



Our Standard in Detail

©West Highland White Terrier Club of America (12.06)

Welcome

What to expect today:

- *Background and history of the Westie*
- *Discussion of the Standard including highlights of important issues*
- *Hands on demonstration with actual Westies (during live presentations)*



- *It was in the isolated vales and glens, home to various clans, that the rugged Scottish earthdogs evolved.*
- *They were particularly suited to the rough conditions, which were fraught with danger. In order to survive in this harsh environment, the dogs were short-legged and well muscled, with flexible, elastic bodies allowing them to wend their way through the cairns...*



A tough hide protected them from jutting rocks and a double coat equipped them to face the vicissitudes of weather. Forced to battle alone, often without the aid of humans, strong jaws, punishing teeth and tough claws were essential.

Earthdog Ins and Outs, Jo Ann Frier Murza



Always remember the
purpose for which
Westies were bred.



Quarry



A Westies is described as hardy, game and possessed of no small amount of self esteem - - because of the work to do:

- **Use senses to locate the game**
- **Bark incessantly**
- **Stand fast without attacking**
- **Wait for the retreat, press on**
- **Barking non-stop, backing the quarry into his home chamber.**

The West Highland White Terrier Standard Highlights



Official Standard

General Appearance

- The West Highland White Terrier is a **small, game, well-balanced, hardy looking terrier**, exhibiting good showmanship, possessed with no small amount of self-esteem, **strongly built, deep in chest and back ribs**, with a straight back and powerful hindquarters on muscular legs, and exhibiting in marked degree a great combination of strength and activity.
- The **coat** is about two inches long, **white** in color, **hard**, with plenty of **soft undercoat**. The dog should be neatly presented, the longer coat on the back and sides, trimmed to blend into the shorter neck and shoulder coat.
- Considerable hair is left around the head to act as a frame for the face to yield a typical Westie expression.

General Appearance

Desirable

- Small, gamey
- Well balanced
- Hardy
- Strongly Built – deep in the chest & back ribs
- White hard double coat
- Active
- Neatly Presented



Size, Proportion, Substance

- The ideal size is eleven inches at the withers for dogs and ten inches for bitches. A slight deviation is acceptable.
- The Westie is a compact dog, with good balance and substance. The body between the withers and the root of the tail is slightly shorter than the height at the withers. Short-coupled and well boned.

Faults: Over or under height limits. Fine boned.

Head

Shaped to present a **round appearance** from the front; should be **in proportion to the body**.

Expression -- Piercing, inquisitive, pert.

Eyes -- **Widely set apart**, medium in size, **almond shaped**, **dark brown** in color, **deep set**, sharp and intelligent. Looking from **under heavy eyebrows**, they give a **piercing look**. **Eye rims are black**.

Faults: Small, full or light colored eyes.

Ears -- **Small, carried tightly erect, set wide apart**, on the top **outer edge of the skull**. They terminate in a **sharp point**, and must **never be cropped**. The hair on the ears is trimmed short and is smooth and velvety, free of fringe at the tips. **Black skin pigmentation is preferred**.

Faults: Round-pointed, broad, large, ears set closely together, not held tightly erect, or placed too low on the side of the head.

Head & Expression

DESIRABLE:

- Round shaped appearance from front
- In proportion to body
- Expression: Piercing, inquisitive & pert





A head with good underlying structure doesn't need a lot of hair or amendments to attain the proper form.

Skull

Broad, slightly longer than the muzzle, not flat on top but **slightly domed** between the ears. It gradually tapers to the eyes. There is a **defined stop**, **eyebrows** are **heavy**.

Faults: Long or narrow skull.

Muzzle -- **Blunt**, **slightly shorter than the skull**, **powerful** and gradually tapering to the **nose**, which is **large and black**. The jaws are level and powerful. **Lip pigment is black**.

Faults: Muzzle longer than skull. Nose color other than black.

Bite -- The **teeth are large for the size of the dog**. There must be **six incisor teeth between the canines of both lower and upper jaws**. An occasional missing premolar is acceptable. A tight scissors bite with upper incisors slightly overlapping the lower incisors or level mouth is equally acceptable.

Faults: Teeth defective or misaligned. Any incisors missing or several premolars missing. Teeth overshot or undershot.



BITE

DESIRABLE

- Large teeth for size of dog
- Scissors or level
- Six (6) incisors, upper & lower
- All or almost all premolars



Neck, Topline, Body

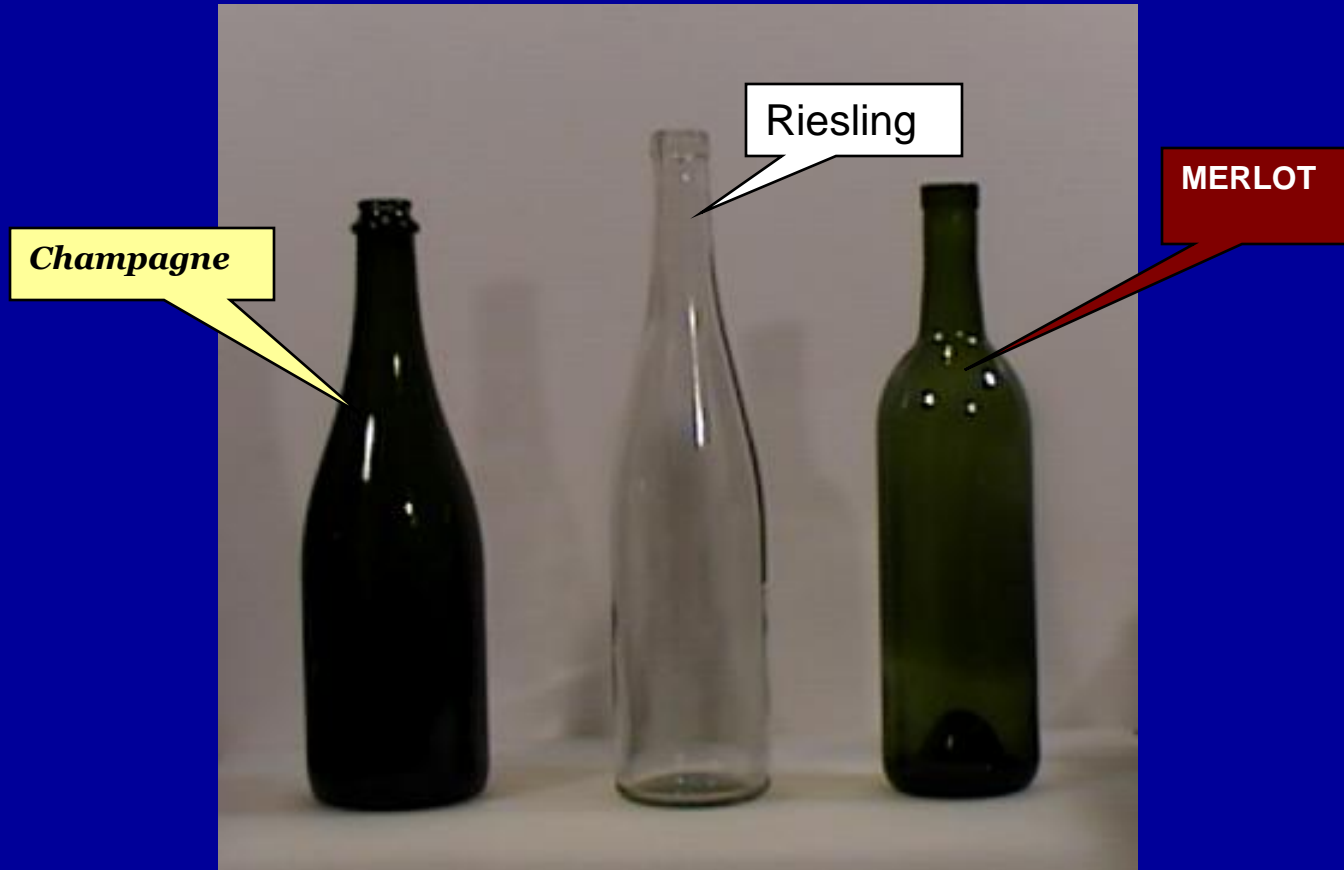
Neck -- Muscular and well set on sloping shoulders. The length of neck should be in proportion to the remainder of the dog.

Faults: Neck too long or too short.

Topline -- Flat and level, both standing and moving.

Faults: High rear, any deviation from above.

Neck & Topline



NECK & TOPLINE

DESIRABLE Neck

- **Moderate in length**
- **Arched**
- In proportion to dog
- Muscular
- **Set on to blend smoothly into shoulders**
- Topline Level --- ADD SKELETON INSIDE OF DOG

Body

Compact and of good substance. Ribs deep and well arched in the upper half of rib, extending at least to the elbows, and presenting a flattish side appearance.

Back ribs of considerable depth, and distance from last rib to upper thigh as short as compatible with free movement of the body.

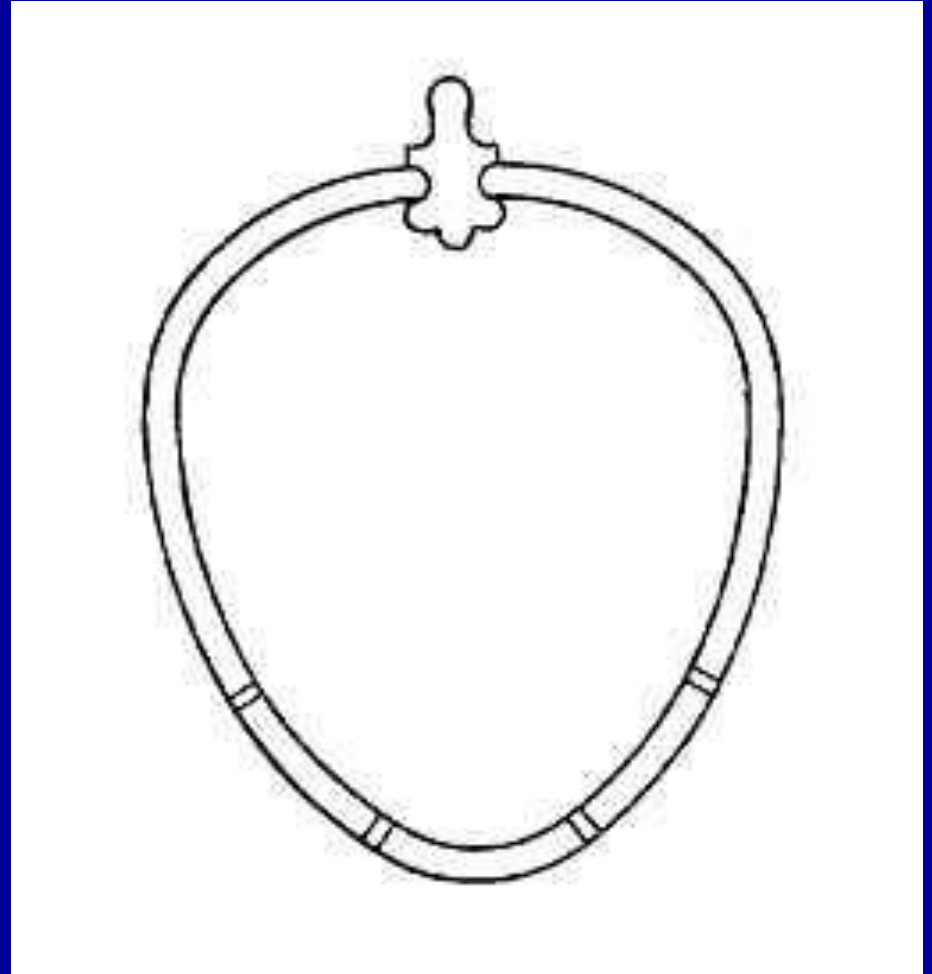
Chest very deep and extending to the elbows, with breadth in proportion to the size of the dog. Loin short, broad and strong.

Faults: Back weak, either too long or too short.
Barrel ribs, ribs above elbows.

RIBS

DESIRABLE

- **Deep, well arched in upper half of rib**
- **Extending at least to elbows**
- **Flattish side appearance**



Tail

Relatively short, with good substance, and shaped like a carrot.

When standing erect it is never extended above the top of the skull. It is covered with hard hair without feather, as straight as possible, carried gaily but not curled over the back.

The tail is set on high enough so that the spine does not slope down to it. The tail is never docked.

Faults: Set too low, long, thin, carried at half-mast, or curled over back.

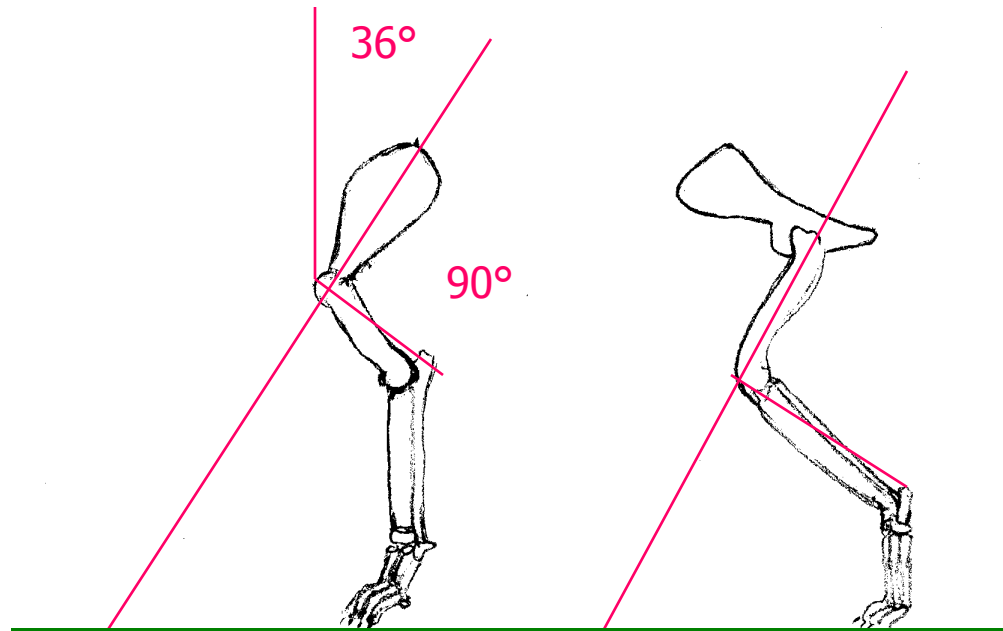


Forequarters

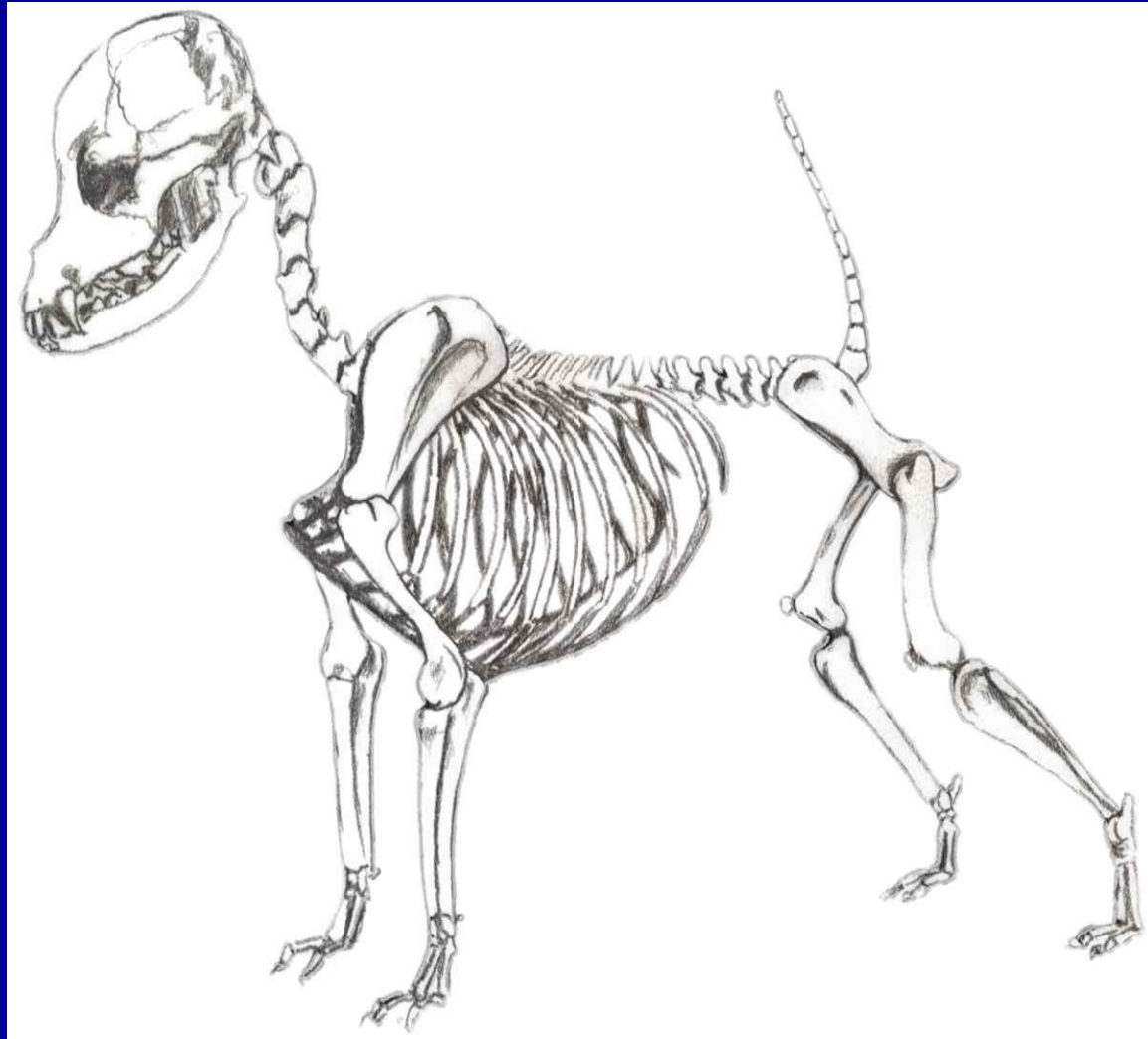
Angulation, Shoulders -- Shoulder blades are **well laid back** and well knit at the backbone. The shoulder blade should attach to an **upper arm of moderate length**, and sufficient angle to allow for **definite body overhang**.

Faults: Steep or loaded shoulders. Upper arm too short or too straight.

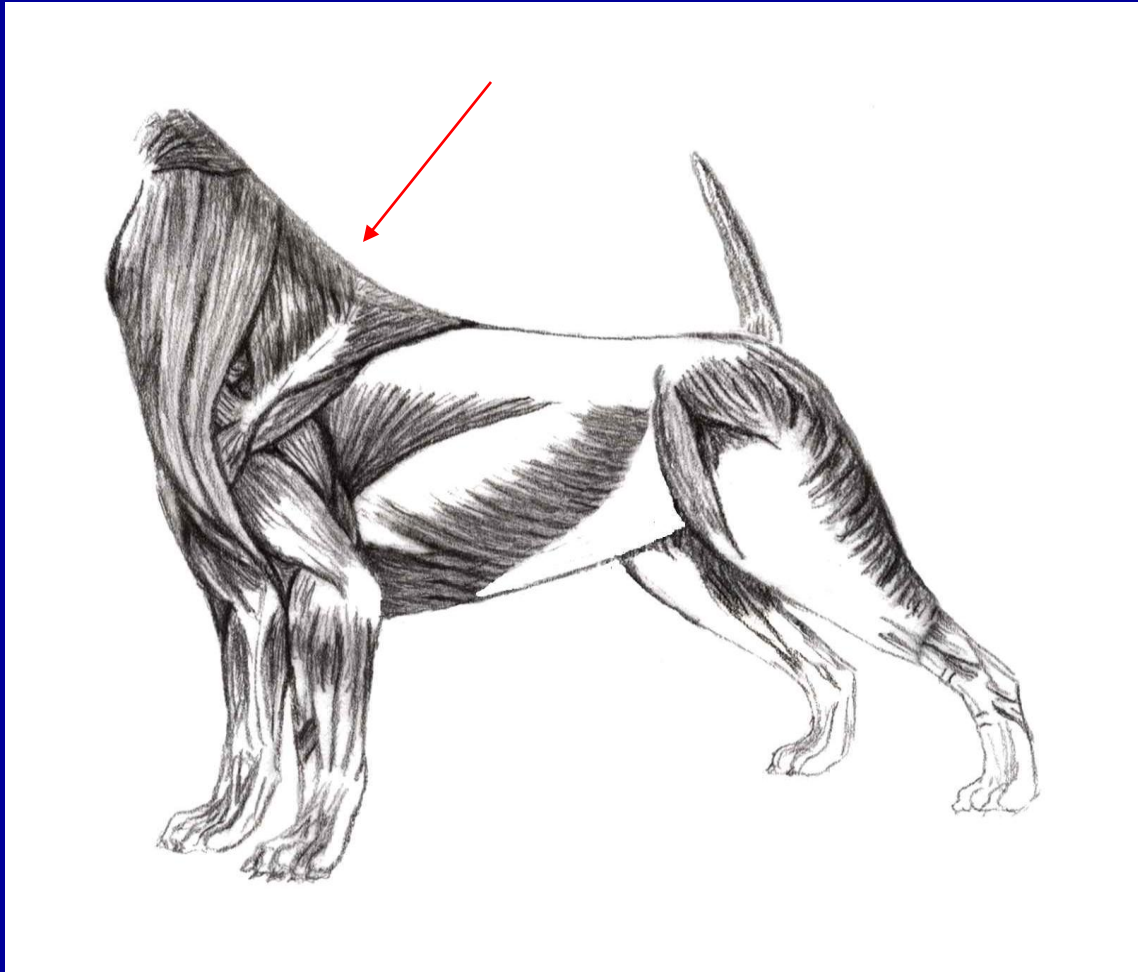
Angles



THE SKELETON



The addition of muscles to the skeletal structures creates a smooth blended neck & shoulder



Legs & Feet

- **Legs** -- Forelegs are **muscular** and **well boned**. relatively short, but with sufficient length to set the dog up so as not to be too close to the ground. The legs are **reasonably straight**, and thickly covered with short hard hair. They are set in under the shoulder blades with **definite body overhang** before them. Height from **elbow to withers** and **elbow to ground** should be **approximately the same**.

Faults: Out at elbows. Light bone, fiddle-front.

- **Feet** -- **Forefeet** are **larger than the hind** ones, are **round**, proportionate in size, strong, **thickly padded**; they **may properly be turned out slightly**. Dewclaws may be removed. **Black pigmentation** is most **desirable** on pads of all feet and nails, although nails may lose coloration in older dogs.

Hindquarters

- **Angulation** -- Thighs are very muscular, well angulated, not set wide apart, with hock well bent, short, and parallel when viewed from the rear.
- **Legs**--Rear legs are muscular and relatively short and sinewy.
Faults: Weak hocks, long hocks, lack of angulation. Cowhocks.
- **Feet** -- Hind feet are smaller than front feet, and are thickly padded. Dewclaws may be removed.

Coat

- Very important and seldom seen to perfection. Must be **double-coated**.
- The head is shaped by plucking the hair, to present the round appearance. The outer coat consists of straight hard white hair, about two inches long, with shorter coat on neck and shoulders, **properly blended** and trimmed to blend shorter areas into furnishings, which are longer on stomach and legs.
- The **ideal coat is hard, straight and white**, but a hard straight coat which may have some **wheaten tipping is preferable to a white fluffy or soft coat**. Furnishings may be somewhat softer and longer but should never give the appearance of fluff.

Faults: Soft coat. Any silkiness or tendency to curl. Any open or single coat, or one which is too

Color

The color is white, as defined by the breed's name.

Faults: Any coat color other than white. Heavy wheaten color.

Note: Westies are genetically tan dogs with excessive lightening.

Thus, they are not as white as the extreme piebald breeds such as Bull Terriers, Dalmatians, or Maltese.

Gait

- **Free, straight and easy** all around. It is a distinctive gait, not stilted, but **powerful**, with **reach and drive**.
- In **front**, the leg is **freely extended forward by the shoulder**. When seen from the front, the legs do not move square, but **tend to move toward the center of gravity**.
- The **hind movement** is free, strong and **fairly close**. The hocks are freely flexed and drawn close under the body, so that when moving off the foot the body is thrown or pushed forward with some force.
- Overall ability to move is usually best evaluated from the side, and **topline remains level**.

Faults: Lack of reach in front, and/or drive behind. Stiff, stilted or too wide movement.





Temperament

Alert, gay, courageous and self-reliant, but friendly.

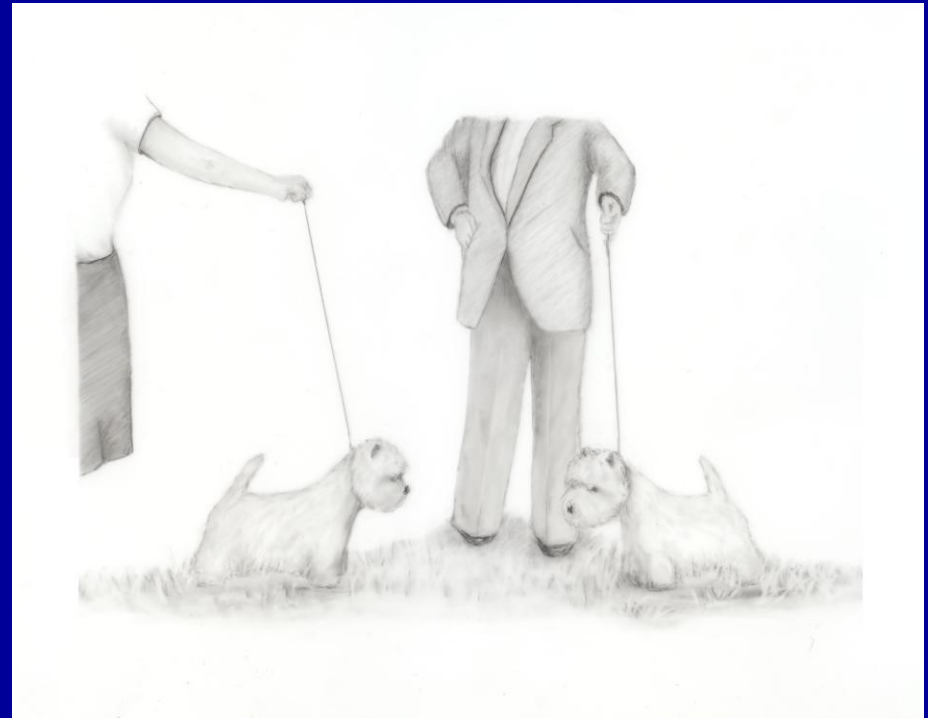
Faults: Excess timidity or excess pugnacity.

SPARRING

- Purpose: To see the dogs on their toes looking at each other, standing their ground. They should be pulling themselves together and showing some presence (real terrier character).

As a judge:

- Sparring often presents a dog in an alert and free standing advantage
- Control is essential – no leaping, growling, barking
- Bring ONLY 2-3 dogs to the center of the ring
- Instruct handlers to have good control with a tight leash; not to let them get too close.
- Do not spar puppies – even Specials



A word of caution ...

Terrier Handlers may have Terrier temperaments!



HANDLING TECHNIQUES

- Gaiting cover-ups:
 - Racing
 - Stringing 'em up
 - Dragging them around
- Grooming cover-ups:
 - Lengthen the neck
 - Shorten the back
 - Crank the tail
 - Extend the rear

THE GREAT COVER UP

- Westie Sculpturing:
 - Rat & tease the head hair
 - Build up the neck
 - Lower the rear
 - Add a foreign substance
 - Bleach
 - Color & Dye



Suggested Reading



- John Marvin, *The Complete West Highland White Terrier*.
- Anna K Nicholas, *The Book of the West Highland White Terrier*.
- Barbara Hand, *All About the West Highland White Terrier*.
- Daphne Gentry, *The New West Highland White Terrier*.
- Tom Horner, *Terriers of the World*.
- Jo Ann Frier Murza, *Earthdog Ins and Outs*.
- Rachel Page Elliott, *The New Dog Steps*.

Note the differences.

Cairn – Westie - Scottie

Cairn

- Slightly smaller
- Lighter boned
- Moves wider in the rear
- Blousier coat
- Slightly longer in body



Westie

- Slightly taller
- Substantial
- Up off the ground
- Happy, friendly



Scottie

- Heavier boned
- Lower to the ground
- Longer head
- Dour expression





A good West Highland White Terrier of true type and sound structure should be able to show himself unassisted and evidence the qualities and spirit specific to the breed.

PLEASE REMEMBER ...

That a good dog can be made to look better is the art of grooming and handling.

That an unsound dog can be made to look good is the art of deception.

The future quality of the breed depends on *you*, our judges, and **your ability to know the difference.**

Thanks to:

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We appreciate your
interest and attention.

Questions?

