

# IRISH WATER SPANIEL (IWS) JUDGE'S EDUCATION

IWSCA Website  
2012



# Purpose



- Provide Conformation Judge's Education "Seminar"
  - Follow AKC Criteria:
    - 90 Minutes ... Or longer
    - IWSCA approved Presenter & Content
    - One or two live dogs for illustration
    - Class size limited to 40
    - Completion reported to AKC Judging Operations

# Introduction

- We appreciate your interest
  - Many styles acceptable within Standard
- The IWS is a **moderate** gun dog, bred for endurance, with a bold and dashing eagerness to please
- We'll discuss:
  - History of IWS.
  - Elements of our Standard and Illustrated Guide
  - Key points of the ideal IWS.
  - Suggestions for Judging and approaching
- Five Take Aways:
  - Structure
  - Movement
  - Head & Coat
  - Silhouette
  - Personality





# Agenda

- History
  - Form & Function
  - IWS At-A-Glance
  - The Standard
  - Judging Notes
  - Take Aways
  - Question & Answer Session
- 
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# History



- Ancient dog
- Prior to 1850's, two different types in terms of color and size
- By 1859, Irish sportsman, Justin McCarthy, isolated the breed type with "Boatswain," the first pure-type IWS
- Well received by both Irish and English sportsmen
  - bold and daring retrieves
  - extreme hardiness in the cold North Sea
  - superb disposition to please
- Before civil war, several IWS were exported to North America

# Modern History

- By end of First World War, most popular retriever
  - Heyday as an all-around gun dog came between the wars
- In 1937 the Parent Club, The Irish Water Spaniel Club of America, was organized by Mr. Thomas C. Marshal and Mrs. Henry F. Hall
- Today, IWS owners are among the most devoted.
  - Regularly compete in conformation, obedience, rally, agility, tracking and field
  - Bench Champions among contenders at the Master National, Field Trials, MACH and OTCH competitions
  - IWSCA recognizes “All-Rounders;” those IWS titling in field, obedience and breed competition
- The IWSCA is a CHIC Parent Club
  - Committed to conducting and supporting the research, surveys, and health testing needed to preserve this unique and wonderful dog



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# Form & Function

- Moderate gun dog
- Bred for all types of shooting, especially water-fowling
- Strongly built and well-boned
- Rugged endurance
- Balanced
- Neither leggy nor coarse

# Form & Function



**Bred for all types of shooting...**



# Form & Function



**...especially for water-fowling**



# Agenda

- History
  - Form & Function
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  - The Standard
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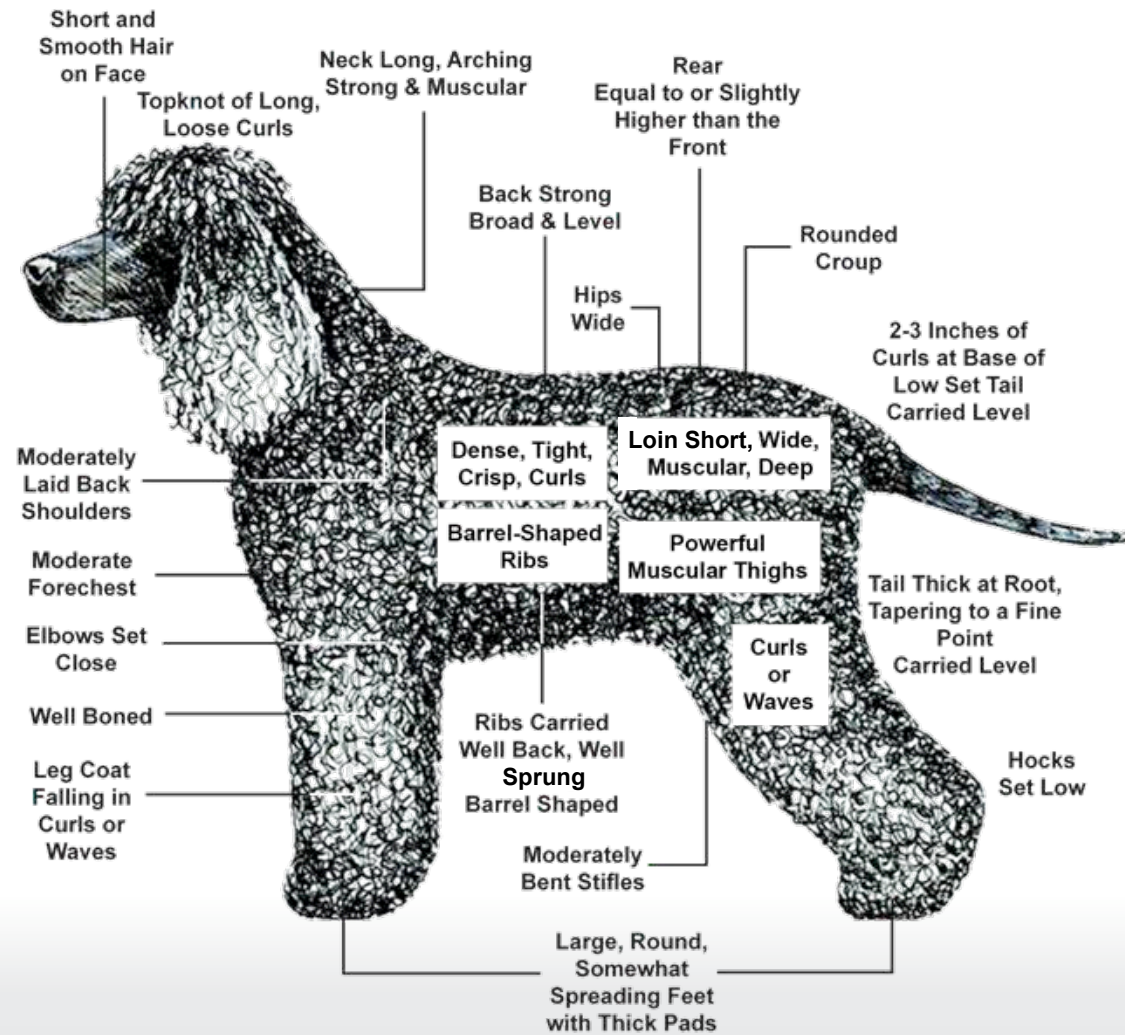
# **IWS At-A-Glance**

## **Distinguishing Characteristics**

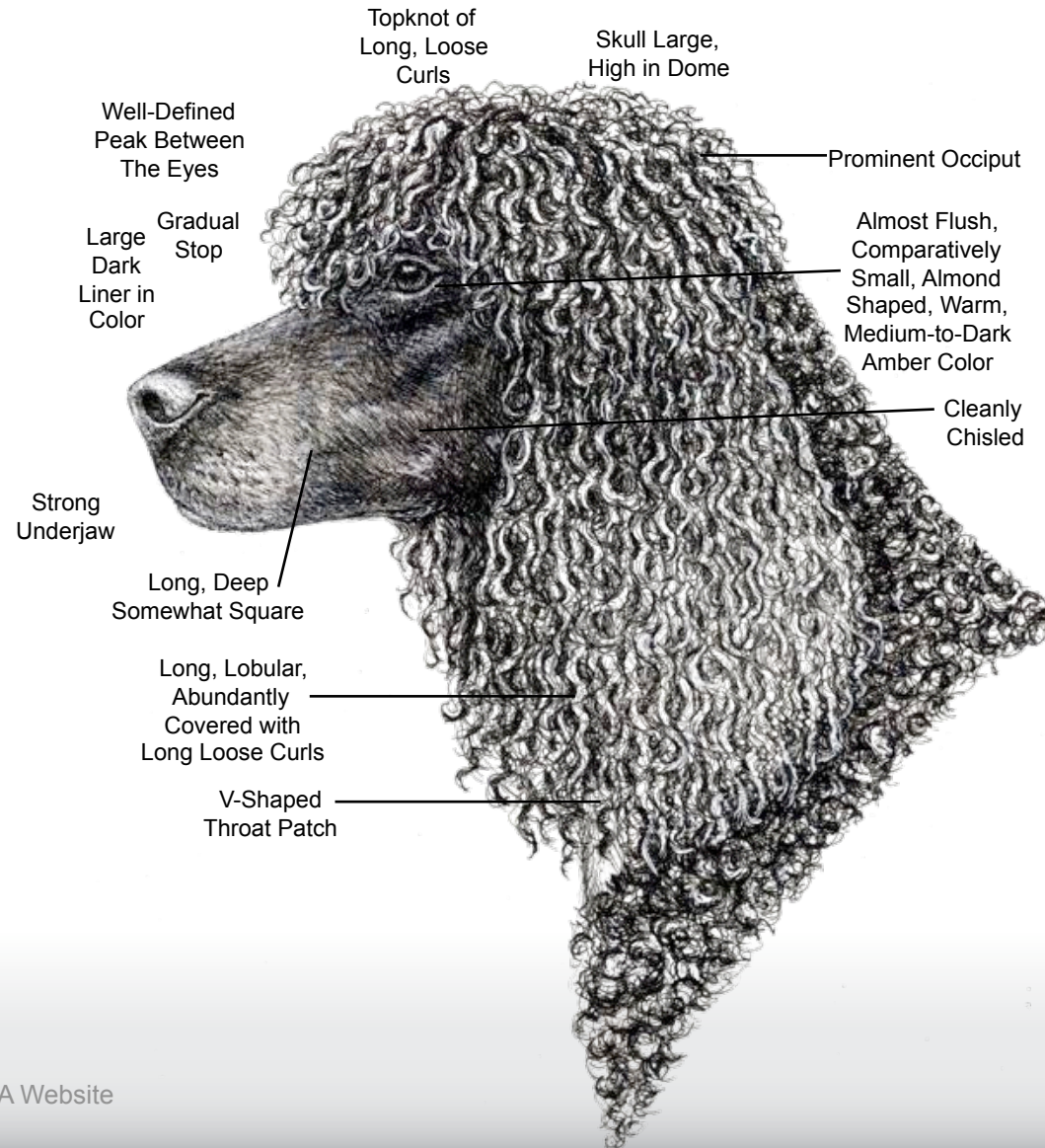
### **What Makes the IWS Different?**

- Top-knot of long, loose curls
- Body covered with:
  - Dense;
  - Crisply curled;
  - Liver colored coat
- Smooth face
- “Rat” tail

# IWS At-A-Glance





# IWS At-A-Glance





# Agenda

- Form & Function
  - IWS At-A-Glance
  - **The Standard**
  - Judging Notes
  - Take Aways
  - Question & Answer Session
- 
- 



# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
Feet

## Movement

Body  
Forequarters  
Hindquarters  
Gait

## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
Coat/Color

## Silhouette

Topline  
Back  
Rattail

## Personality

Temperament

# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
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## Movement

Body  
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## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
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Topline  
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## Personality

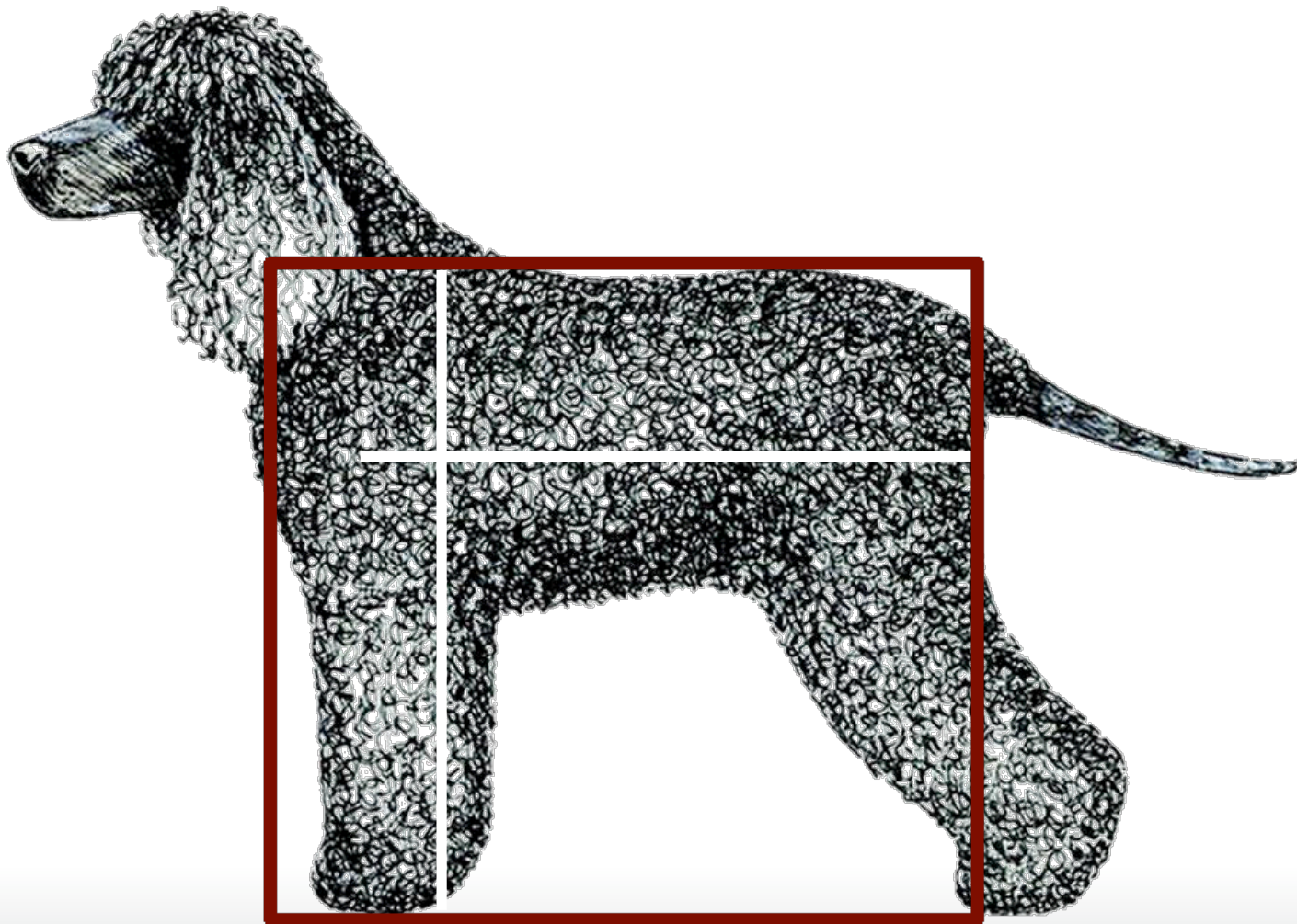
Temperament

# Structure

Proportion & Substance - Size/Weight – Neck - Feet

- “...smart, upstanding, strongly built...”
- Slightly rectangular shape
- Height to leg of about 50/50
- Medium length
- A well-muscled, arched neck, set smoothly into the shoulders, to carry large waterfowl
- Large webbed feet, able to tread on marsh & bog

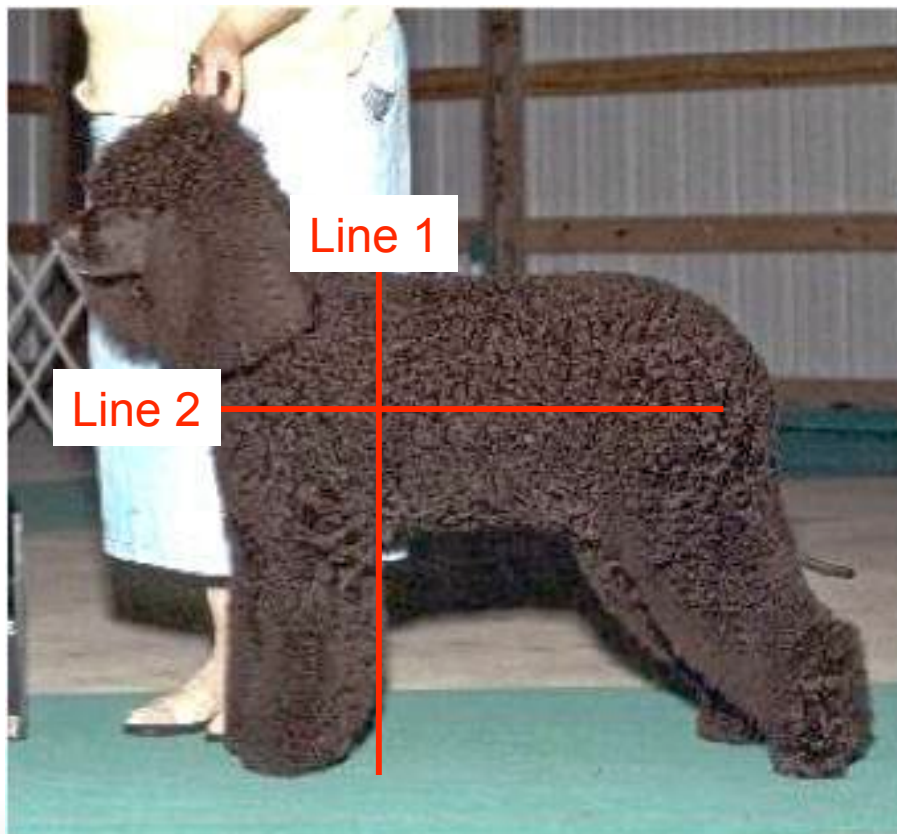
# Proportion & Substance



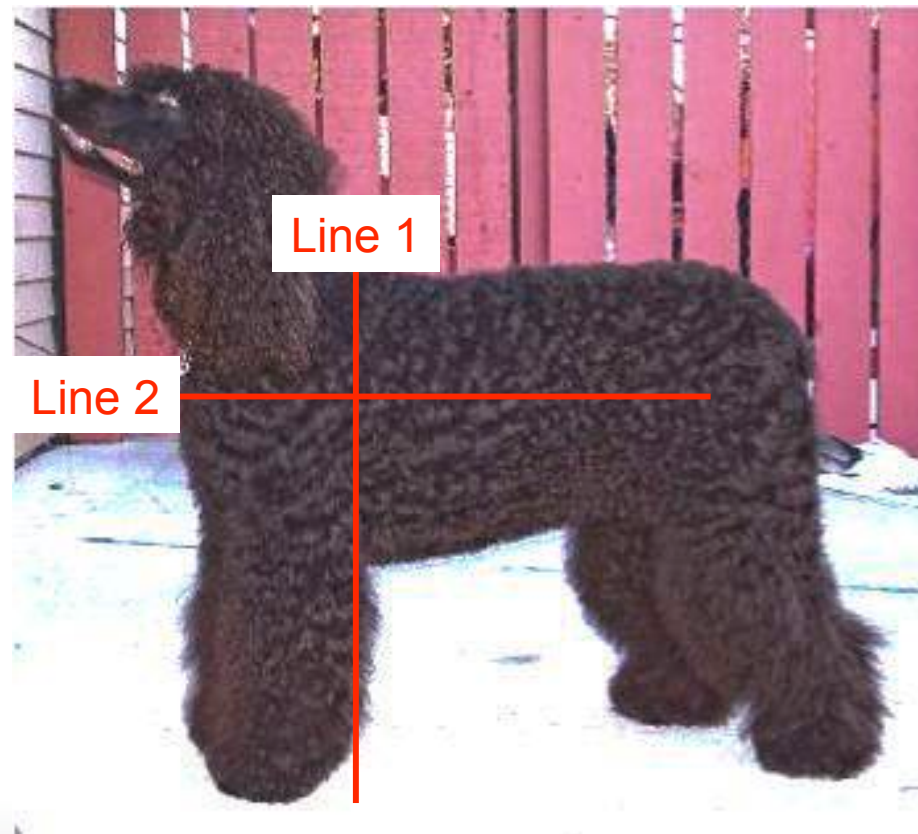
**Medium Length. Slightly Rectangular**

# Proportion & Substance

Slightly rectangular bitch - Correct

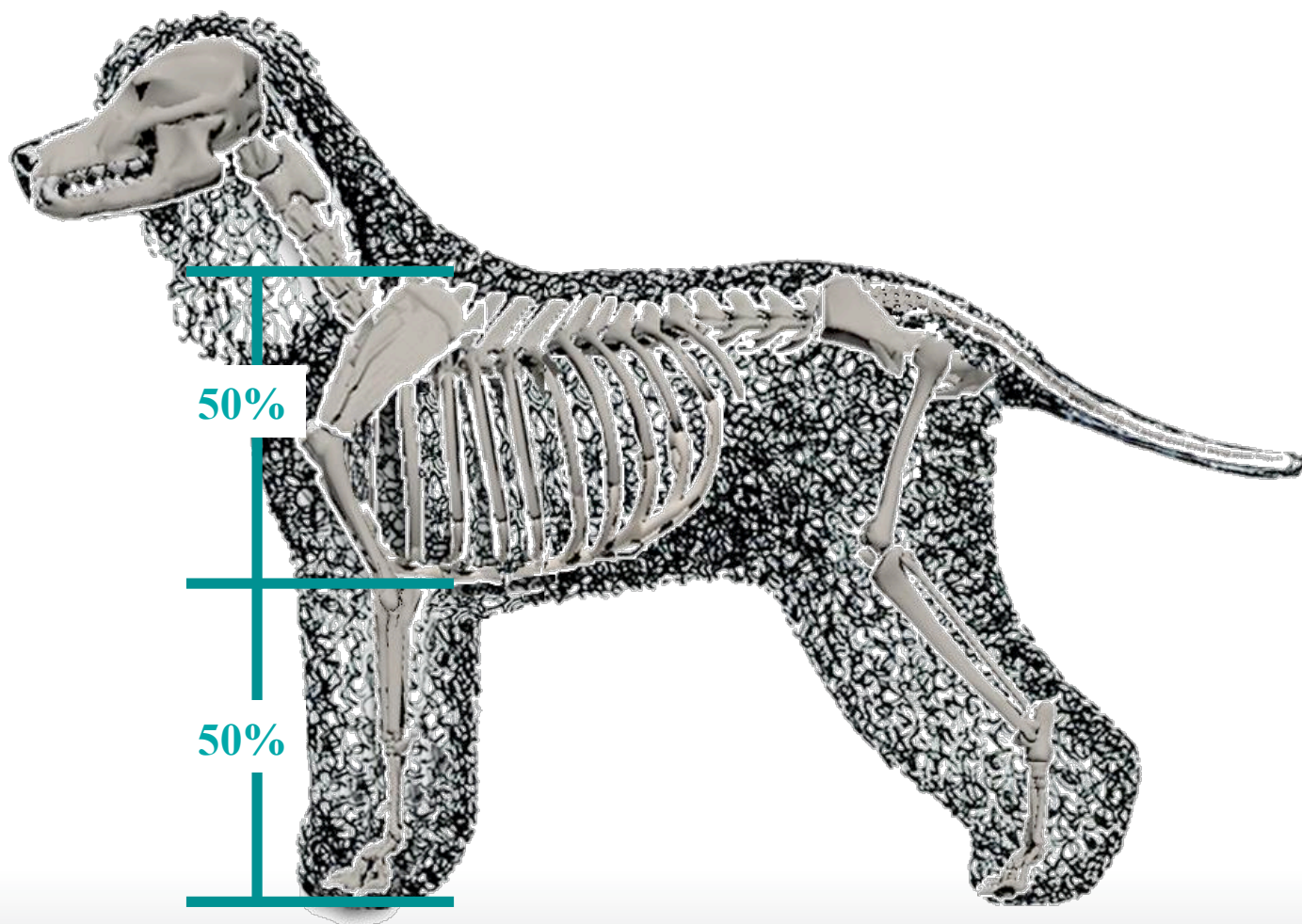


Bitch too long in back - Incorrect



**Line 1 = Line 2**

# Proportion & Substance

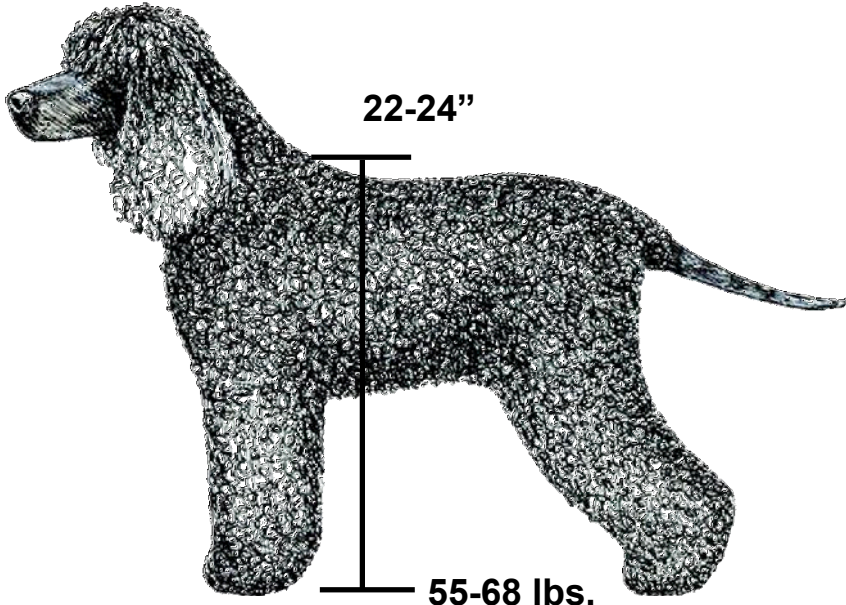
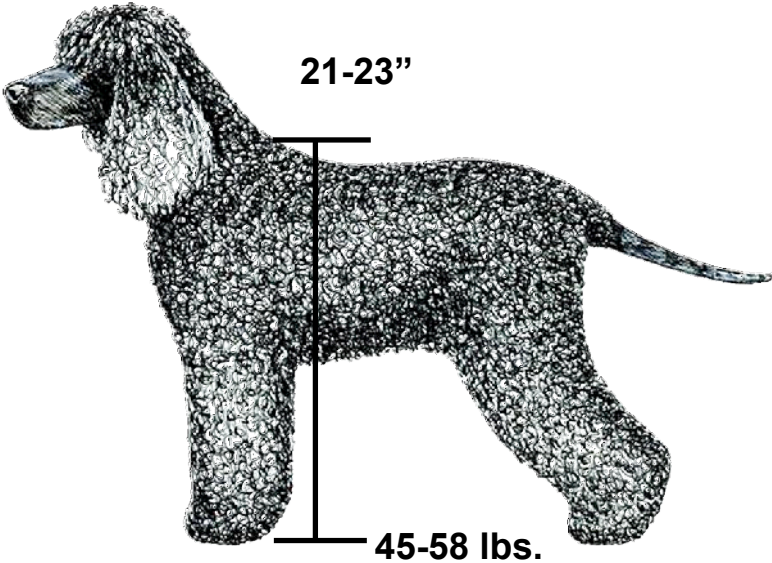


**Not Leggy: Withers to Brisket roughly equal to Brisket to Ground**

# Size/Weight

**Bitch**  
21-23 inches 45-58 pounds

**Dog**  
22-24 inches 55-68 pounds



# Size/Weight

## Bitch

21-23 inches 45-58 pounds

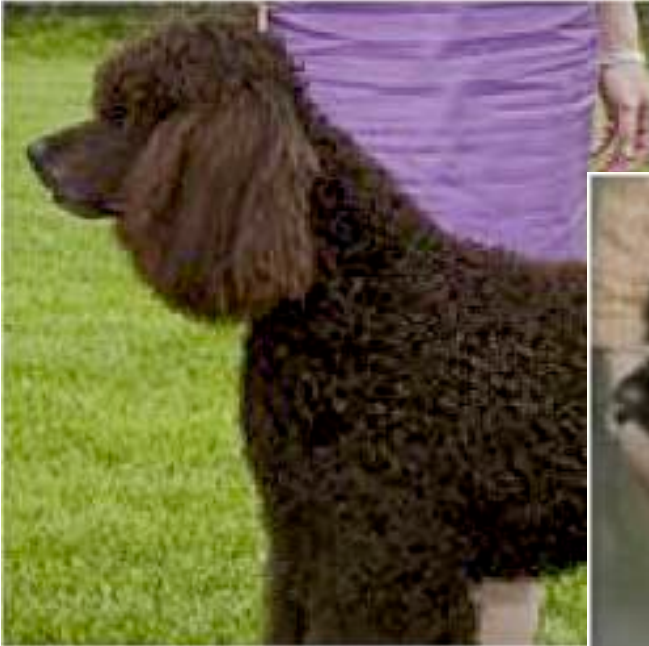
## Dog

22-24 inches 55-68 pounds





# Neck

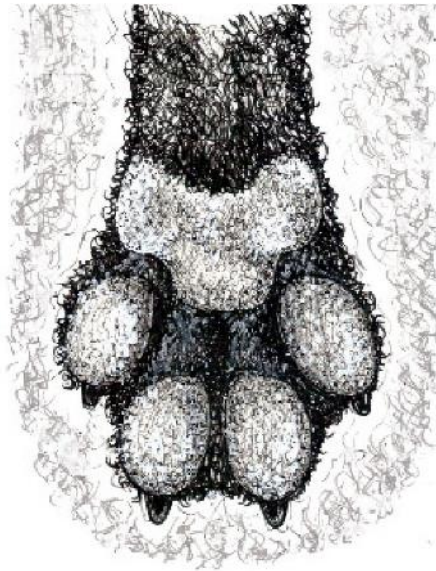


# Feet



**Large, round, somewhat spreading.  
Well clothed with hair. Pads are thick.**

# Feet



# Feet



# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
Feet

## Movement

Body  
Forequarters  
Hindquarters  
Gait

## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
Coat/Color

## Silhouette

Topline  
Back  
Rattail

## Personality

Temperament

# Movement

Body – Forequarters – Hindquarters – Gait

- Strength without heaviness, well sprung ribs, carried well back
- Free movement, without dragging toes; effortless, efficient
- Well balanced fore and hindquarters; moderate angulation
- Full leg extension; robust reach and drive

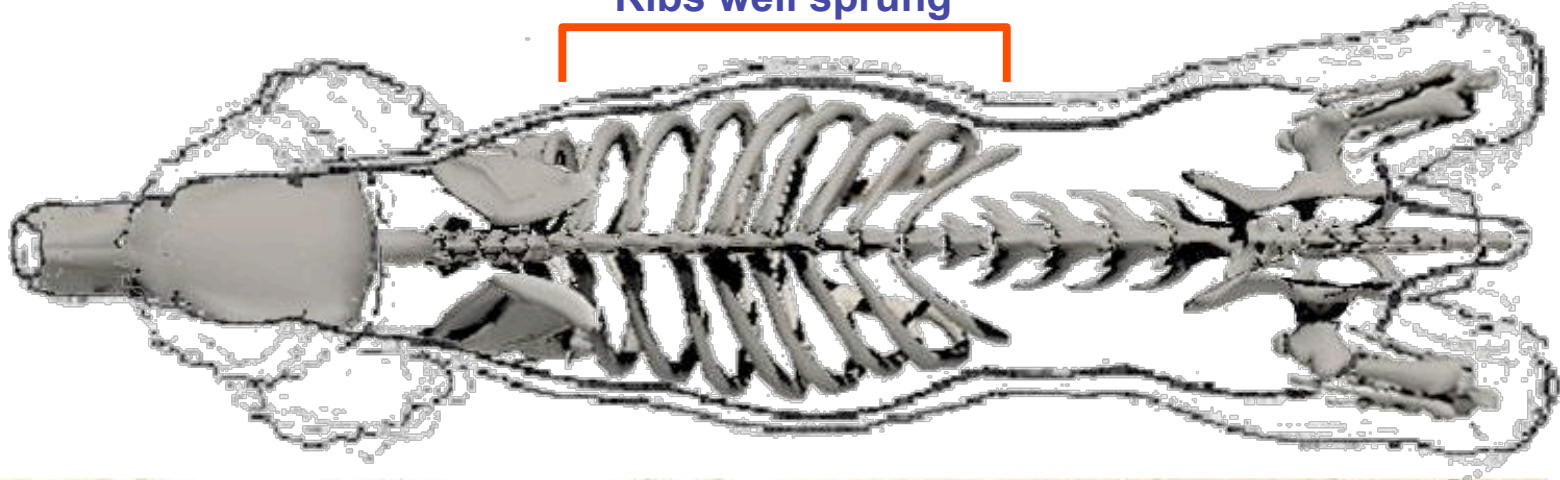
# Body



**Chest is deep with the brisket extending to the elbows.  
Loin is short and muscular.  
Should not present a tucked-up appearance.**

# Body

Ribs well sprung



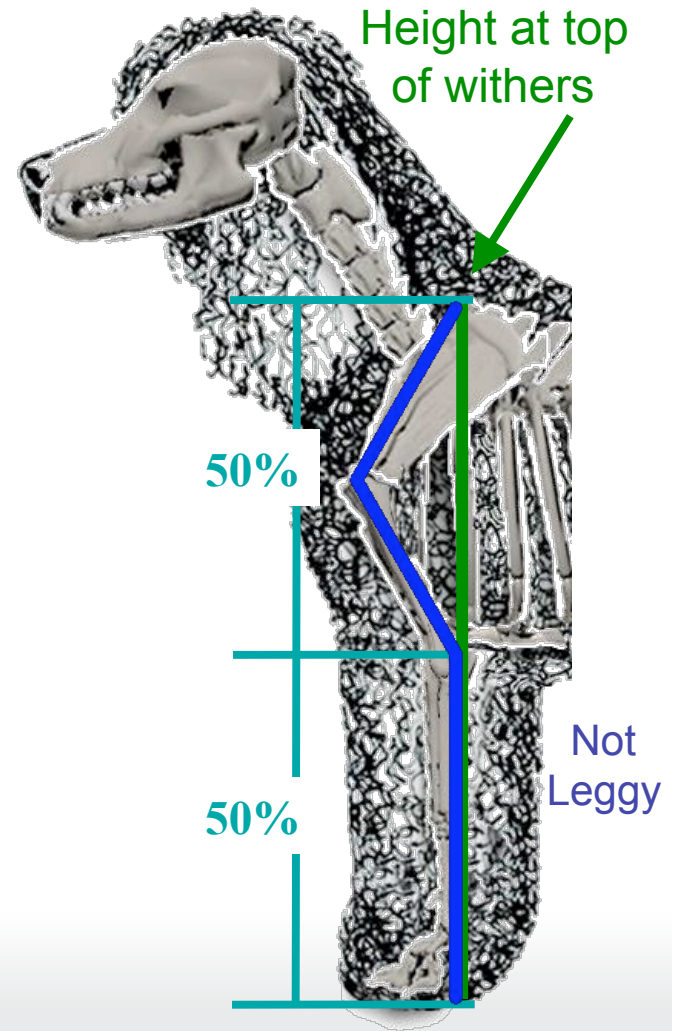
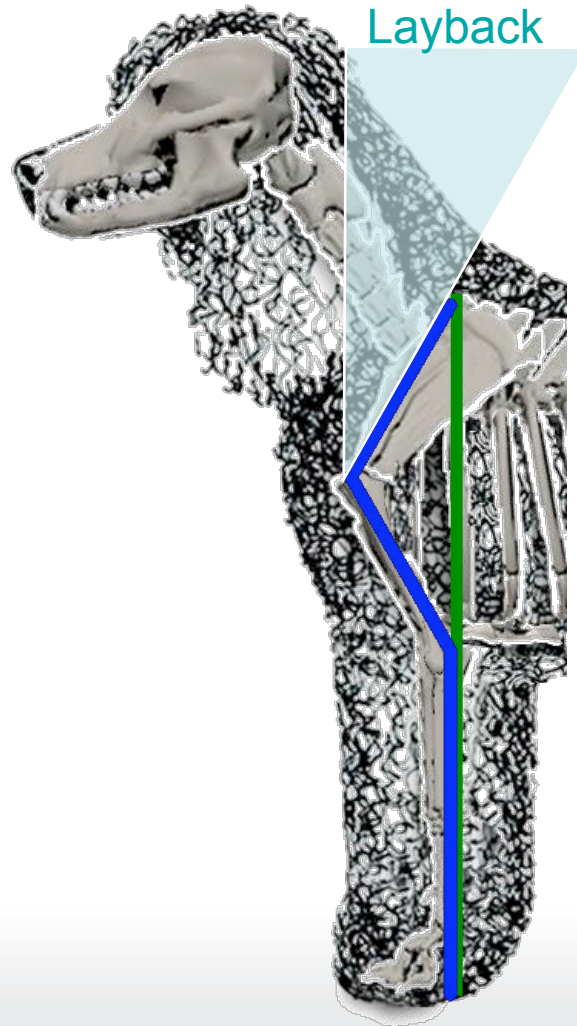
**The ribs are carried well behind the shoulders as to give large lung capacity**



# Forequarters

- Forechest should be moderate
- Shoulders sloping and moderately laid back, clean and powerful
- The upper arms are approximately the length of the shoulder blades with clean elbows set close to the body
- Forelegs are well boned, muscular and straight, set well under the withers

# Forequarters

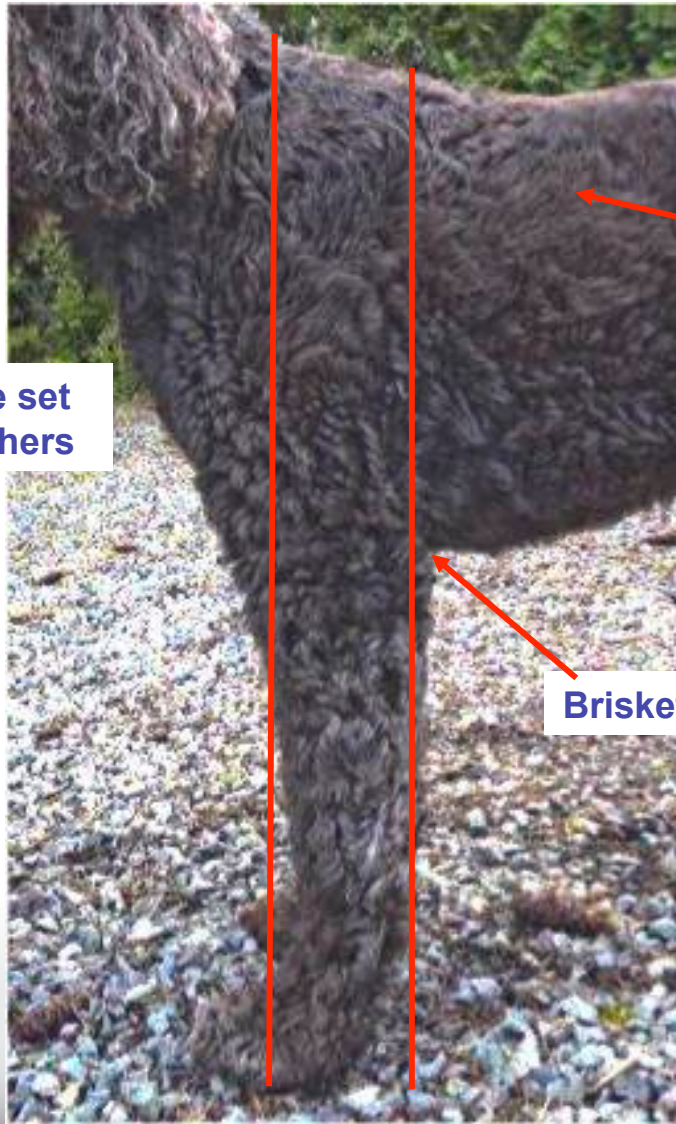


# Forequarters



**Forelegs well boned and muscular, set under the withers**

# Forequarters



This dogs forelegs are set correctly under its withers

Coat is too short, curls not seen. Incorrect

Brisket extends to elbows

# Forequarters



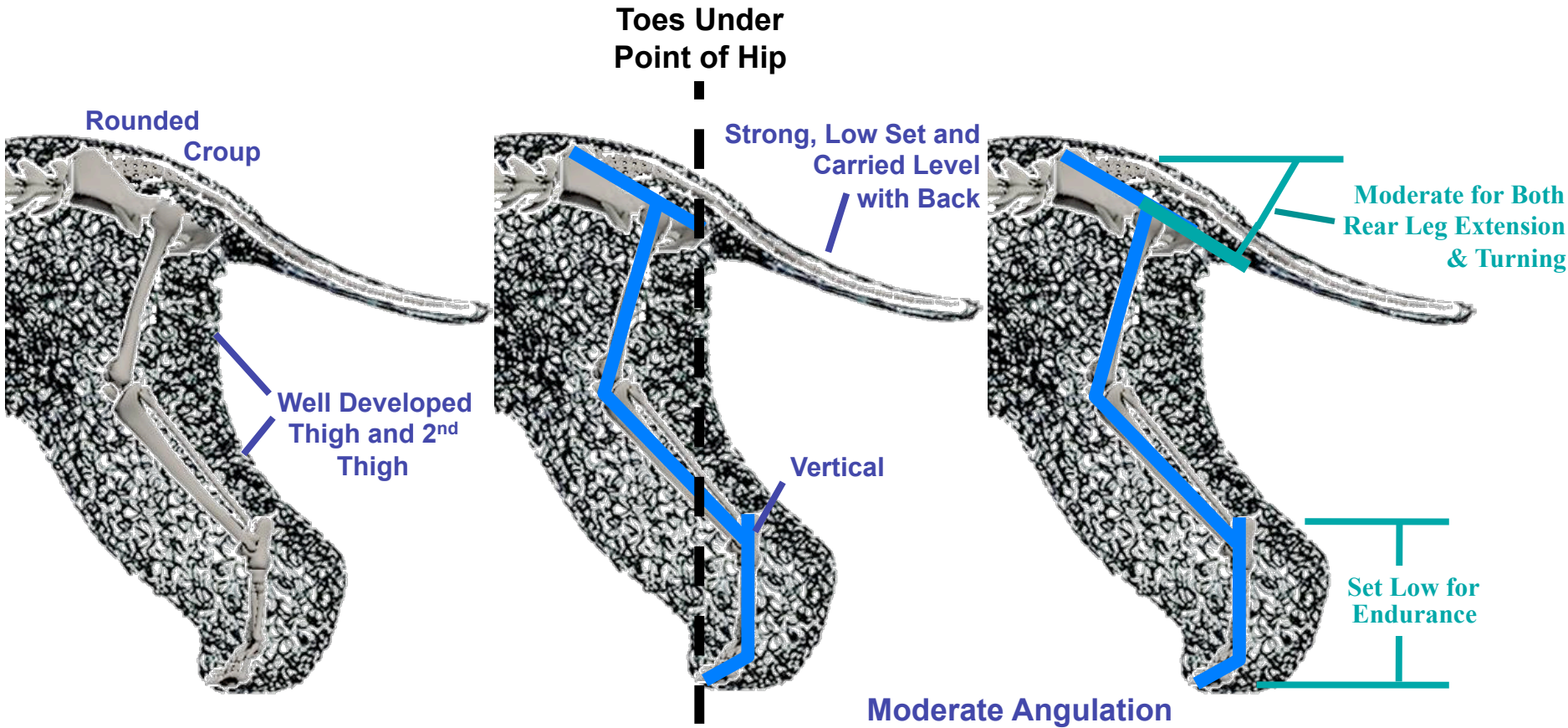
**Correct Forechest.  
Enhanced with  
grooming and coat.  
Judges should put  
“hands-on.”**

**Correct Tight,  
Crisp, Curls**

# Hindquarters

- As high or slightly higher than the shoulders with powerful, muscular, well developed thighs
- Hips are wide
- Stifles are moderately bent
- Hocks are set low and moderately bent
- Balance of front and rear angulation is important

# Hindquarters



# Hindquarters

## Croup



**Hips are wide. The croup is rounded.**



# Hindquarters

## Tail & Hock Set



**Correct tail set**

**Well developed thighs**

**Pasterns perpendicular to ground**

**Hock-to-ground short relative to lower-thigh**

**The stifles moderately bent. Hocks low; grooming can enhance the look**

# Hindquarters

**Too short  
Open Curls  
Incorrect**



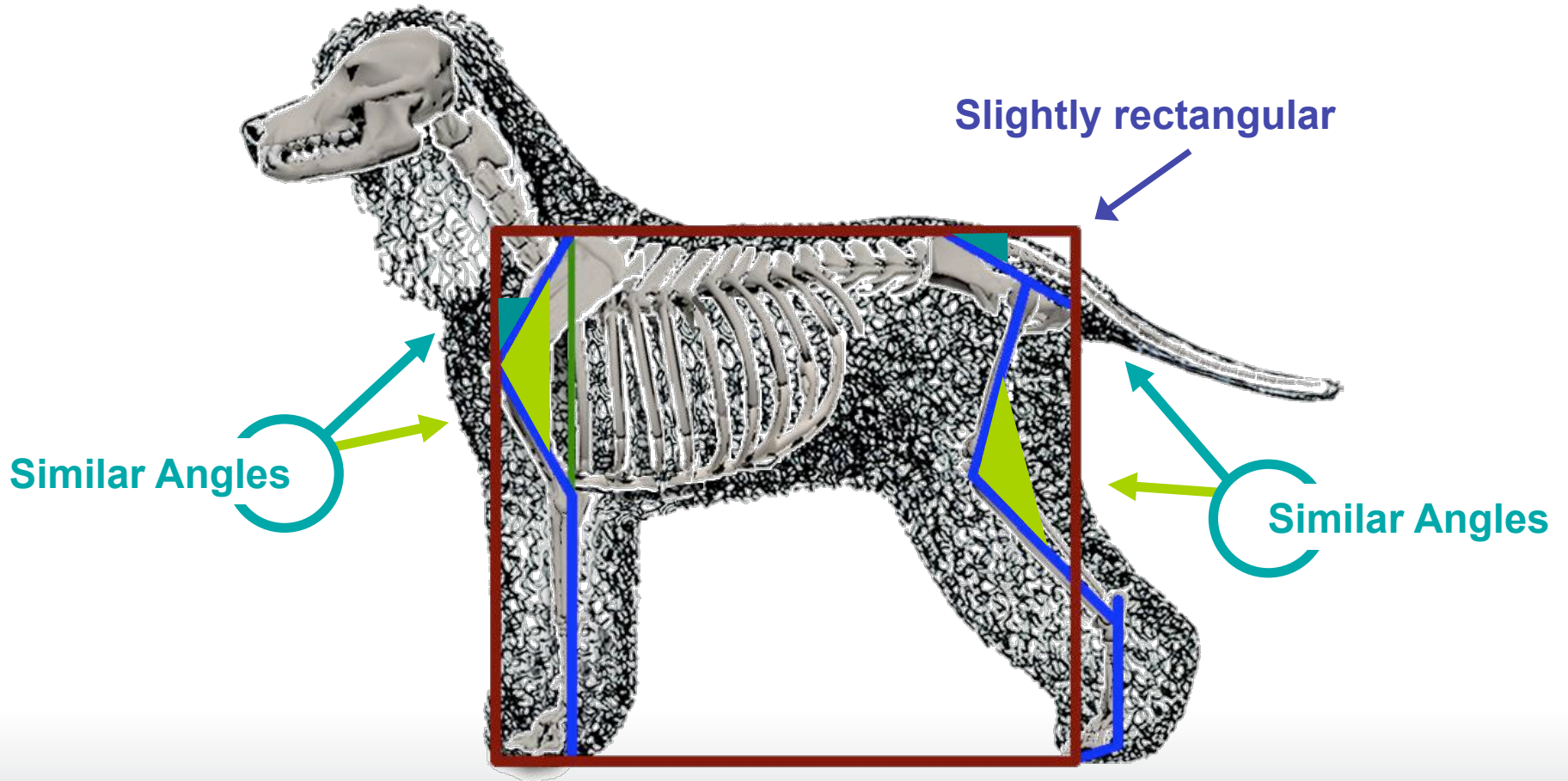
**Pictured hocks are still considerably shorter than the lower thigh (tibia/fibula).  
Correct**

# Gait

- Balanced front and rear
- Efficient endurance
- Ability to explode into action
- Moves freely and soundly
- At slow speeds, may exhibit characteristic roll

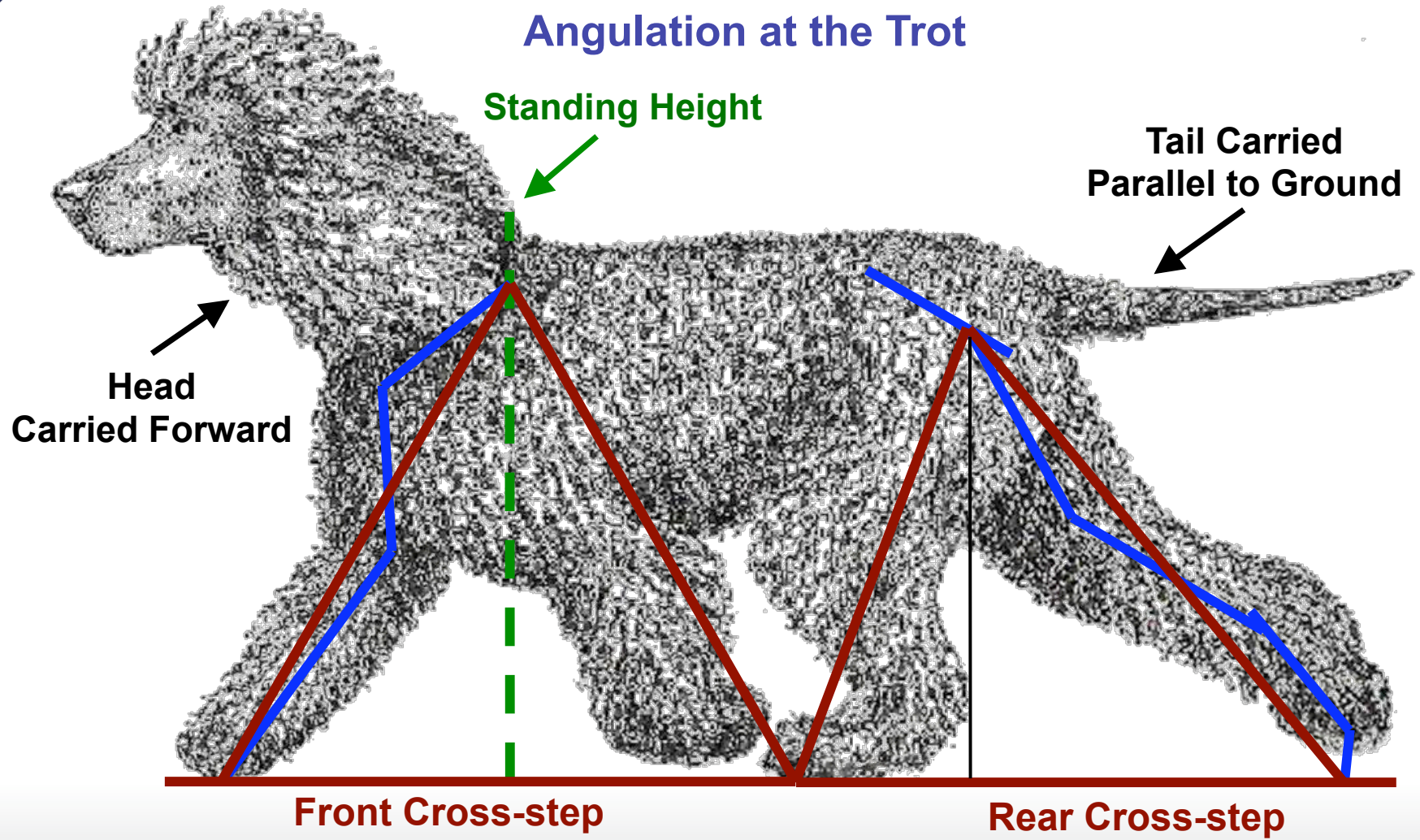
# Gait

## Balanced Front and Rear Angulation



# Gait

## Angulation at the Trot



## Balanced Front and Rear

# Gait

## Leg Action at the Trot

Well balanced, showing brief period of suspension (not pictured)

Neither front nor rear foot lifts higher than pastern height

Hock Fully Extended

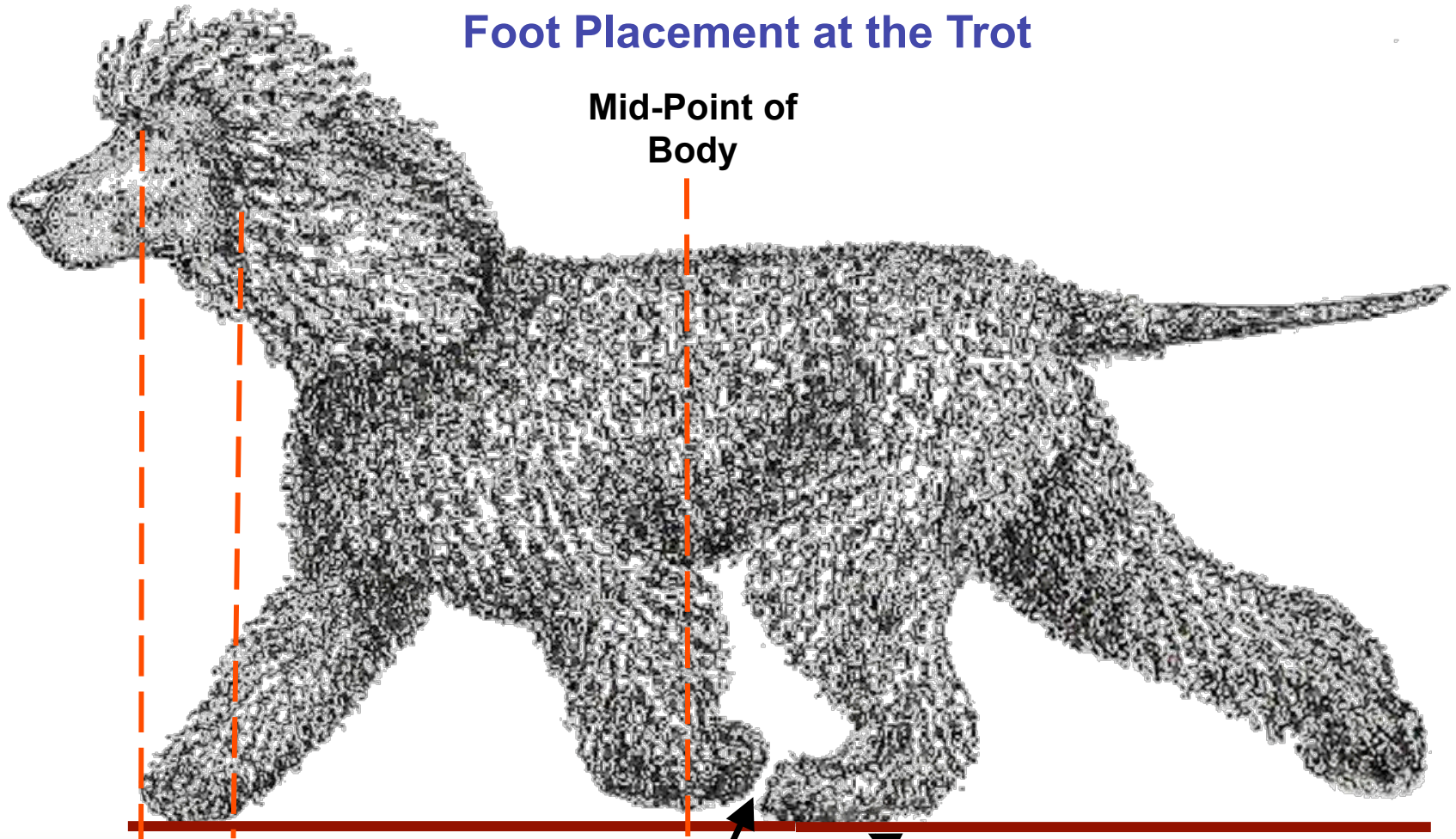
Pastern Height

Flexible Pastern

Good diagonal leg coordination

# Gait

## Foot Placement at the Trot



**Front Foot  
Set Down Between  
Eye and Ear**

**No Foot Fall  
or Leg Interference**

**Rear foot set down  
slightly short of mid-point**

# Gait

Dog – Correct





# Gait

Bitch – Correct



# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
Feet

## Movement

Body  
Forequarters  
Hindquarters  
Gait

## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
Coat/Color

## Silhouette

Topline  
Back  
Rattail

## Personality

Temperament

# Head & Coat

## Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears – Coat/Color

- Keenly alert expression
- Characteristic top-knot
- Eyes a warm shade of brown/medium to dark amber (never yellow)
- Long, square muzzle and strong under-jaw
- Smooth face, tight skin, flews and lids
- Long, lobular, well clothed ears
- Insulating and water shedding coat
  - Crisp curls of dark liver
  - Can be shown “natural” or trimmed

# Top-knot

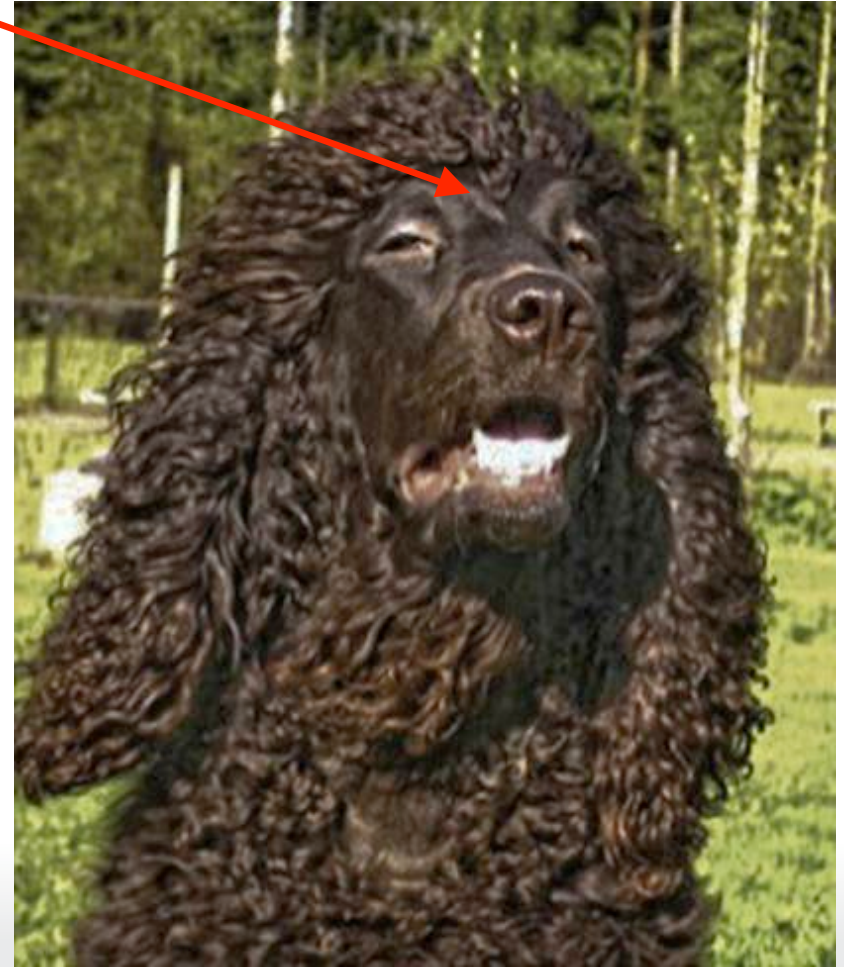
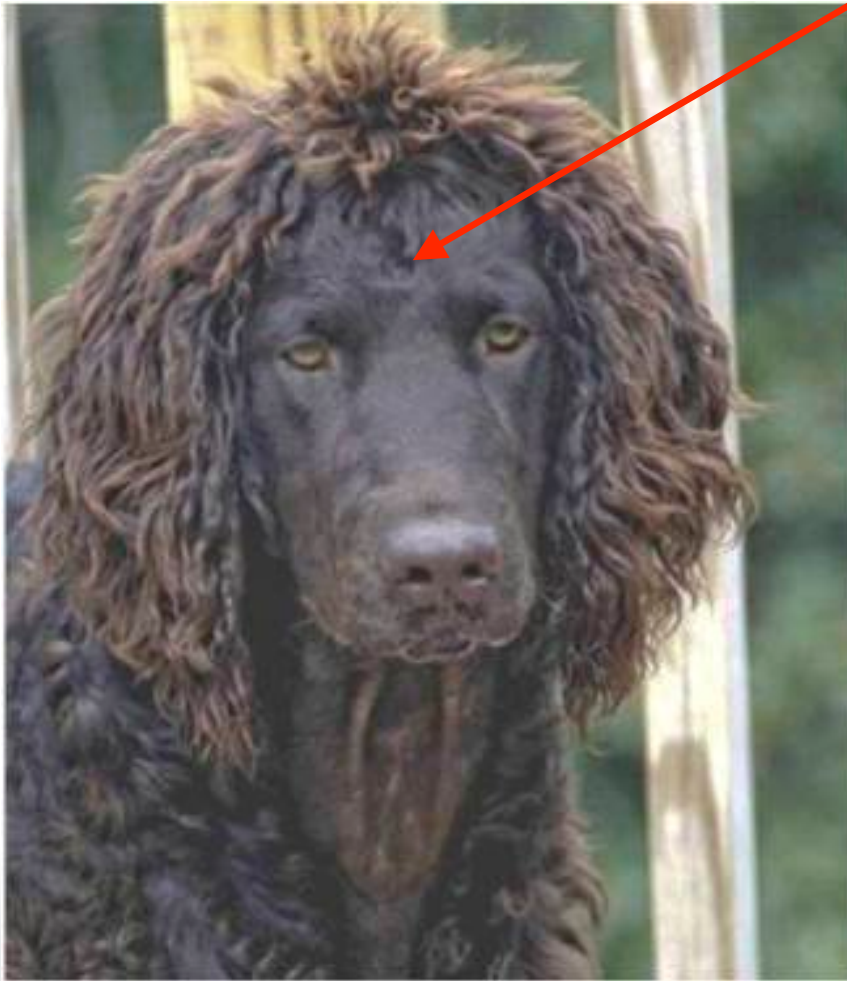
- Characteristic of the breed
  - Long, loose curls
  - Covering the skull
  - Falling over top of ears and occiput
- Contrast between smooth face and topknot evident in well-defined peak between the eyes
- Should not be trimmed in an exaggerated or excessive manner

# Top-knot



# Top-knot

## Widow's Peak



# Top-knot

Trimmed



Natural



## Prominent Occiput

# Head

- Cleanly chiseled
- Skull large and high in dome with prominent occiput and gradual stop
- Muzzle long, deep and somewhat square with strong underjaw
- Lips are fine in texture, tight and dry
- The nose is large and dark liver in color
- The teeth are even with a scissor or level bite
- Hair on the face is short and smooth
- Beard of long, loose curls growing at the back of the lower jaw
  - May continue up the side of face as sideburns



# Head

Correct head. Cleanly chiseled, squared off muzzle. Lips are fine. Nose large and very dark.



Bitch has a strong, full muzzle without being coarse. Note the gradual stop.



# Head

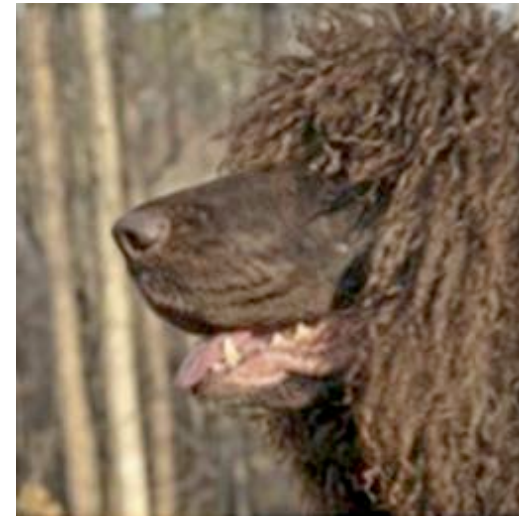
**Adolescent bitches**  
Correct length of muzzle and fine lips.  
Correct gradual stops



**Mature bitch**  
correct placement of the eyes



# Head



**Correct muzzles (long, deep and somewhat square)  
with strong underjaw**

# Head



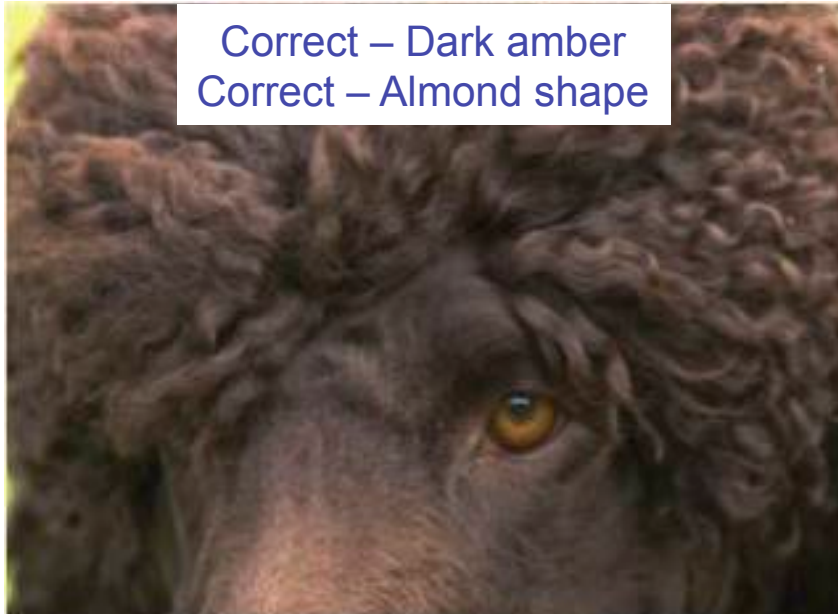
**Correct lips (fine tight and dry)**

# Eyes



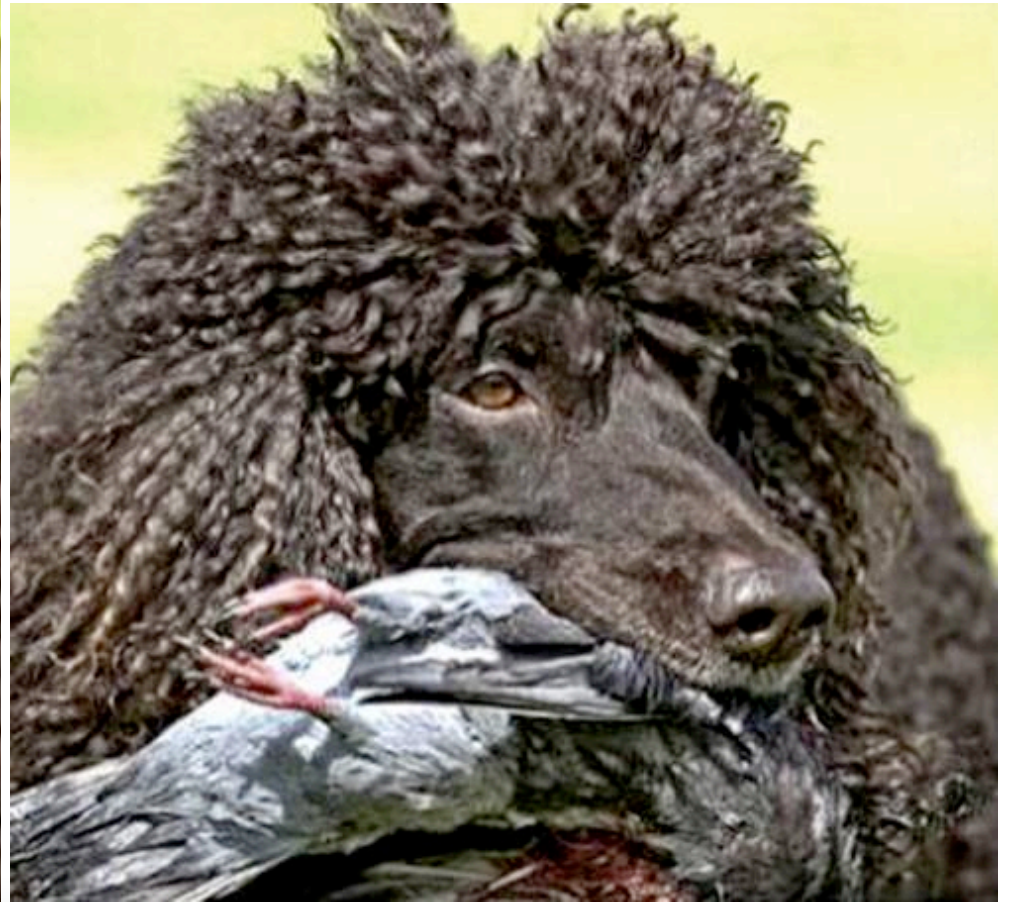
**Correct eyes set almost flush, comparatively small and almond shaped with tight lids**

# Eyes



**Color is a warm tone of medium to dark brown, dark amber but never yellow**

# Eyes



**Correct shape and color**

# Ears



Graying  
of age

**Long, lobular, set low, hanging close to the head,  
abundantly covered with long loose curls of hair**

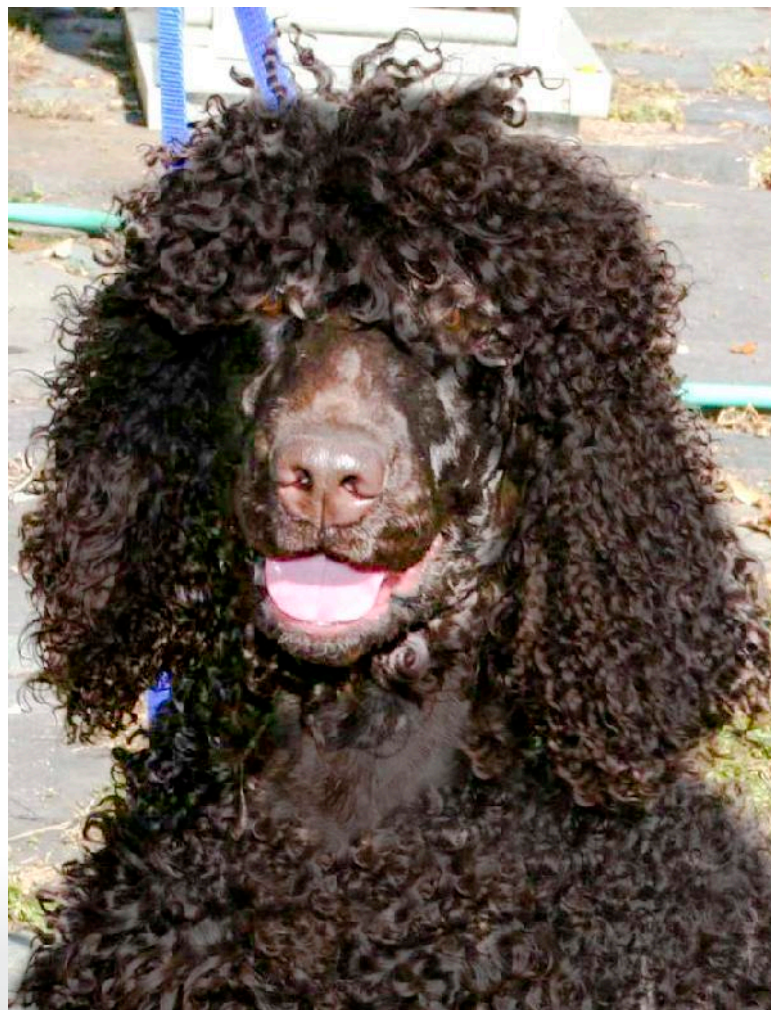


# Coat

- Proper coat very important-protects dog while working
- Liver colored
- Face has short hair and is smooth
- Crisp, dense curls
- The throat is smooth
- Forms V-shape from back of lower jaw, behind beard, to breastbone

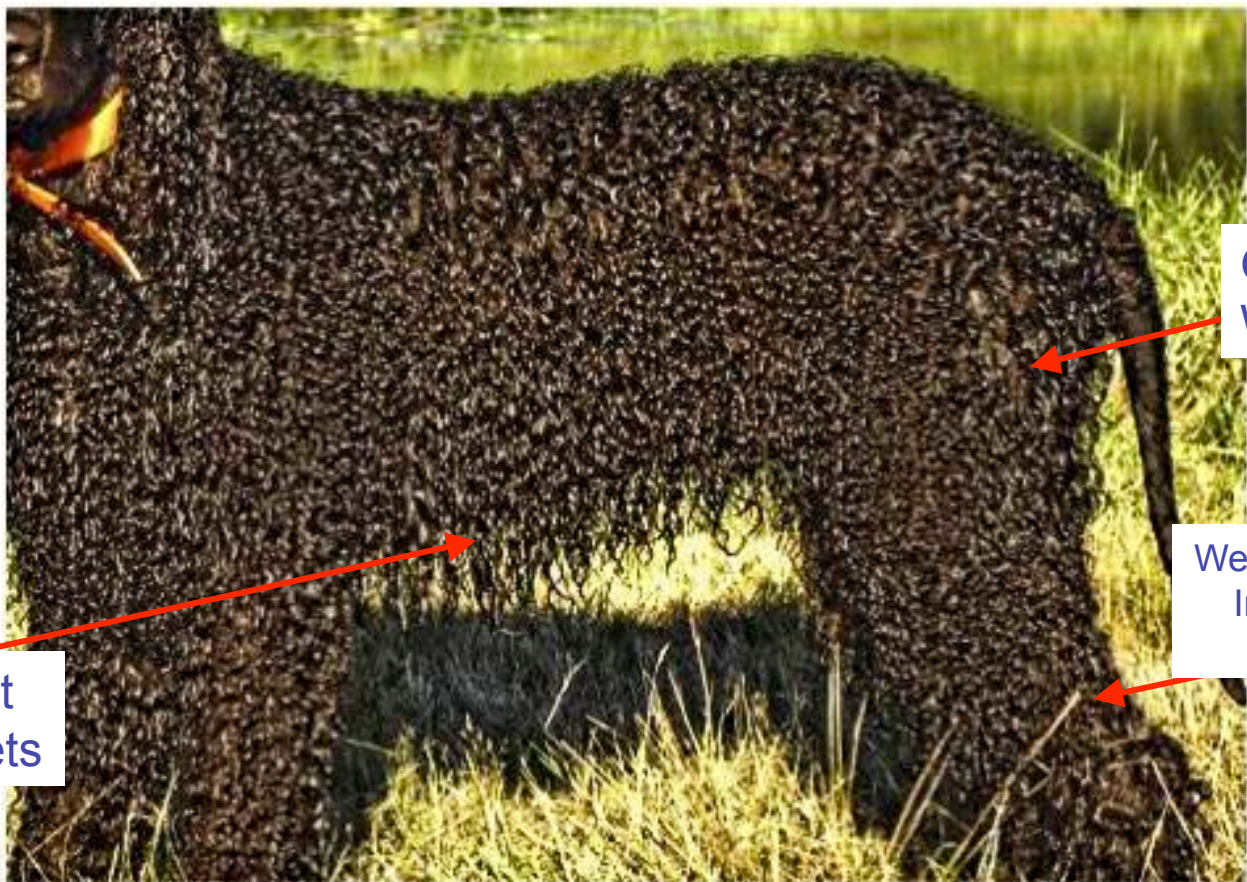
# Coat

## Correct Smooth Face & Neck



# Coat

Correct Trimmed Coat, Naturally Drip-Drying



Dense, Tight  
Crisp Ringlets

Good Condition,  
Well Muscled

Well developed 2<sup>nd</sup> thigh  
Indicates significant  
swimming

# Coat

## Correct Curl & Coat Texture



**Neck, body and base of the tail  
covered with *dense, tight, crisp curls***

# Coat

## Color Range



**Rich liver, to dark liver with a purplish tinge, sometimes called puce liver.  
No white hair or markings except for the graying of age.  
These are correct coats.**

# Coat

## Legs



**Forelegs are covered down to the feet with curls or waves all around.  
The hind legs are also abundantly covered with curls or waves.  
Hair is short and smooth on the front of the rear  
legs below the hocks (not pictured)**

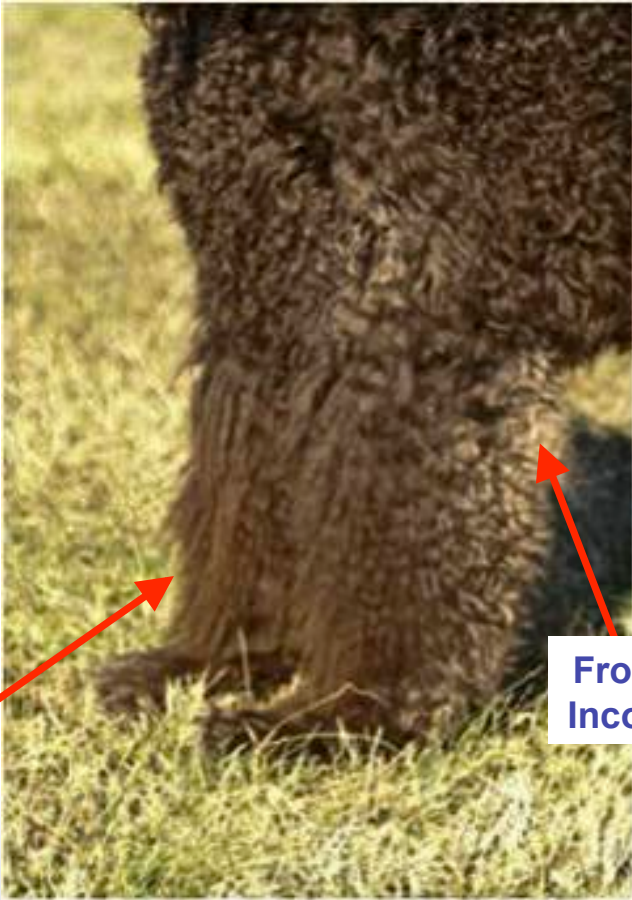
# Coat

## Legs

Young dog with front leg Patterning



Patterning filled in



Red from weathering

Curl Obscured Incorrect

Frosting Incorrect

# Coat Grooming



Trimmed



Natural



Patterned



Overdone



# Coat

Natural or Trimmed

Dog



Bitch



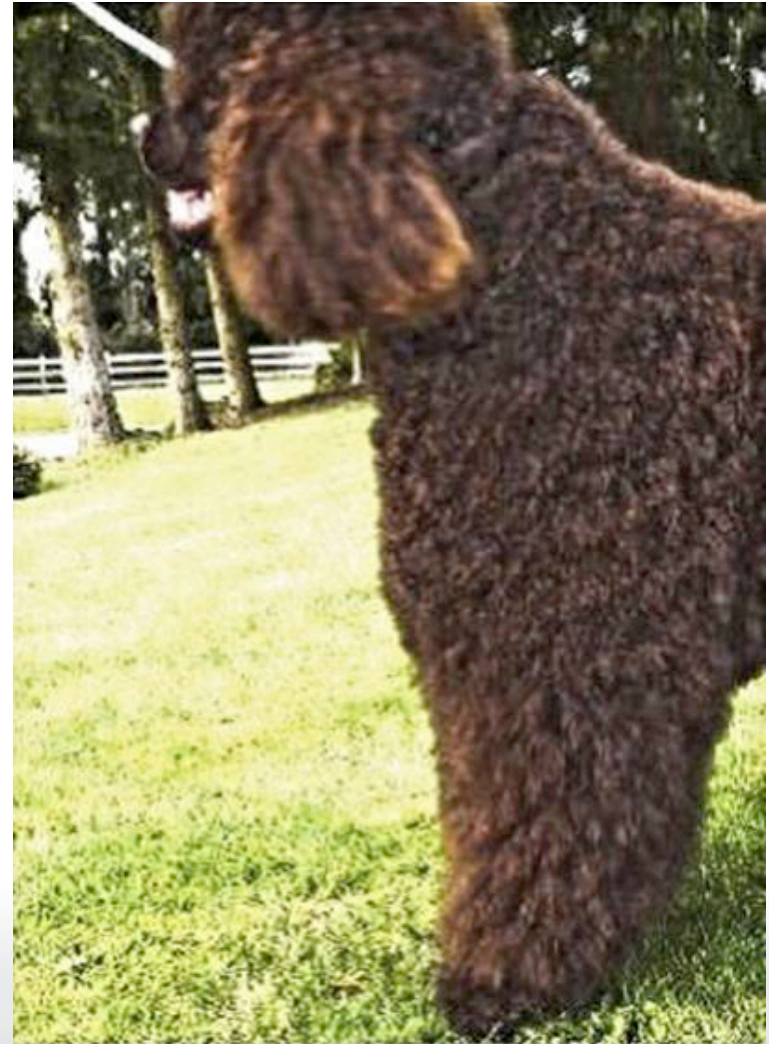
**No dog should be groomed or trimmed so excessively as to obscure the curl or texture of the coat**

# Coat

## Excessive Grooming



**The dog pictured here has been brushed and blown out to the extent that there is no definition of curl. This is not desired.**



# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
Feet

## Movement

Body  
Forequarters  
Hindquarters  
Gait

## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
Coat/Color

## Silhouette

Topline  
Back  
Rattail

## Personality

Temperament

# Silhouette

Topline – Back – Rattail

- Level topline, may rise slightly over the loin but should never be descending
- Strong, broad back
- Rounded croup with tail set low enough to correlate with the rounded contour
- Characteristic rattail, carried parallel to the ground when moving

# Topline

**Shoulders and hips are  
on a level plane**



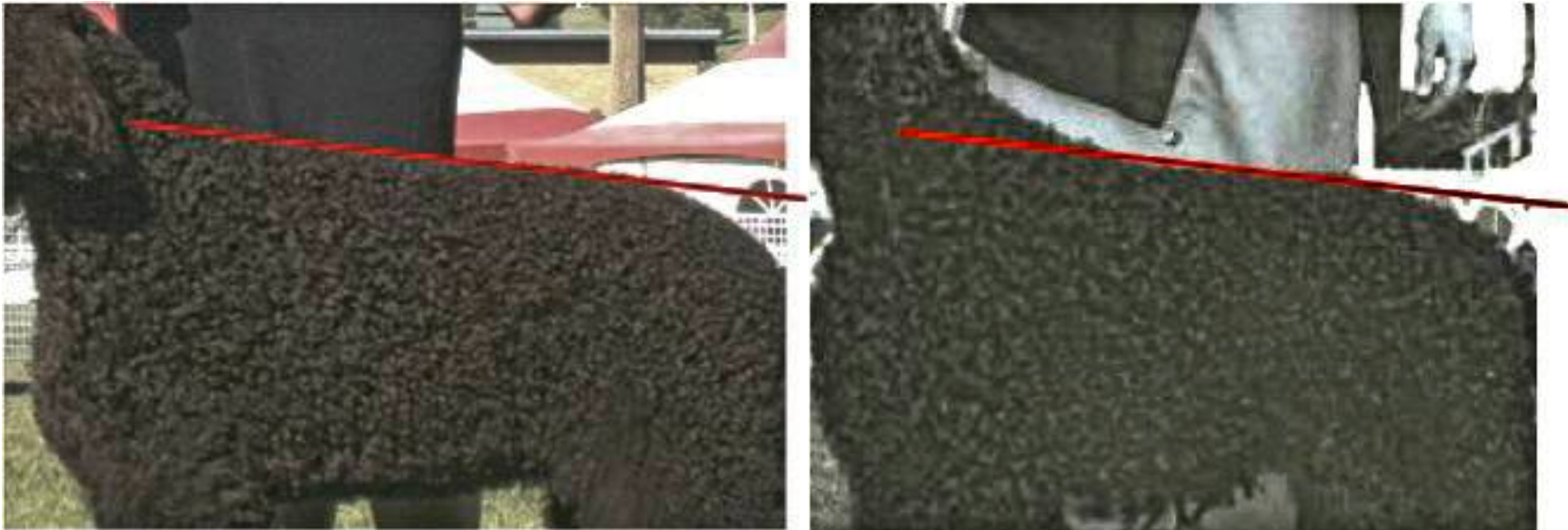
**Bitch is slightly  
higher in the rear**



**Both are Correct**

**The rear is equal to or slightly higher than the front,  
never descending or showing sag or roach**

# Topline

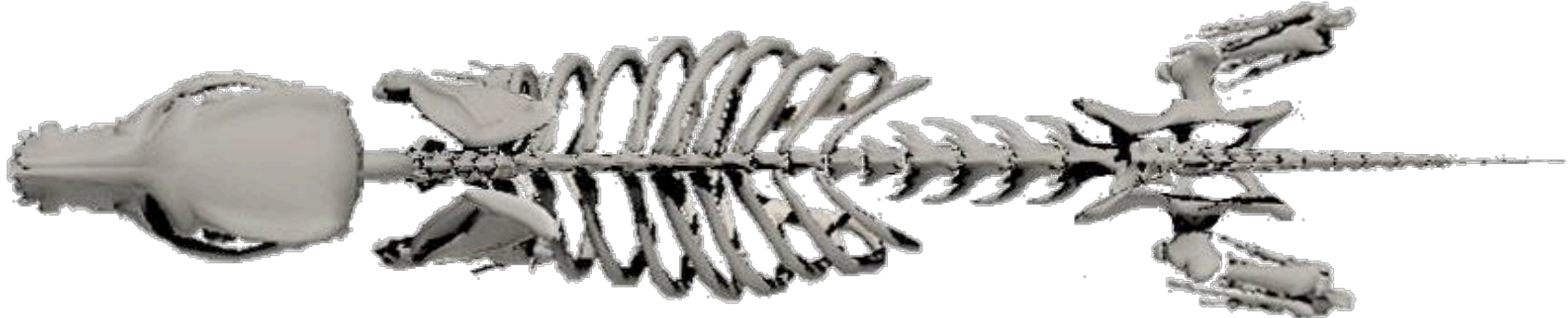


**Descending Toplines. Both are Incorrect.**

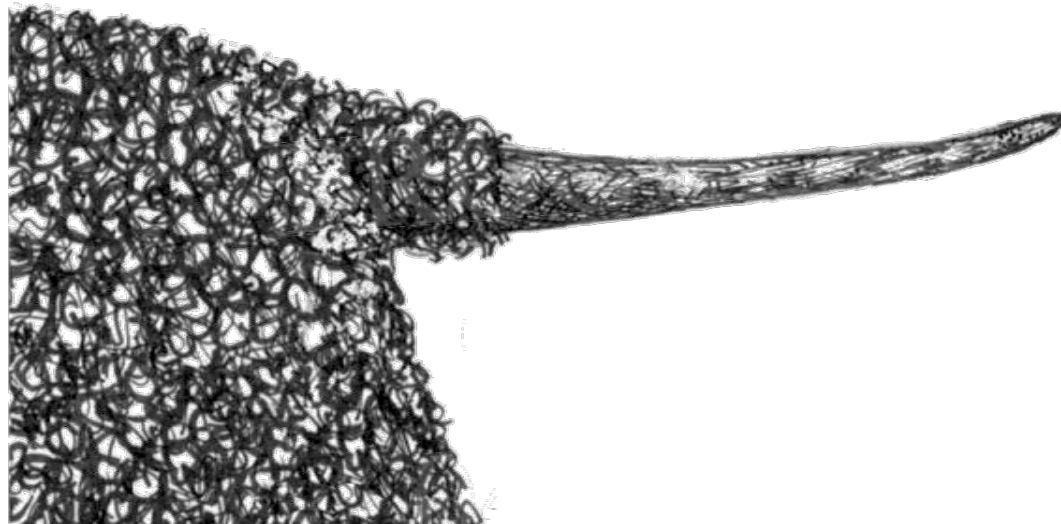
Silhouette

# Back

Strong, Broad



# Rattail



The tail is unlike any other breed. Straight when the dog is at rest and on the move. A high tail set or a high tail carriage is not desirable. A dip in front of the tail, creating a goose rump, is also not desired.



# Rattail



**Tail is carried parallel to the ground; no higher than the back.  
Tail-set on left is better than tail-set on the right.**

# Rattail

Tail carried too high



Tail carried too Low



**Incorrect tail carriage**

# Rattail



**Incorrect. Tail set is too high, tail carriage too high**

# The Standard

## Structure

Proportion & Substance  
Size/Weight  
Neck  
Feet

## Movement

Body  
Forequarters  
Hindquarters  
Gait

## Head & Coat

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears  
Coat/Color

## Silhouette

Topline  
Back  
Rattail

**Personality**  
Temperament

# Personality

## Temperament

- Bold, dashing, spirited eagerness
- Audacious and gallant disposition
- Stability, with an endearing sense of humor
  - ...but may be reserved with strangers

# Temperament



Smart, Great Intelligence



# Temperament



The Irish Water Spaniel... when sent into water,  
will always get it's duck!



# Agenda

- History
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  - The Standard
  - **Judging Notes**
  - Take Aways
  - Question & Answer Session
- 
- 



# Judging Notes



- Judge the entire Irish Water Spaniel
  - Don't focus on one characteristic
- Wonderful personality, fitness, sound movement, and unique curly coat
- Must be capable of traversing all terrains with the **stamina and structure** needed for a full day in the field and water
- No requirement to be shown in a long coat
  - A short, working-coat is quite acceptable. The cut should not be so short as to obscure the curl
- Grooming should not be excessive; can not obscure curl
- Coats lighten easily in the sun and water
  - No penalty for red caused by weathering

# Judging Notes

- Intelligent dogs
- Coat may gray with age
- Should not be shy or aggressive
- Naturally wary of strangers
- Approach from the front, not the side or rear
- Confidently walk up to the handler, as much as, dog
- In a normal conversational tone, exchange a few words
  - It will go a long way in gaining the dog's acceptance



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  - **Take Aways**
  - Question & Answer Session
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# Take Aways

- Moderately Structured Gun Dog / Endurance Retriever
- Sound & Well Moving
- Distinctive Head & Coat
- Unique Silhouette
- Great Personality