

THE SMOOTH FOX TERRIER



Presented by
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In 1993, I chaired an American Fox Terrier committee that rewrote the Illustrated and Amplified Breed Standards for Smooth and Wire Fox Terriers. This presentation will be built substantially from the SFT portion of that document.

Until the mid 1980's, Fox Terriers were a single breed of two varieties. However, when it appeared that the AKC was moving toward allowing only one representative of any breed to proceed to Group Competition, the then AFTC Board of Governors was guided to seek and received Breed status for each Variety. As we all know, the AKC thought better of the proposal and scrapped it, but the AFTC had already made its irreversible move. The AFTC remains the Parent Club of both Breeds.

In 1677, two kinds of Fox Terriers were described in the English publication,

"Gentleman's Recreation." They were described as, "...taking earth very well and being very long at Fox and Badger." These were, undoubtedly our current Fox Terriers' ancestors, the Rough and Smooth Black & Tan Terriers. According to the AKC's official history of the breeds, "they can be traced at least to the 1790's."

The origins of the Fox Terrier probably descend from the old rough coated Black & Tan Terrier, the Bull Terrier, the Greyhound and the Beagle...if that last one is hard for you to believe, just listen to them in the back yard some day. In the show ring, the Smooth predated the Wire by some 15 or 20 years. The first standard as drawn by the (English) Fox Terrier Club in 1876. The AFTC's initial standard came with its founding in 1885. Fox Terriers have enjoyed great success on both continents. If one notes the BIS winners at Montgomery County and Westminster Kennel Clubs, the names of many greats of these Breeds will be prominent. Even more important, at least to me, is how many people I have met over these many years whose lives have been touched in a positive way by Fox Terriers.

As for me, my Father raised Smooth Fox Terriers before I was born. He was very fond of telling me that there was a Smooth on the bed when I was born. My first Smooth was given to me for my 6th birthday and he slept on my bed every night of his life until he died the day I graduated from High School. This presentation will be broken into several parts. The lead-ins will be a quotation of a specific portion of the Standard. Following that we will discuss that portion of the standard in some detail.

Those of you that know me are aware that I have never professed to have all the answers - on any subject. Having had Smooths for 65 years means one thing and one thing only...I am 65 years old. Any and all questions and discussion items are welcome.

Let's get to it...

General Appearance

The dog must present a generally gay, lively and active appearance; bone and strength in a small compass are essentials; but this must not be taken to mean that a Fox Terrier should be cloddy, or in any way coarse - speed and endurance must be looked to as well as power, and the symmetry of the Foxhound taken as a model. The Terrier, like the Hound, must on no account be leggy, nor must he be too short in the leg. He should stand like a cleverly made hunter, covering a lot of ground, yet with a short back, as stated below. He will then attain the highest degree of propelling power, together with the greatest length of stride that is compatible with the length of his body.



Weight is not a certain criterion of a Terrier's fitness for his work - general shape, size and contour are the main points; and if a dog can gallop and stay, and follow his fox up a drain, it matters little what his weight is to a pound or so.

N.B. Old scars or injuries, the result of work or accident, should not be allowed to prejudice a Terrier's chance in the show ring, unless they interfere with its movement or with its utility for work or stud.

Amplification

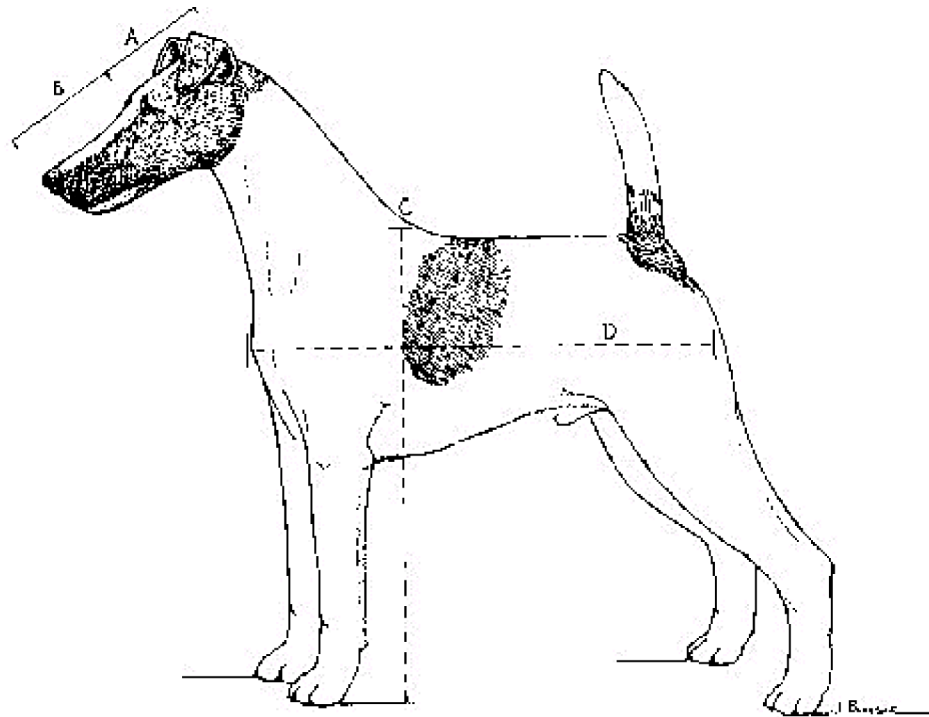
The Smooth Fox Terrier is the personification of the happy, lively, active, "stay out of my face" Terrier. He knows no fear and his stamina is endless, whether hunting fox, squirrel, vermin, or baby-sitting the family children. Although solid and compact, he should have no hint of coarseness, nor in any way be considered cloddy. He is the essence of elegance from any angle. Top to bottom, end to end, he epitomizes balance. When "at the ready," he will be on his toes to the extent as to appear to have no feet at all. His dark eyes, like lasers, stare right through their target when excited.

The following is a true story I related some time ago in my Gazette column:

"A good friend related a beautiful story to me that I would like to share. Their 12 year old Smooth was in the yard playing with their 4 year old grandchild under the supervision of Grandma. Suddenly, a fire truck rounded the corner with its siren screaming. Naturally, Grandma's attention was taken momentarily by the oncoming fire truck, as was the little child's. The child, however, darted straight for the pretty red truck coming down the street.

There was no way the older woman could stop the child from getting to the street. The dog could however and as quick as he saw his little friend heading toward certain disaster, he leaped after him grabbing his shirrtail pulling him to the ground and then held him there until relief arrived. Smart, happy, intelligent, fearless yes, Smooths are all these things."

Size, Proportion, Substance



Balance—Length of skull (A) equals length of foreface (B). Height at the withers (C) equals length of body (D) from point of shoulder to point of buttocks.

According to present-day requirements, a full-sized, well balanced dog should not exceed 15 1/2 inches at the withers - the bitch being proportionately lower - nor should the length of back from withers to root of tail exceed 12 inches, while to maintain the relative proportions, the head should not exceed 7 1/4 inches or be less than 7 inches.

A dog with these measurements should scale 18 pounds in show condition - a bitch weighing some two pounds less - with a margin of one pound either way.

Balance - This may be defined as the correct proportions of a certain point, or points, when considered in relation to a certain other point, or points. It is the keystone of the Terrier's anatomy. The chief points for consideration are the relative proportions of skull and foreface; head and back; height at withers and length of body from shoulder point to buttock - the ideal proportion being reached when the last two measurements are the same. It should be added that, although the head measurements can be taken with absolute accuracy, the height at withers and length of back are approximate, and are inserted for the information of breeders and exhibitors rather than a hard-and-fast rule.

Amplification

It is as true today as it was in 1876, when this Standard was first adopted in England, that a dog of correct size will seldom exceed 7 1/4 inches in length of head. Any measurement over 7 1/4 inches normally indicates an over sized or long backed specimen. One should note the frequent use of the word "moderate" in the Standard. The key word is BALANCE. No part of the Smooth should ever call attention to itself when viewing the whole dog. The dog should be 15 1/2" SQUARE...when height at withers and length of body from shoulder point to buttock are the same, the ideal is reached.

Oversize Terriers are apt to lack type and character and extremes are to be avoided. Passing fancies such as extreme length of head or excessive rear angulation do little to promote the preservation of breed type.

Judges, breeders and exhibitors must make every effort to prefer the Fox Terrier of correct size, spirited but tractable character, of substance combined with elegance and refinement.

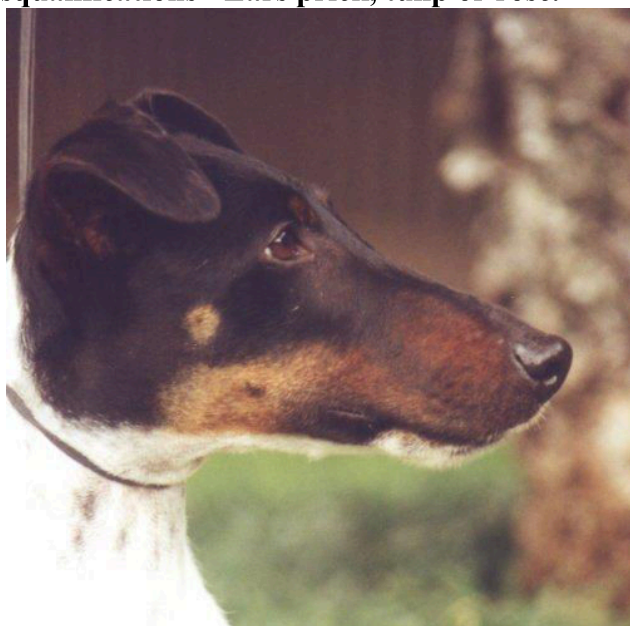
They should be lively and active, but not hyperactive, and never timid, spooky or aggressive toward humans. All Smooths should have a gay, fearless temperament. The desire to "spar" or square off against and stare down another dog is very typical of males and shows them to their best advantage (Judges must exercise appropriate cautions). Some bitches do not display this behavior to the same extent.

Head

Eyes and rims should be dark in color, moderately small and rather deep set, full of fire, life and intelligence and as nearly possible circular in shape. Anything approaching a yellow eye is most objectionable.

Ears should be V-shaped and small, of moderate thickness, and dropping forward close to the cheek, not hanging by the side of the head like a Foxhound. The topline of the folded ear should be well above the level of the skull.

Disqualifications - Ears prick, tulip or rose.



must not be full.

Jaws, upper and lower, should be strong and muscular and of fair punishing strength, but not so as in any way to resemble the Greyhound or modern English Terrier. There should not be much falling away below the eyes. This part of the head should, however, be moderately chiseled out, so as not to go down in a straight lope like a wedge. The nose, towards which the muzzle must gradually taper, should be black.

Disqualifications - Nose white, cherry or spotted to a considerable extent with either of these colors. The teeth should be as nearly as possible together, i.e., the points of the upper (incisors) teeth on the outside of or slightly overlapping the lower teeth.

Disqualifications - Much undershot, or much overshot.



The skull should be flat and moderately narrow, gradually decreasing in width to the eyes. Not much "stop" should be apparent, but there should be more dip in the profile between the forehead and the top jaw than is seen in the case of a Greyhound.

It should be noticed that although the foreface should gradually taper from eye to muzzle and should dip slightly at its junction with the forehead, it should not "dish" or fall away quickly below the eyes, where it should be full and well made up, but relieved from "wedginess" by a little delicate chiseling. There should be apparent little difference in length between the skull and foreface of a well-balanced head. Cheeks

Amplification

The Smooth Standard, unlike the Wire, calls for a flat backskull. A really good head shows flat, clean planes when viewed from any angle. A rounded backskull is not typical. The eyebrows should never be prominent. The cheeks must be flat and smooth, with no bulging of bone or muscle. Discernible flaring of the cheeks is most objectionable. Backskull and muzzle should be equal in length.

The muzzle should be slightly chiseled away from the backskull under the eyes. The stop should not be prominent, lest the dog appears dish-faced. Neither should the area between the eyes (stop) be filled in, as in the Bull Terrier. From the joining of the backskull and muzzle, there should be a slight, but continuous taper to the tip of the muzzle. An overly-fine muzzle will be "snipey," while a muzzle that is too heavy, or blocky, in proportion to the backskull will result in a "brick head" lacking the necessary refinement.

The lower jaw should be well developed and in profile there should be a distinct "chin" rather than a jawline which recedes at a sharp angle from the lower front incisors. The lips should be clean and tight and there should be no loose skin under the throat.

Shape and placement of the eye, together with color, are very important in creating correct expression. The eye should be circular in shape, but must not be full... an eye may be small, dark and round, but if it protrudes or is "poppy," the expression is mouselike rather than fiery. Light eyes create an undesirable soft expression and are most objectionable. Dark eye rims are always desirable as they contribute greatly to correct expression. Dogs having much white about the head may have eye rims completely dark at birth, or they might be pink with small dark areas which gradually enlarge, taking a year or more to fully develop. Eyes that are not circular in shape may appear to be set on a slant, creating an unpleasant fault in expression. An over long foreface creates an undesirable "foreign" expression in which the eyes are no longer located at their appropriate position - the midpoint of the head.

Ears should be carried so that they break approximately at the midpoint of the leather. They should face forward, breaking in a clean fold so that the tip touches the skull near the eye. It is permissible for ears to vary in size, but the smaller ear is always to be preferred, providing its carriage owes nothing to artifice. (But again we bow to all things in moderation...Mary Blake once said that big ears make a dog look common, but overly small ears make a dog look foolish!) The inside of the ear should never be visible when the ear placement and carriage are correct. Large, hound like ears detract seriously from the desired expression.

The nose must be solid black. (See Disqualifications) A "scissors bite" is the present day definition of what the Standard demands, i.e., the points of the upper incisors on the outside of or slightly overlapping the lower teeth. The disqualification under this section (mouth much undershot, or much overshot) is a subjective judgment that each judge must carefully decide for themselves.



Neck, Topline, Body

Neck should be clean and muscular, without throatiness, of fair length, and gradually widening to the shoulders. Back should be short, straight, (i.e., level), and strong, with no appearance of slackness. Chest deep and not broad. The Brisket should be deep, yet not exaggerated. The fore ribs should be moderately arched, the back ribs deep

and well sprung, and the dog should be well ribbed up. Loin should be powerful, muscular and very slightly arched. Stern should be set on rather high, and carried gaily, but not over the back or curled. It should be of good strength, anything approaching a "Pipestopper" tail being especially objectionable.

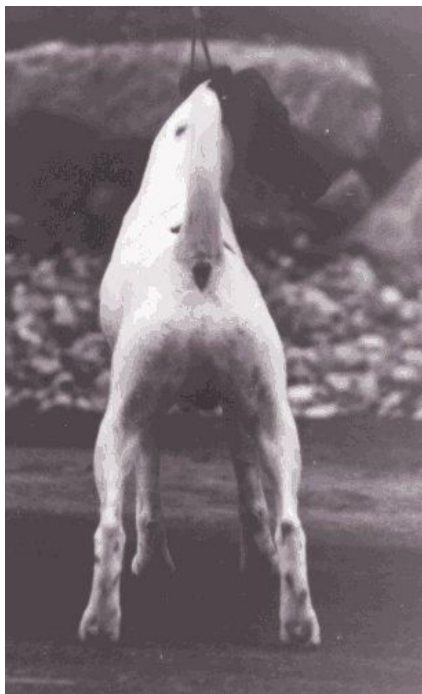
Amplification

The neck is neither long nor short; it should be neither slender nor stocky; it should be the balancing connection between head and body. Proper length of neck will, with correct shoulder placement, be of graceful, but not excessive length, and the back will, as desired, appear short. The neck flows smoothly into the shoulders and shows no sign of indentation at, or behind, the withers. The short, strong back appears level whether standing or moving.

Viewed from the front, the chest should be somewhat narrow rather than broad and muscular like that of a Bull Terrier, but the front legs should not "come out of the same hole." The ribs should be well sprung, but on no account "barrel-chested." The slightly arched loin is felt rather than seen. The tail should be set on high (forward of the rear projection of the pelvic bones), and be carried either directly upright or slightly forward of the perpendicular. A gay or squirrel tail is a bad fault. A "two o'clock tail" spoils the dog's outline. Furthermore, no terrier of correct temperament will drop its tail in the ring and admit timidity. A poor topline may be disguised when the dog is posed, but will be discovered as the dog moves. The brisket should be at least deep enough to reach the elbow, giving the pleasing contrast in profile between the chest and tuck-up

Forequarters - Shoulders should be long and sloping, well laid back, fine at the points, and clearly cut at the withers. The elbows should hang perpendicular to the body, working free from the sides. The forelegs viewed from any direction must be straight with bone strong right down to the feet, showing little or no appearance of ankle in front, and being short and straight in pastern. Both fore and hind legs should be carried straight forward when traveling.

Feet should be round, compact, and not large; the soles hard and tough; the toes moderately arched, and turned neither in nor out.



Hindquarters - Should be strong and muscular, quite free from droop or crouch; the thighs long and powerful, stifles well curved and turned neither in nor out; hocks well bent and near the ground should be perfectly upright and parallel each with the other when viewed from behind, the dog standing well up on them like a Foxhound, and not straight in stifle. The worst possible form of hindquarters consists of a short second thigh and a straight stifle. Both fore and hind legs should be carried straight forward in traveling, the stifles not turning outward. Feet as in front.

Amplification

The forelegs must be neither down in pasterns nor knuckled over forward of the pastern joint. This does not mean that the very "keen" dog should be penalized for leaning forward on their toes when on the alert. The feet should have short, well-arched toes with thick pads - the classic cat-foot. It is the highest of praise to say of a Smooth that it "has no feet," meaning that the toes barely project beyond the pastern when seen in profile. The rear legs should be well bent at the stifle, with hocks low to the ground, but angulation must not be excessive. Over bent stifles are weak in actual propulsive power and more often than not indicate "sickle-hocks."

Coat - should be smooth, flat, but hard, dense and abundant. The belly and underside of the thighs should not be bare.

Color - White should predominate; brindle, red or liver markings are objectionable. Otherwise this point is of little or no importance.

Amplification

The coat of the Smooth may vary in length and density according to breeding, grooming and climate, but should always be flat, with a hard topcoat. The hair under the tuck-up and inside the thighs is usually trimmed short, but not bald, as in some single-coated breeds.

The colors of the Smooth may be solid white (as discussed earlier, eye rims should have dark pigment); White and tan; white and black, with tan shadings - all "white and black" Smooths are actually tri-colors, although the amount of tan that appears over the eyes, on the cheeks, at the vent, etc., varies considerably with the individual. These tan markings are in the black are traditional and genetic and should never be colored out when grooming. Tan may be taken to mean any reasonably solid of reddish tan, with or without black points or shading. Many dogs are sable marked. Brindling should be penalized.

Although white should predominate, no preference of any kind should be given to placement of markings. The type, structure and character of the dog is paramount and the attractiveness or lack of it conferred by markings is extraneous to the intent of the standard. The "would-be" judge of the Smooth Fox Terrier must be ever cautious of the illusions cast by markings...Many considered excellent adjudicators find themselves confusing a splash of color from the off side with a dip in the topline. Ticking on legs and body is not uncharacteristic and should on no account be penalized. Judges must also remember that the preferred coloration is more than half white over the total body mass and may be all white. The variation of markings that is possible in the breed is a part of its great heritage, to be preserved and respected by all. When evaluating the Smooth, do consider the extent to which the placement of markings affects the appearance rather than the reality of its conformation, and make every effort to assess structure rather than illusion.

Temperament - The dog must present a generally gay, lively and active appearance.

Amplification

The Smooth should never take the lead in aggressive action toward humans. On the other hand, he should never retreat when challenged by canine competitors. It is for this reason that the Terrier judge must exercise caution when they feel the need to "spar" exhibits. A safe and reasonable distance must be maintained at all times. Likewise, do not let the more experienced dog, or handler, take advantage of the younger, more inexperienced. (Discussed further in Wire section.)

Disqualifications - Ears prick, tulip or rose. Nose white, cherry or spotted to a considerable extent with either of these colors. Mouth much undershot, or much overshot.

Endnote: The Smooth Fox Terrier is the epitome of "what you see is what you get." If the handler must show the Smooth to you "hands-on," the essence of the breed is lost in that exhibit. Smooths portray the basic nature of the proud, "take me or leave me," I can do it by myself Terrier. Judge them on their own merit. The handlers that make themselves observable to the judge do the exhibit worthy of notice no favor.

I would like to close this presentation with a quote, as best as I can remember it, from one of the most inspirational ladies I have ever known in this world of dogs. Several years ago, the wonderful Thelma Brown said, "The Terrier ring is a ring in motion. It is up to the judge to position themselves to get the best picture

the Terrier can present. It is not for the handler to hold the dog in position or mesmerize it with liver." Truer words were never spoken!

Questions & Answers

Q. As a Sporting enthusiast, I have always asked that dogs are moved on a loose lead...however, when judging terriers, and I ask for this it seems impossible for the handlers to follow my instructions:-(((...I would love >for this to be the norm, but see it very seldom in the ring..so how can you >see how the dog truly moves??? keep asking them to move the dog until they >'finally' loosen the pressure of the lead??

A. Sadly, many of the "better" Terrier handlers sincerely feel that they own the ring. They can and do intimidate many judges...even many of the "old timers" will not buck them for fear of banishment from the circle. So, they show their charges as they please and the way that truly has been effective for them and their illustrious predecessors. If they string up the dog, IT IS WRONG!!! Tell them what you want once. Tell them what you want twice, if you care to. Then if they do not comply, tell them goodbye.

Maybe Charlotte McGowan will tell the group how she handles non-compliance with instructions. As Bill Bergum has said so often, "It is your ring."