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Gale Cummings  
Judges Ed Chair, ITCA



## The Irish Terrier Club of America

Presents  
**Judges  
Education  
Seminar**

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# Examining the Standard

Head  
Teeth  
Lips  
Nose  
Eyes  
Ears  
Neck  
Shoulders and Chest  
Body  
Hindquarters  
Stern  
Feet and Legs  
Coat  
Color  
Size  
General Appearance  
Temperament



**The Standard recognizes  
No Disqualifications**

# The HEAD

Skull is flat and slightly wedge shaped



## The HEAD

*“Long, but in a nice proportion to the rest of the body; the skull flat, rather narrow between the ears, and narrowing slightly toward the eyes; free from wrinkle, with the stop hardly noticeable except in profile.”*



## The HEAD

- *“The jaws must be strong and muscular, but not too full in the cheek, and of good punishing length.”*
- *“The foreface must not fall away appreciably between or below the eyes;*
- *- instead, the modeling should be delicate.”*



## The HEAD

- ***“The foreface and the skull from occiput to stop should be approximately equal in length.”***
- ***“Excessive muscular development of the cheeks, or bony development of the temples, conditions described by the fancier as “cheeky,” or “strong in head,” or “thick in skull” are objectionable.”***
- ***“The “bumpy” head, in which the skull presents two lumps of bony structure above the eyes, is to be faulted.”***





# The HEAD

*“The Skull flat, rather narrow between the ears, and narrowing slightly toward the eyes; free from wrinkle.”*

The stop should be barely visible except in profile.

The back skull and the muzzle should be approximately equal in length.



# The HEAD – hair and furnishings



- *“The hair on the upper and lower jaws should be similar in quality and texture to that on the body, and of sufficient length to present an appearance of additional strength and finish to the foreface.”*



- *“Either the profuse, goat-like beard, or the absence of beard, is unsightly and undesirable.”*

# HEAD and Expression

Expression plays a major role in defining TYPE in Irish terriers. The “hard-bitten” expression so valued by long-time terrier breeders.

**Teeth:** *“Should be strong and even, white and sound; and neither overshot nor undershot.”*

**Lips:** *“Should be close and well-fitting, almost black in color.”*

**Nose:** *“Must be black.”*

**Eyes:** *“Dark brown in color; small, not prominent; full of life, fire and intelligence, showing an intense expression.”*

*“The light or yellow eye is most objectionable, and is a bad fault.”*





# Eyes

*“Dark, small, not prominent;  
full of life, fire and intelligence,  
showing an intense expression.”  
“The light or yellow eye is most  
objectionable, and is a bad fault.”*



**Bad fault - Light or yellow eyes**



# The Small Eye

The vaunted "hard-bitten" expression depends on the small eye. It is increasingly rare.



Ch. Glannagalt Now Peace



Dennis Sheehan with his Glannagalt Now Peace. Dennis owned "Jerry" at the time of his historic BIS win.

The pup (bottom left) exhibits a conventional eye. The pup on the right has the small eye and the hard-bitten face.

John Thorndike with Notlim Celtic Playboy.



# EARS

- *“Small and V-shaped; of moderate thickness; set well on the head, and dropping forward closely toward the outside corner of the eye.”*
- *“The top of the folded ear should be well above the level of the skull.”*
- *“A “dead” ear, hound-like in appearance, must be severely penalized. It is not characteristic of the Irish Terrier.”*
- *“The hair should be much shorter and somewhat darker in color than that on the body.”*



## EAR Carriage



**Tip on inside corner of eye**



**Tip in middle of eye**



**Tip above  
outside corner of eye,  
Fastened low**



**Hound Ear - a  
severe penalty**

## HEAD – Summary



- Head - Long and in balance with body.
- Muzzle - Strong.
- Cheeks - Clean.
- Skull - Flat.
  - A wedge – that tapers from cheek.
- Stop - *“hardly noticeable, except in profile.”*
- Ears - fasten to skull at mid-eye or higher up.
  - Rather Narrow between ears
  - Tips - fall to outside corner of the eye.
- Teeth - Strong, even, white. *“neither overshot nor undershot.”*
  - BITE Exam: “FRONT Only”.
- Eye - key to expression: small, dark, not prominent, intense, full of life, fire and Intelligence.
- Nose - Black.
- Beard - reflects texture of jacket.





## NECK

- *“Should be of fair length and gradually widening toward the shoulders; well and proudly carried, and free from throatiness.”*
- *“Generally there is a slight frill in the hair at each side of the neck, extending almost to the corner of the ear.”*



## SHOULDERS and CHEST

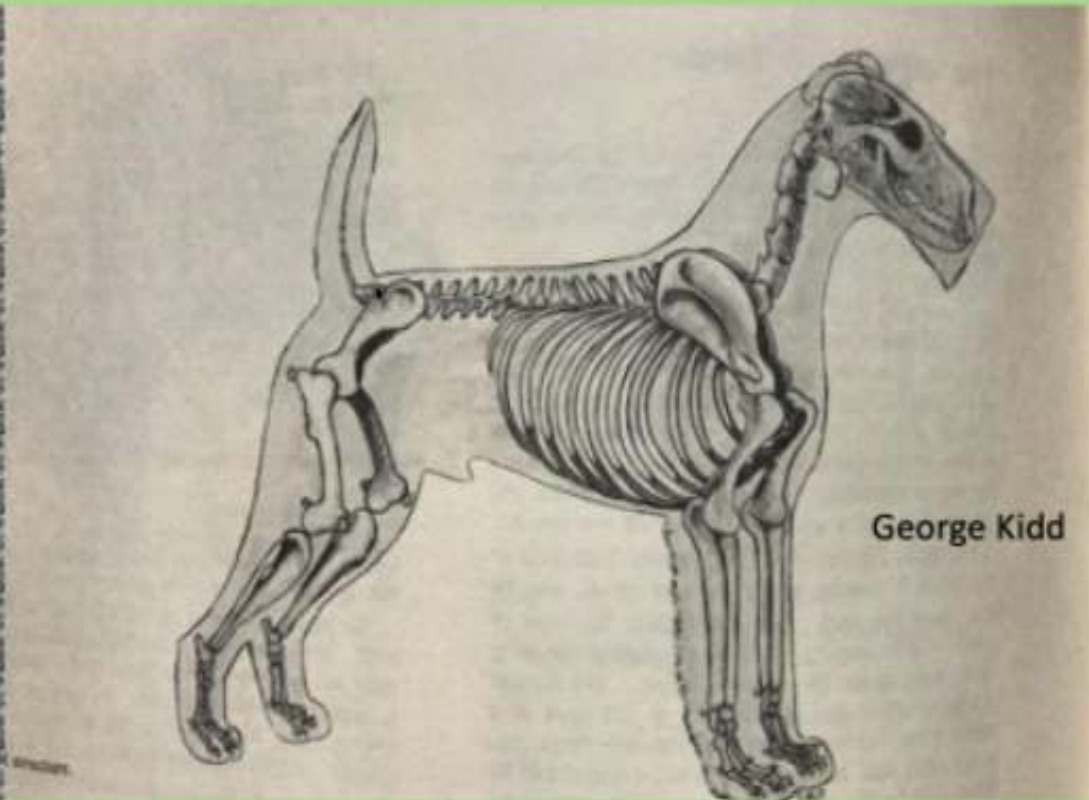
- *“Shoulders must be fine, long, and sloping well into the back.”*
- *“The chest should be deep and muscular, but neither full nor wide.”*



## The BODY

*“The Body should be moderately long. The short back is not characteristic of the Irish Terrier, and is extremely objectionable. The back must be strong and straight, and free from an appearance of slackness or "dip" behind the shoulders. The loin should be strong and muscular, and slightly arched, the ribs fairly sprung, deep rather than round, reaching to the level of the elbow. The bitch may be slightly longer than the dog.”*

# The BODY



# The BODY



**Chest down to the elbow, some pro-sternum visible, long rib, short loin, gradual tuck, straight backline, shoulders blend back and in.**



**Lacking moderate length, shorter backline, heavier at shoulder not clean, lacks tuck-up.**

# HINDQUARTERS

*"Should be strong and muscular; thighs powerful; hocks near the ground; stifles moderately bent."*



**Straight Stifle**



**Correct  
conformation**



**Over angulated**

## STERN

***“Should be docked, taking off about one quarter. It should be set on rather high, but not curled. It should be of good strength and substance; of fair length and well covered with harsh, rough hair.”***



Stern: should be set on high without falling away. The profile of the dog should be a continuous flowing line from the neck to the base of the tail. Placement permits some pelvic bone to project behind.



Tail is set below the level of the topline, curved carriage pulls the tail too far forward.

## FEET and LEGS

*“The feet should be strong, tolerably round, and moderately small; toes arched and turned neither out nor in, with dark toenails. The pads should be deep, and must be perfectly sound and free from corns. Cracks alone do not necessarily indicate unsound feet. In fact, all breeds have cracked pads occasionally, from various causes.”*

**Corny feet  
(hyperkeratosis)**



## LEGS

***“Legs moderately long, well set from the shoulders, perfectly straight, with plenty of bone and muscle; the elbows working clear of the sides; pasterns short, straight, and hardly noticeable. Both fore and hind legs should move straight forward when traveling; the stifles should not turn outwards. “Cow-hocks” - that is, the hocks turned in and the feet turned out - are intolerable. The legs should be free from feather and covered with hair of similar texture to that on the body to give proper finish to the dog. ”***





## FEET and LEGS

*“Both fore and hind legs should move straight forward when traveling; the stifles should not turn outward.”*



~\*~





## COAT

*"Should be dense and wiry in texture, rich in quality, having a broken appearance, but still lying fairly close to the body, the hairs growing so closely and strongly together that when parted with the fingers the skin is hardly visible; free of softness or silkiness, and not so long as to alter the outline of the body, particularly in the hindquarters. On the sides of the body the coat is never as harsh as on the back and quarters, but it should be plentiful and of good texture. At the base of the stiff outer coat there should be a growth of finer and softer hair, lighter in color, termed the undercoat. Single coats, which are without any undercoat, and wavy coats are undesirable; the curly and the kinky coats are most objectionable."*



# THE BROKEN COAT

Originally written for the German publication Der Terrier.  
Revised for the AKC breed column, and an ITCA breeding seminar.

- Broadly misunderstood.
- *Dense and wiry* in texture, rich in quality, *broken appearance*.
- A *tight-fitting* coat that protects the dog from water and brush.
- Hair grows in an arc that forces the tip back into the body of the dog.
- The words “straight” or “flat” never appear in the Standard.
- Wavy coat grows away from the body of the dog.
- Curly coat hair grows in a spiral shape



## Variations in The Broken Coat



## COAT COLOR

***“Should be whole colored: bright red, golden red, red wheaten, or wheaten. A small patch of white on the chest, frequently encountered in all whole-colored breeds, is permissible but not desirable. White on any other part of the body is most objectionable. Puppies sometimes have black hair at birth which should disappear before they are full grown.”***

“Red” Coat



“Golden Red” Coat



Sm. White on Chest



## SIZE

***“The most desirable weight in show condition is 27 pounds for the dog and 25 pounds for the bitch. The height at the shoulder should be approximately 18 inches. These figures serve as a guide to both breeder and judge. In the show ring, however, the informed judge readily identifies the oversized or undersized Irish Terrier by its conformation and general appearance. Weight is not the last word in judgment. It is of the greatest importance to select, insofar as possible, terriers of moderate and generally accepted size, possessing the other various characteristics.”***



## GENERAL APPEARANCE

*“The overall appearance of the Irish Terrier is important. In conformation he must be more than a sum of his parts. He must be all-of-a-piece, a balanced vital picture of symmetry, proportion and harmony. Furthermore, he must convey character. This terrier must be active, lithe and wiry in movement, with great animation, sturdy and strong in bone structure , but at the same time the same time free from clumsiness, for speed, power and endurance are most essential. The Irish Terrier must be neither "cobby" nor "cloddy" but should be built on lines of speed with a graceful, racing outline.”*



# GENERAL APPEARANCE

**"Ideal" physique**



**"Cobby" physique**



**"Cloddy" physique**

# TEMPERAMENT

*"The temperament of the Irish Terrier reflects his early background: he was family pet, guard dog, and hunter. He is good tempered, spirited and game. It is of the utmost importance that the Irish Terrier show fire and animation. There is a heedless, reckless pluck about the Irish Terrier which is characteristic, and which, coupled with the headlong dash, blind to all consequences, with which he rushes at his adversary, has earned for the breed the proud epithet of "Daredevil." He is of good temper, most affectionate, and absolutely loyal to mankind. Tender and forbearing with those he loves, this rugged, stout-hearted terrier will guard his master, his mistress and children with utter contempt for danger or hurt. His life is one continuous and eager offering of his loyal and faithful companionship and devotion. He is ever on guard, and stands between his home and all that threatens."*

