

# AMERICAN SLOUGHI ASSOCIATION

## CRASH COURSE IN JUDGING THE SLOUGHI

Dear Hound Judge:

Even though the Sloughi has enjoyed full recognition in the AKC Hound Group since January 1, 2016, the breed remains one of the low entry breeds, and the majority of judges have not had the opportunity to see Sloughis in person.

The Sloughi is a unique and primitive breed that shares some characteristics with the Azawakh and with the Saluki. Nonetheless, they remain three distinct breeds and understanding the nuances between them will help to preserve each of the three breeds.

To that end, this document will elucidate some key points in Sloughi type. Preserving proper breed type is essential to protecting this rare and unique breed. As with the Azawakh, **if the details that separate the Sloughi from other short-coated desert Sighthounds are not prioritized, type is quickly lost. We do not want a generic Sighthound. The differences between Azawakh, Saluki and Sloughi should be apparent. The Sloughi is not a smooth Saluki or a variation of the Azawakh, and it should not look like one.**

Here are ten key points of Sloughi type described in the AKC standard that we would like you to consider:

**1. BODY PROPORTIONS.** A male Sloughi is very slightly taller, measured from the top of the withers to the ground, than it is long, measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttocks. *Ideally, a male's length is 96% of its height. In other words, a Sloughi is very slightly taller than it is long. A female's body may be slightly longer, proportionally, than that of the male.* A Sloughi should never appear rectangular. It should never be as upright as an Azawakh, nor as long in the back than many Salukis. **These unique body proportions are a defining characteristic of the breed and long Sloughis should not be rewarded.**





*Differences in body proportions: Saluki (far left) is longer in the body and more angular than the Sloughi or Azawakh. The Azawakh (far right) is the most upright of the three and the least angular. The correct Sloughi (center) is very slightly taller than long, with open angles that fall in between the Saluki and the Azawakh.*

**2. OPEN ANGLES.** The Sloughi standard uses the word “open” three times to describe front and rear angulation. The Sloughi should be less angular than the Saluki, but slightly more angular than the Azawakh.

**3. GROUND COVERING GAITS.** **The Sloughi has a supple, smooth, and effortless gait with long strides, covering plenty of ground.** Short strided, hackneyed, weak gaits, or gaits reaching only from the elbows are incorrect. Weak pasterns and floppy pasterns are also incorrect. Hackneyed action is a serious fault. The American Sloughi Association has a judges’ education video on proper gaits in the breed at this link: <https://sloughi-international.com/?p=2416>



*The correct, ground covering, smooth, effortless and long strided gait, reaching from the shoulders.*



**4. ROBUST BUT ELEGANT.** The standard says the Sloughi is a “***robust, but elegant and racy, pursuit dog*** with no exaggeration of length of body or limbs, muscle development, angulation, nor curve of loin.” The standard also uses the words, “powerful,” “strong” and “sturdy.” Yes, the Sloughi is elegant, but the skeletal structure should be sturdy. The Sloughi should not appear fragile or delicate. The muscles and soft tissues should be strong and lean. The Sloughi is sturdier than many of its desert counterparts.

**5. WEDGE SHAPED HEAD.** The head of the Sloughi is unique among sighthounds. It has a long and elegant, sturdy, wedge shaped head that narrows from the cranial region to the nose. The AKC standard describes a backskull that is 4”-5” wide. The Sloughi head is more substantial than many sighthound breeds. The occiput should be apparent, but not as pronounced as that of the Afghan hound.

**6. EARS.** The standard reads, “The ears are set at about the level of the eye and droop close to the head when the animal is at rest. . . Disqualifications are ears erect, or small and folding backwards in a ‘rose ear.’”

The Sloughi’s ears are set at about the level of the eye ***when the animal is at rest***. When the animal is alert, the ears are going to be higher on the head.



*The same bitch is pictured above. In the photo at left, she is alert. In the photo at right, she is at rest. Note also that these correct, dropped ears, are folded back in the photo at right.*

In addition, ***a small, rose ear is a disqualification in the Sloughi***. Even Sloughis with excellent ears will fold them back when they are anxious, hot, bored, or inattentive. A handler can always show that an exhibit’s ears are proper upon request ***if they are correct***. The American Sloughi Association has a judges’ education video on Sloughi ears at this link: <https://sloughi-international.com/?p=2227> The video illustrates the difference between proper and disqualifying ears and also shows how a handler can demonstrate dropped ears.

**7. TOPLINE.** The Sloughi's topline is essentially level between the withers and the hip bones, but the highest point of the hip bones *may be* slightly higher than the withers, which should be apparent.

**8. BODY CONDITION.** The Sloughi should always show defined bony structure and strong, lean muscles. The skeletal structure is sturdy. A Sloughi in good weight will have its hip bones apparent (but less apparent than those of the Afghan hound), as well as the rear most three ribs and three vertebrae on the spine. The croup is bony and gently sloping. A Sloughi should look and feel hard and fit in the ring. The forechest should be bony and angular and it lacks "fill." The Sloughi should never be pigeon-breasted. It should never be soft in condition, and it should never appear padded.

**9. TEMPERAMENT.** The Sloughi evolved as a coursing and hunting hound, but it also evolved as a guardian of nomadic tents and a sometimes livestock guardian. Part of the Sloughi's purpose was historically to be suspicious of strangers and to be especially devoted to its family.

The Sloughi should be approached in a business like fashion – never staring into the eyes; ask the handler to show the bite – front and sides, but never opening the mouth to check molars. Judges should refrain from speaking when bent directly over a Sloughi. If an exhibit is shy or nervous, please refrain from trying to comfort the Sloughi or talk to it, which will only heighten its suspicion.

As with the Azawakh, we would suggest that in a breed that generally dislikes being touched by strangers, and whose physique is so dry as to make every piece of anatomy clearly visible, excessive touching or handling is unnecessary.

**10. GENERAL COMMENTS.** The Sloughi hails from a land of harsh desert and rocky mountains to course rabbits, hares, jackals, fennecs and other foxes, gazelles, and all manner of game that can be found in northern Africa. It should present as a tough, athletic dog with lots of speed and endurance, and each component of its conformation should speak to its purpose — it should have tough feet with hard nails, plenty of sturdy skeleton, lean muscles, an elegant but powerful neck, strong teeth. Whenever an exhibit is presented to you, please consider whether this is a hound that could hunt in extreme heat over rough, unforgiving conditions.

Additional resources: The AKC Sloughi Standard:

<http://images.akc.org/pdf/breeds/standards/Sloughi.pdf>

Should you have any further questions, or wish to discuss the breed in more depth, please contact JEC Chair Erika Wyatt at [erika@sloughi.us](mailto:erika@sloughi.us) or 773-609-3647. See the ASLA Judges Education Page online at:

[https://sloughi-international.com/?page\\_id=1340](https://sloughi-international.com/?page_id=1340)

Erika is available to present the breed seminar and workshop to any clubs or groups that request it, as scheduling and logistics permit.

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