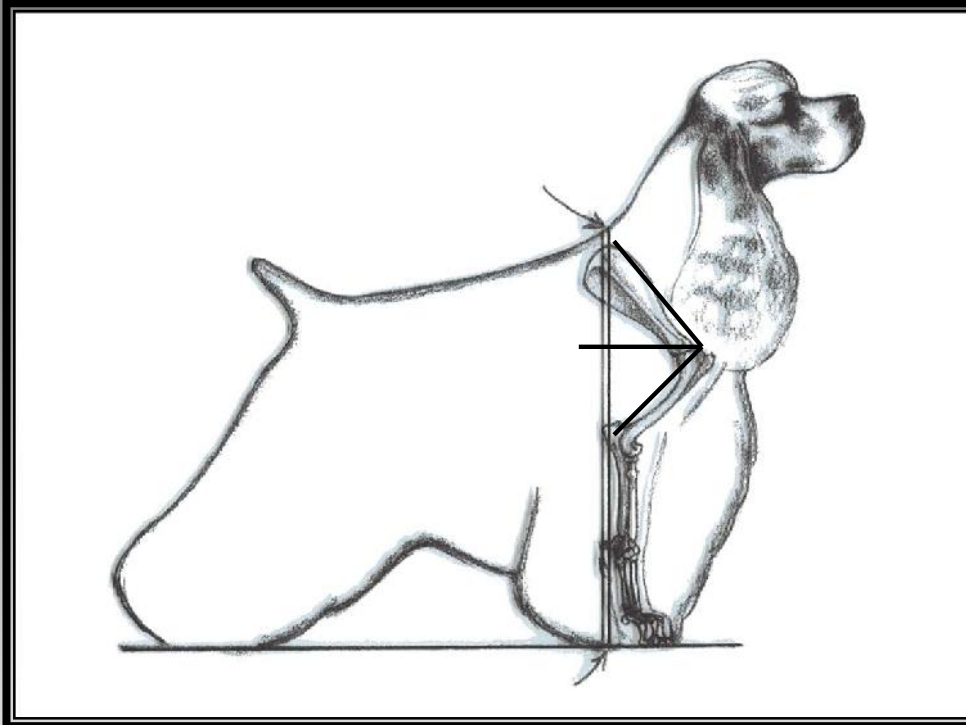
- In order to be functionally sound and efficient, a sporting spaniel must have a correct front assembly. Correct shoulder assemblies can be difficult to visualize, especially on coated breeds. Draw an imaginary line from the top of the withers to the ground. That line should fall just behind the elbow and the foot, and there should be a 'lot of dog' in front of the line. Dogs with correct shoulder construction will have their necks and heads out in front of their elbows, as is illustrated by the two dogs here.

# Comparison



- The dog on the left is much more 'vertical' in front assembly, with shorter bones and less layback of shoulder blade and upper arm, than the dog on the right. Note how his neck comes straight up out of his upright front. This sort of front creates a fancy profile but does not allow for proper length of stride and shock absorbency in a breed that is supposed to have efficiency of movement for endurance.

# *Ideal Front Construction*

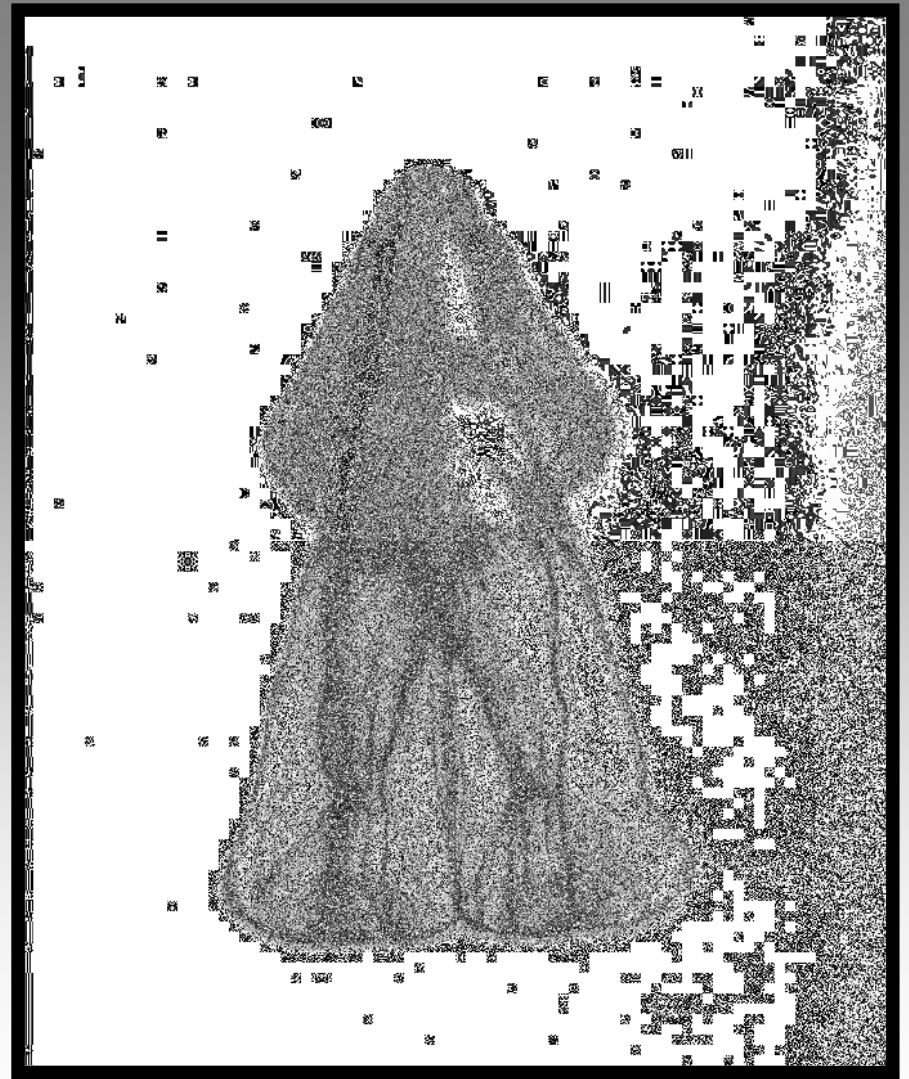


- Is created by a shoulder blade and upper arm that appear to be approximately the same length, and they meet at an angle of nearly 90 degrees, which divides equally into two 45 degree quadrants. Shoulder blades should be clean and set at an angle that will allow for a wide spring of rib, and they should be fairly close together at the tips.



# *Hindquarters*

- Hips are wide, with well-rounded, muscular quarters.
- Hind legs are strongly boned and muscled, with angulation between the pelvis and the upper thigh matching that of the shoulder assembly, and moderate angulation at the stifle. The thighs should be powerful and clearly defined.
- Rear pasterns are short and strong.
- Lack of muscling is a serious problem in today's Cocker Spaniels, due to the desire to grow and keep big coats. The standard stresses muscling and judges should seek and reward dogs in proper condition whenever possible.



# *Rear Angulation*

- Remember that it is the angle of the pelvis and the femur that should match the angle of the shoulder blade and upper arm. This is what produces balanced angulation.
- There should be MODERATE angulation at the stifle.

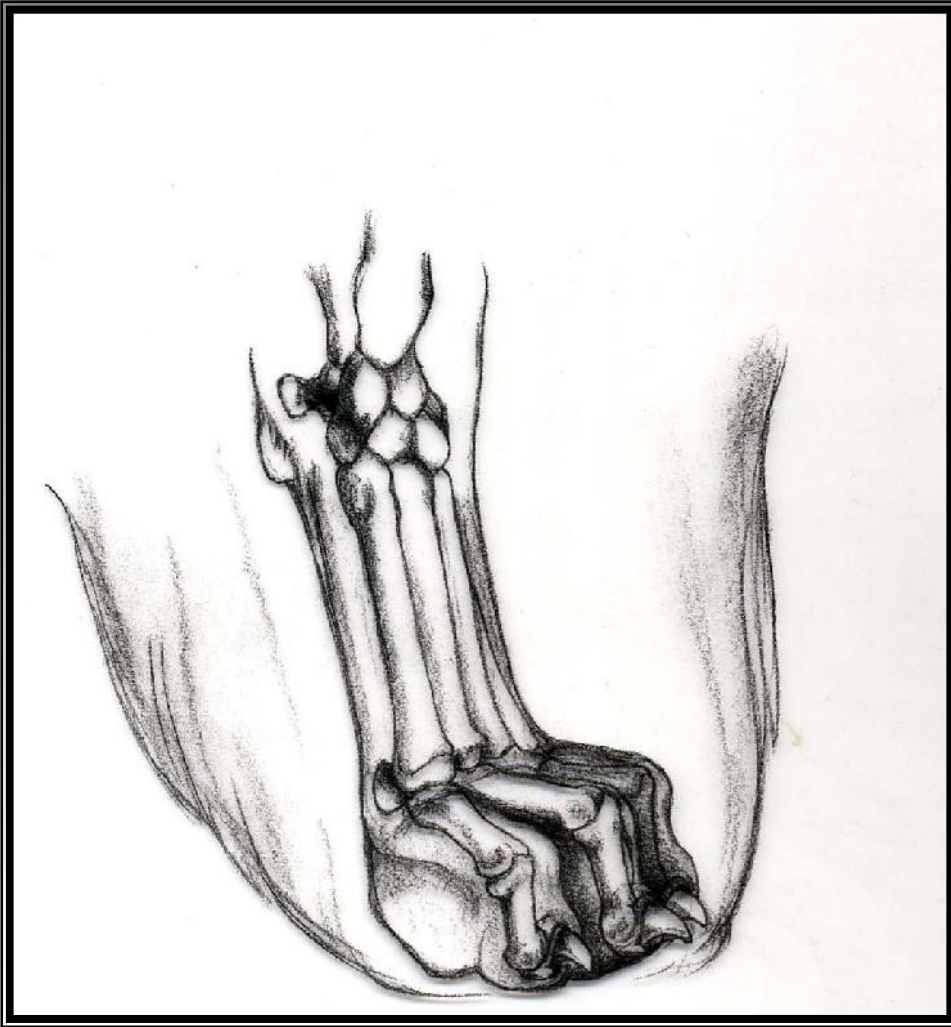


# *Balanced Angulation*



- Produces a smooth, easy gait because the length of cross step matches between the front and rear assemblies.
- When a Cocker has this balance, there is no wasted motion such as excessive lift or kick, both of which are due to faulty construction. High stepping in front and lifting or kicking of the rear is an attempt on the part of the dog to compensate for poor foot timing caused by lack of balance.
- As fancy as that sort of movement might look, it is inefficient because it wastes effort, causing the dog to lack endurance.

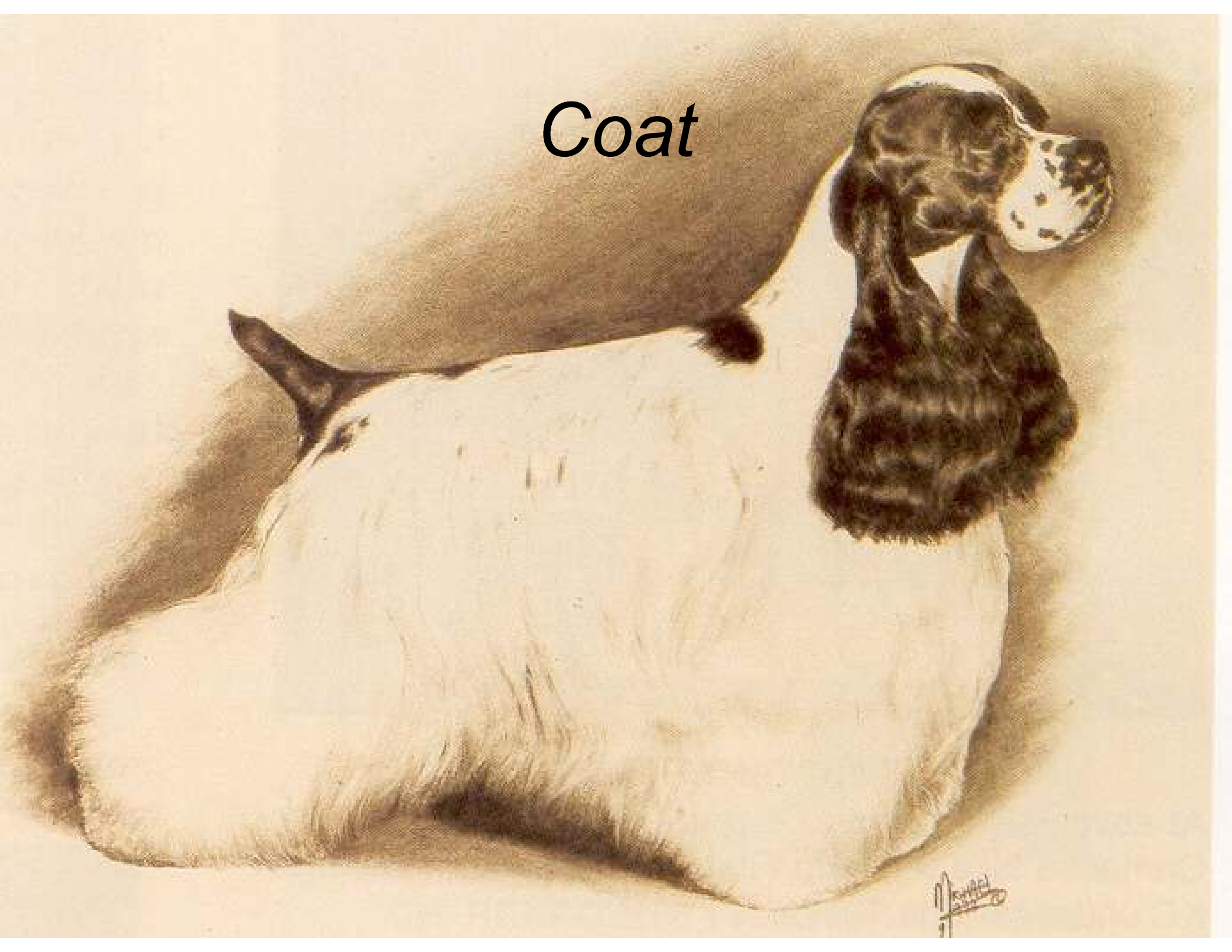
# *Feet*



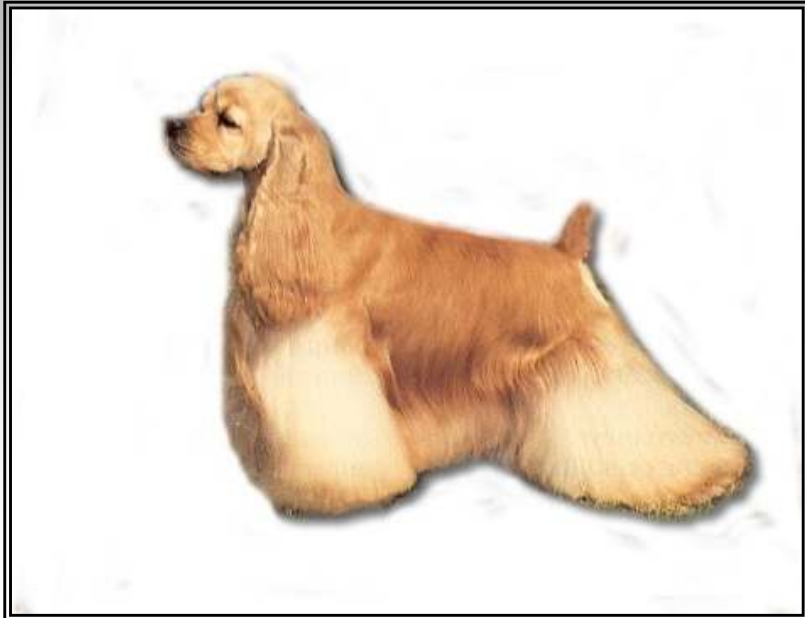
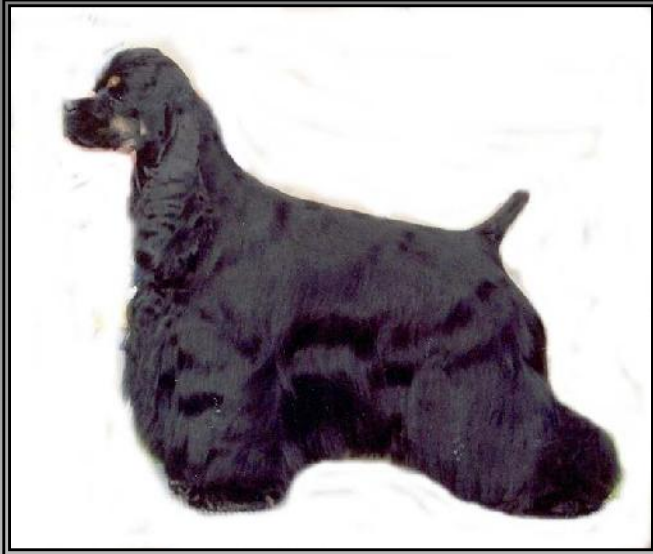
- Compact, large, round and firm, with horny pads.
- Proper construction of legs and feet is crucial in a sporting dog.



*Coat*



# *Amount and Texture*



- The breed standard stresses the importance of sufficient, but not excessive, coat.
- The coat should not hide the true lines of the dog.
- The texture of the coat is the most important coat issue. The coat must be silky in order to maintain its easy care quality.
- A truly correct, silky coat will feel 'cool' to the touch.

# Wavy Coats



- The coat on the left is correct in texture and has a slight wave, which is allowable in the standard.
- The coat on the right is of incorrect texture, it is cottony. It is also excessively wavy.

# *Practical Considerations*

- The standard describes one dog that can function in the field and in the show ring. In spite of that, the Cocker has become increasingly more heavily coated. Therefore, the texture and the proper length of the coat is exceedingly important to his dual role. Excessive and/or cottony coat must be recognized and penalized by judges.
- Just ask yourself-which of these two dogs would you want to take hunting? Which one would you want to take care of as a pet owner?



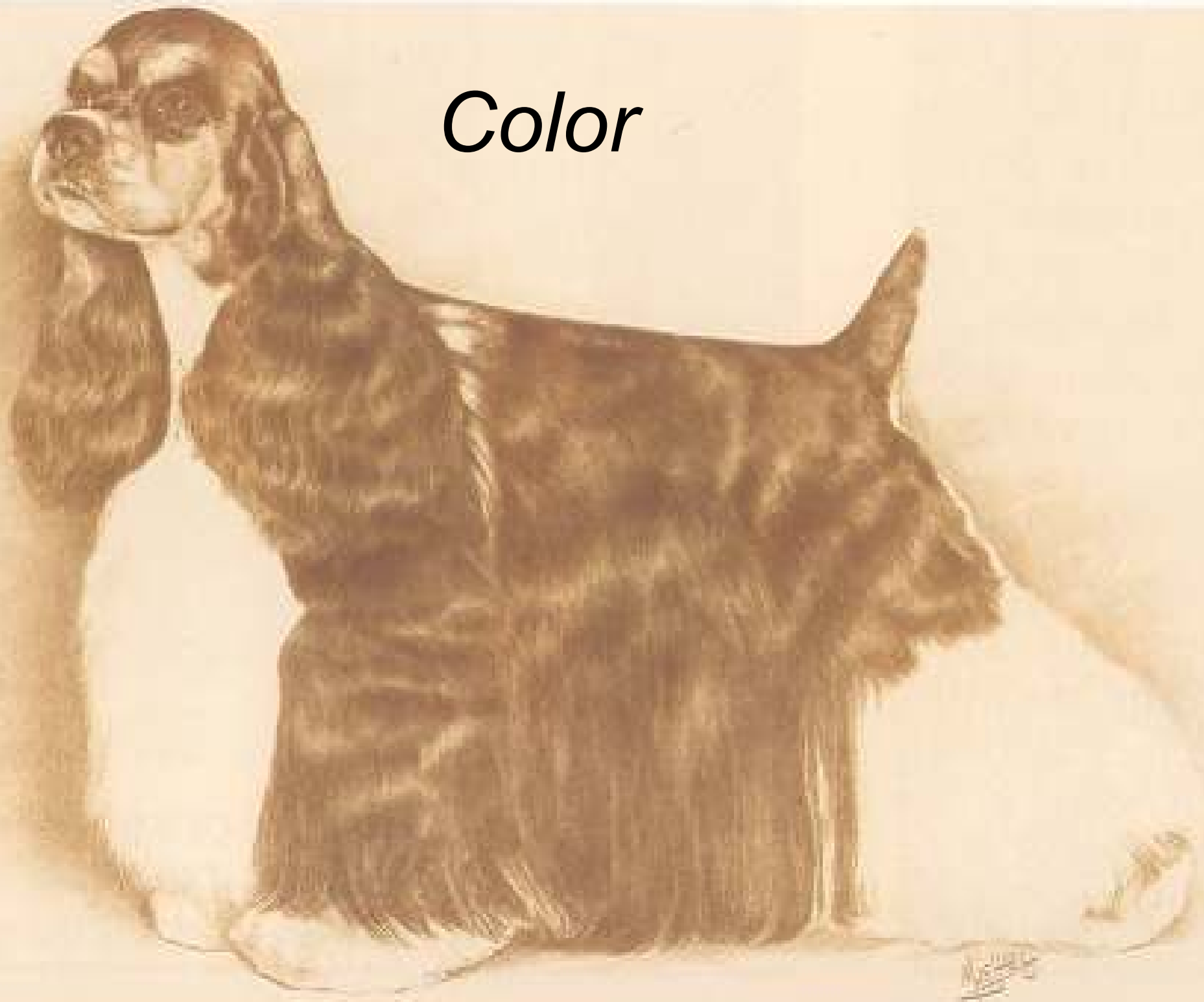


# *Trimming*

- The Cocker should be shown with a good amount of protective topcoat. The guard hairs should never be trimmed with a clipper.
- A correct trim will follow the natural lines of the dog and allow its true shape to be apparent.
- The difference in trimming between these two dogs is enormous. The dog on the top is properly stripped and trimmed. The dog on the bottom has had his topcoat scissored off and has no shape due to excessive length of furnishings.



*Color*



# *Black*



- Solid black, including black with tan points.
- Jet black, not with brown or liver shading.
- Small amount of white on the chest or throat is allowed; white in any other location shall disqualify.
- The coat should have a healthy gloss.
- Tan markings may range from light cream to dark red.

# ASCOB



- Any solid color other than black, ranging from lightest cream to darkest red, including brown and brown with tan points.
- The color shall be of a uniform shade, but lighter color of the feathering is allowed.
- A small amount of white on the chest or throat is allowed; white in any other location will disqualify.



# *Parti-Color*



- Two or more solid, well-broken colors, one of which must be white; black and white, red and white, brown and white, and roans, including any of these color combinations with tan points. It is preferable that the tan markings be located in the same pattern as for the tan points in the Black and ASCOB varieties.
- 90% or more primary color shall disqualify.

# *Tan Points*

- Color of the tan may be from the lightest cream to the darkest red. It is restricted to 10% or less of the color of the dog.
- In the case of tan points in the Black and ASCOB varieties, the markings shall be located as follows
  - A clear tan spot over each eye
  - On the sides of the muzzle and on the cheeks
  - On the underside of the ears
  - On all feet and/or legs
  - Under the tail
  - On the chest, optional; presence or absence shall not be penalized.
- Tan markings which are not readily visible or which amount only to traces shall be penalized. Tan on the muzzle which joins over the top shall be penalized.
- The absence of tan markings in the Black and ASCOB variety in any of the specified locations in any otherwise tan-pointed dog shall disqualify.



# *Parti-Color Markings*



Parti-color Cockers come in a wide variety of markings and patterns and no one is more desirable than the next, as long as the basic parameters of the standard are met.





# *Gait*





# *Side Gait*



- Balanced, coordinated, smooth and effortless are the key words that describe the way a sporting spaniel should move.
- The strides should be long, with the feet kept close to the ground through all phases of the trot. High stepping, hackney, kicking up in the rear, etc. are all indications of a lack of balance and they should all be penalized as the extra effort they take tires the dog quickly.
- Extreme showmanship, fast, short, quick steps, or excessive speed must not be confused with free, fluid movement.

# *Foot Timing*



- This photograph clearly illustrates correct foot timing, length of stride and balance and harmony of movement. The legs work in pairs to create a clean, effortless trot with no interference or exaggeration of motion.

# *Coming and Going*



- The dog should move in a straight line with his legs converging toward a center line of gravity.
- At full extension of the stride, when the dog is going away you should see his pads.
- Conversely, if you see the pads of the front feet when the dog is coming at you, the front legs are being lifted far too high off the ground and the feet are being 'flipped up'. That sort of movement is incorrect.

# *Carriage*



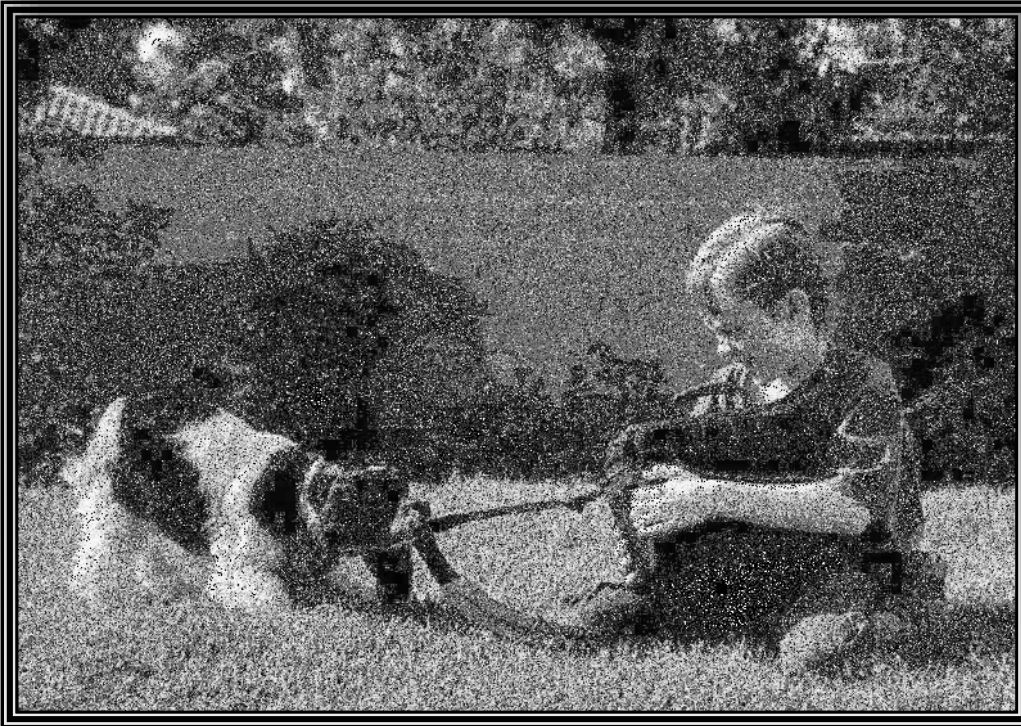
- The Cocker Spaniel should 'move as he stands', with upstanding carriage and the same firm, slightly sloping topline that he exhibits when standing.
- If the dogs are being moved too fast, or on extremely tight leads, you are completely within your rights as the judge to request that they be slowed down and the leads loosened so that you can assess true gait. However, Cockers are not generally trained to go on completely loose leads like many of the other Sporting breeds.



# *Temperament*



# *The Merry Cocker*



- Above all, he must be merry and show a keen inclination to work.
- Cockers should be equable in temperament and show no signs of timidity. The Cocker should be confident and approachable by other dogs and people with no sign of aggression or shyness.
- Please do not reward incorrect temperament in the ring. Remember that this is a sporting breed and it must act (and react) in an appropriate manner.

# *Breed Disqualifications*

- Height-Males over 15 ½ inches, females over 14 ½ inches.
- Color and Markings-The aforementioned colors are the only acceptable colors or combination of colors. Any other colors or combination of colors to disqualify.
- Black Variety-White markings except on chest and throat.
- Any Solid Color Other Than Black Variety-White markings except on chest and throat.
- Parti-color Variety-Primary color ninety percent (90%) or more.
- Tan Points-(1) Tan markings in excess of ten percent (10%); (2) Absence of tan markings in Black or ASCOB Variety in any of the specified locations in an otherwise tan pointed dog.



# *Recap- A Breed Specific Table Examination*

1. Begin in profile. Is the proportion correct? Does the topline slope properly? Is the dog of acceptable size?
2. Examine the head, both from the front and in profile.
3. Feel the breastbone and depth and width of chest and down the front legs.
4. Move to the side of the dog and examine the shoulder assembly, body and croup.
5. Check the coat on the back for correct length and wrap and feel the side coat for texture.
6. Move behind the dog and evaluate the hindquarter, and then look down over the dog for correct spring of rib.
7. Step back and look at the overall dog again. With the knowledge that you have gained in your detailed examination, put the dog 'back together again' and see how he measures up against the standard.
8. Put the dog on the ground and see how well he holds the same look on the move. Remember, this is a trimmed and posed breed and they can be molded into a shape. The true test is if that shape remains when the dog is standing free and moving.
9. If further hands-on evaluation is necessary, please place the dog back on the table, rather than 'coming down' on him on the ground.



# *The End*



- Thank you for your attention. We hope you will enjoy judging our wonderful breed.