

THE TIBETAN MASTIFF

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Noble and impressive: a large, but not a giant breed. An athletic and substantial dog, of solemn but kindly appearance. The Tibetan Mastiff stands well up on the pasterns, with strong, tight, cat feet, giving an alert appearance. The body is slightly longer than tall. The hallmarks of the breed are the head and the tail. The head is broad and impressive, with substantial back skull, the eyes deep-set and almond shaped, slightly slanted, the muzzle broad and well-padded, giving a square appearance. The typical expression of the breed is one of watchfulness. The tail and britches are well feathered and the tail is carried over the back in a single curl falling over the loin, balancing the head. The coat and heavy mane is thick, with coarse guard hair and a wooly undercoat.



The Tibetan Mastiff has been used primarily as a family and property guardian for many millennia. The Tibetan Mastiff is aloof and watchful of strangers, and highly protective of its people and property.



The initial impression that one should have upon seeing a Tibetan Mastiff is that of a beautiful, balanced, strong dog, with a magnificent, natural coat. A Tibetan Mastiff will generally appear aloof: not unfriendly but yet not interested in strangers. The typical expression, so important to the breed, is "Watch out, I am watching you." At no time, however, should a Tibetan Mastiff off of his own property ever appear to be aggressive.



SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

Size: Dogs – preferred range of 26 inches – 29 inches at the withers
Bitches - preferred range of 24 inches – 27 inches at the withers

Dogs and bitches that are 18 months or older and that are less than 25 inches at the withers in the case of dogs or 23 inches at the withers in the case of bitches to be disqualified.

All dogs and bitches within the preferred range for height are to be judged equally, with no preference to be given to the taller dog.

Proportion: Slightly longer than tall (10-9), (i.e., the length to height, measured from sternum to ischium should be slightly greater than the distance from withers to ground).

Because of the heavy mane and the heavily feathered tail that curls over the back, dogs will often appear to be square when in fact their proportions are correct. As with most breeds, bitches are often slightly longer in body than dogs.



[A young bitch]

Substance: The Tibetan Mastiff should have impressive substance for its size, both in bone, body and muscle.



*The Tibetan Mastiff is considered by many to be the origin of all the molosser breeds. It is essential that the Tibetan Mastiff, both dogs and bitches, have impressive substance. Ribs should be well sprung, the brisket deep and broad and the loin and upper thigh and forearm well muscled. It is **essential** that the Tibetan Mastiff have strong bone. Judges should not be misled by the appearance of bone that the heavy furring on the forelegs can give. A Tibetan Mastiff that is light of bone, no matter its movement or size, must be severely faulted.*

HEAD

Broad, strong with heavy brow ridges. Heavy wrinkling to be severely faulted; however a single fold extending from above the eyes down to the corner of the mouth acceptable at maturity. A correct head and expression is essential to the breed.



[A mature dog]



[Three bitches]

Although the Tibetan Mastiff is not a "head" breed, at the same time, the head, and most particularly the expression, is of utmost importance. The head should be broad from the front, with a defined, supraorbital brow creating a slight furrow, extending halfway up the foreface, with a prominent sagittal crest starting, and parietal bones of the skull, diverging, with a very slight rounding of the skull to either side of the sagittal crest. The head and muzzle should form two squares. The head, especially in dogs, should be impressive.



[A mature dog]



[A mature bitch]

Expression: Noble, intelligent, watchful and aloof.

Eyes: Very expressive, medium size, any shade of brown. Rims to be black except in blue/grey and blue/grey and tan dogs, the darkest possible shade of grey. Eyes deep-set, well apart, almond-shaped, and slightly slanting, with tightly fitting eye rims at maturity. Any other color or shape to be severely faulted since it detracts from the typical expression.

Some dogs may show a slight haw, which is acceptable though not desirable. Tibetan Mastiffs were traditionally bred by the nomads living on the Changtang Plateau, at 16,000 feet. A loosely fitting eye rim, or a large round eye, would naturally lead to more injuries and infections in their natural habitat.

As stated in the standard, any shape - such as a round eye, detracts from the typical and unique expression of the Tibetan Mastiff, of constant thoughtful, watchfulness.

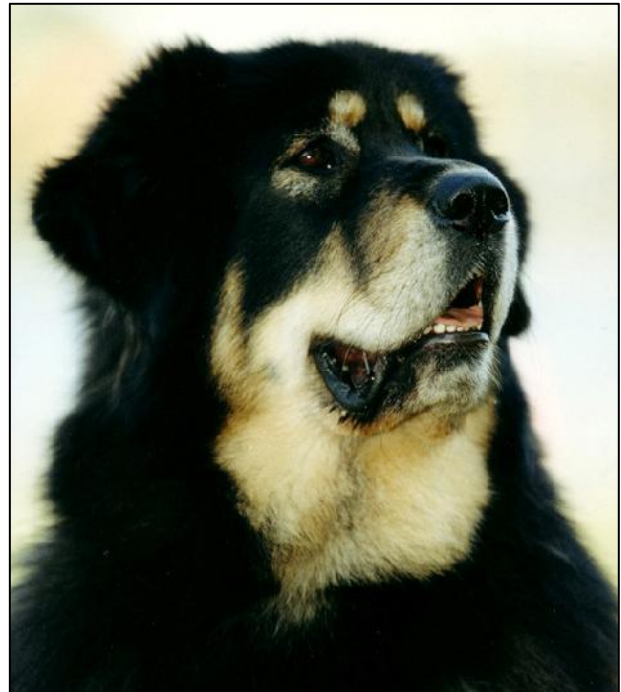


Ears: Medium size, V-shaped, pendant, set-on high , dropping forward and hanging close to head. Raised when alert, level with the top of the skull. The ear leather is thick, covered with soft short hair, and when measured, should reach the inner corner of the eye. Low-set and/or hound-like ears to be severely faulted.

Thin ear leather, low set ears or large or small ears detract from the typical expression. It should be noted, however, that young dogs will often have slightly large ears until their heads have grown into them at maturity.



[Ears relaxed]



[Same bitch - Ears raised]

Skull: Broad and large, with strongly defined occiput. Broad, flat back skull. Prominent, bony brow ridges.

Stop: Moderately defined, made to appear well defined by presence of prominent brow ridges.

As stated in the standard, the stop appears more defined than it in reality is as a result of both prominent brow ridges, as well as heavy coat. Because of this, in dogs that lack the bony brow ridges, the head appears very "dry" and both the overall appearance of the head as well as the expression are significantly affected.

Muzzle: Broad, well filled and square when viewed from all sides.



[A young dog]



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[A young bitch]

Nasal bone should be broad at the root with very little narrowing to the end of the muzzle. The correct muzzle should be heavily padded, but not overly fleshy, giving an almost square appearance.

Proportions: Measurement from stop to end of nose to be between one-half to one-third the length of the measurement from the occiput to stop. Longer muzzle is a severe fault. Width of skull measured from ear set to opposite ear set, to be slightly greater than length of skull measured from occiput to stop (i.e., just off square).



[A mature bitch]

The Tibetan Mastiff should have a dry mouth, accordingly, the flews should not be overdone. At the same time, it is important in order to maintain the correct outline of the muzzle, that the flew be thick and padded, with thin flews/lips to be faulted.

Nose: Broad, well pigmented, with open nostrils. Black, except with blue/grey or blue/grey and tan dogs, the darkest shade of grey and brown dogs, the darkest shade of brown. Any other color to be severely faulted.

Lips: Well developed, thick, with moderate flews and slightly pendulous lower lips.

Bite: Scissor bite, complete dentition, level bite acceptable.

Teeth: Canine teeth large, strong, broken teeth not to be faulted.

Disqualifications: Undershot or overshot bite.



NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck: The neck is well muscled, moderately arched, sufficient in length to be in balance with the body, and may have moderate dewlap around the throat. The neck, especially in mature dogs, is shrouded by a thick upstanding mane.



Dogs in particular may appear to have a somewhat short neck as a result of the mane, as well as the hair on the back which often stands away from the body.

Topline: Topline level and firm between withers and croup.

Body: The chest is well developed, with reasonable spring of rib. Brisket reaching to just below elbows. Underline with pronounced (but not exaggerated) tuck-up. The back is muscular with firmly muscled loin. There is no slope or angle to the croup.

Tail: Well feathered, medium to long, not reaching below the hock, set high on line with the back. When alert or in motion, the tail is always carried curled

over the back, may be carried down when dog is relaxed. Faults: Double curl, incomplete curl, uncurled or straight tail.

Severe faults: Tail not carried in the proper position as set forth above.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders: Well laid back, muscular, strongly boned, with moderate angulation to match the rear angulation.

Legs: Straight, with substantial bone and muscle, well covered with short, coarse hair, feathering on the back, and with strong pasterns that have a slight slope.

Feet: Cat feet. Fairly large, strong, compact, may have feathering between toes. Nails may be either black and/or white, regardless of coat color. A single dewclaw may be present on the front feet.



HINDQUARTERS

Hindquarters: Powerful, muscular, with all parts being moderately angulated. Seen from behind, the hind legs and stifle are parallel. The hocks are strong, approximately one-third the overall length of the leg, and perpendicular.

Feet: A single or double dewclaw may be present on the rear feet. Removal of rear dewclaws, if present, optional.

COAT

In general, dogs carry noticeably more coat than bitches. The quality of the coat is of greater importance than length. Double-coated, with fairly long, thick coarse guard hair, with heavy soft undercoat in cold weather which becomes rather sparse in warmer months. Hair is fine but hard, straight and stand-off; never silky, curly or wavy. Heavy undercoat, when present, rather woolly. Neck and shoulders heavily coated, especially in dogs, giving mane-like appearance. Tail and britches densely coated and heavily feathered. The Tibetan Mastiff is shown naturally. Trimming is not acceptable except to provide a clean cut appearance of feet and hocks. Dogs are not to be penalized if shown with a summer coat.

COLOR

Black, brown, and blue/grey, all with or without tan markings ranging from a light silver to a rich mahogany; also gold, with shades ranging from a pure golden to a rich red gold. White markings on chest and feet acceptable. Tan markings may appear at any or all of the following areas: above eyes as spots, around eyes (including spectacle markings), on each side of the muzzle, on throat, on lower part of front forelegs and extending up the inside of the forelegs, on inside of rear legs showing down the front of the stifle and broadening out to the front of the rear legs from hock to toes, on breeches, and underside of tail. Undercoat, as well as furnishings on breeches and underside of tail, may be lighter shades of the dominant color. The undercoat on black and tan dogs also may be grey or tan. Sabbling, other than wolf sable and sabbling in a saddle marked color pattern, is acceptable on gold dogs. Large white markings, to be faulted.



[Black]



[Black and Tan]



[Blue and Tan]

[Brown and Tan]





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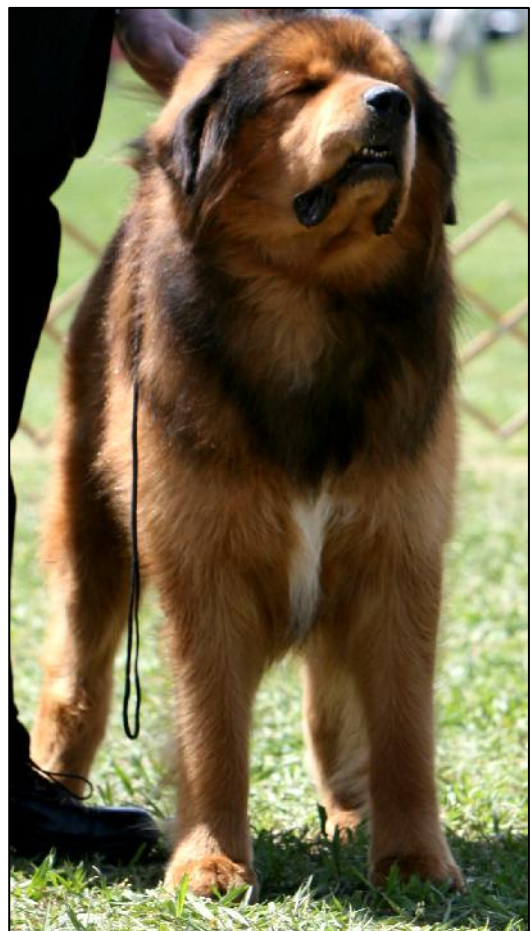
[Gold]



[Two sisters, two shades of gold, including the palest shade of gold]



[Dark red gold sable]



[Gold Sable]

[Range of tans]



Disqualification: All other coat colors (e.g., white, cream, wolf sable, brindle and particolored) and markings other than those specifically described, to be disqualified.



[Cream Sable]



[Cream Sable]



[Brindle]



[Double Dilute]

GAIT

The gait of a Tibetan Mastiff is athletic, powerful, steady and balanced, yet at the same time, light-footed and agile. When viewed from the side, reach and drive should indicate maximum use of the dog's moderate angulation. At increased speed, the dog will tend to single-track. Back remains level and firm. Sound and powerful movement more important than speed.



TEMPERAMENT

The Tibetan Mastiff is a highly intelligent, independent, strong willed and rather reserved dog. He is aloof with strangers and highly protective of his charges and his property. In the ring he may exhibit reserve or lack of enthusiasm, but any sign of shyness is unacceptable and must be severely faulted as inappropriate for a guardian breed.

FAULTS

The foregoing description is that of the ideal Tibetan Mastiff. Any deviation from the above described dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Dogs under 25 inches (and 18 months or older). Bitches under 23 inches (and 18 months or older).

Undershot or overshot bite.

All other coat colors (e.g., white, cream, wolf sable, brindle and particolors) and markings other than those specifically described, to be disqualified.