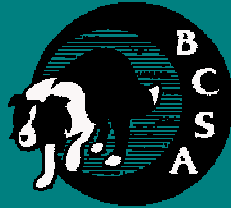


# THE BORDER COLLIE



Presented by

**BORDER COLLIE SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

*AKC Parent Club*

It is the philosophy of the BCSA that the Border Collie is first and foremost a herding dog and evaluation of its overall structure should be made solely with this function in mind.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

AKC Herding Group



We hope this presentation will help you understand what makes a correct Border Collie, both on the herding field and in the conformation ring. Because this breed is primarily defined by it's work, we would like to give you a sense of what is needed to make Border Collies good working dogs – as well as discuss aspects of their structure that allow them to accomplish their job.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

Versatile Working Breed



Conformation

Agility



Herding

Tracking



Obedience

Border Collies are quite versatile and well known to excel in many performance activities. They are intelligent, agile, happy workers – quick to learn and eager to please. They live to work and with guidance from their trainer will usually master any task requested.

These working attributes are directly due to hundreds of years of breeding dogs specifically to work with shepherds in managing flocks of sheep in Great Britain and are central to what defines this versatile breed.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

### History – Great Britain

- Sheepdogs and sheep brought to Britain by Romans
- Sheepdogs became a necessity as the sheep industry grew – particularly in the Scottish Border regions where the breed was refined



1576 – Early reference to Shepherd's dog (Border Collie) by Johannes Caius in *English Dogges* – “Our Shepherd's dogge is not huge, vaste and bigge, but of indifferent stature and growth, because it hath not to deale with the blood thirsty wolf, ...

“... This dogge, either at the hearing of his master's voice or at the shrill hissing, bringeth the wandering wethers and straying sheep into the self same place where his master's will and wish is to have them, whereby the shepherd reapeth his benefite, namely that with little labour nor tyole or moving of his fette he may rule and guide his flocke, according to his own desire.”

1576—Early reference to Border Collies (Shepherd's dog) by Johanes Caius in *English Dogges* –

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**labour nor tyole or moving of his feete he may rule and guide his flocke, according to his own desire.”**

Border Collies work the same way today, more than 400 years later. The preservation of this herding talent is not accidental. It has been preserved throughout the centuries because the Border Collie is a valuable tool for the stockman.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

### History Continued

James Hogg (1772-1835), a shepherd and poet from the Ettrick Valley in the Scottish Borders wrote, “without [the sheep dog] the mountainous land of England and Scotland would not be worth sixpence. It would require more hands to manage a flock of sheep and drive them to market than the profits of the whole were capable of maintaining.”

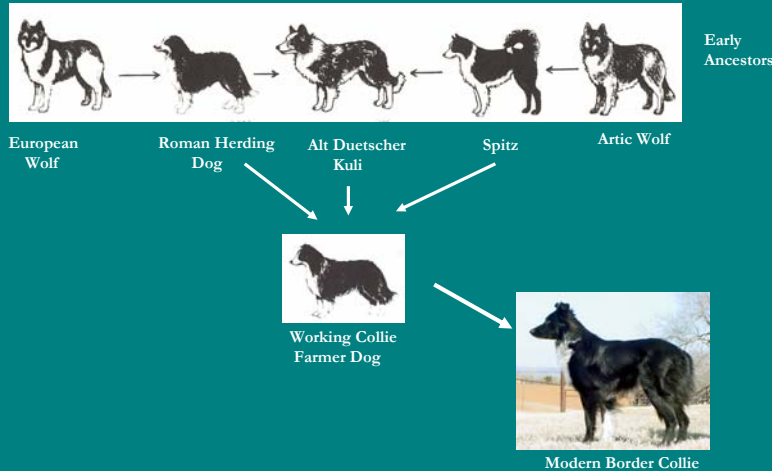


In the early years, the breed has been known as the Working Collie, Old-Fashioned Collie, Farm Collie, Farmer’s Dog, Shepherd’s Dog, and English Collie. 1918 - James Reid, Secretary of the International Sheep Dog Society in Great Britain, first called the dog a Border Collie.

Before modern transportation became readily available, livestock was taken on foot to market. Thus a dog who could both gather unruly, wandering stock as well as drive them from place to place was needed. Several different strains of these herding dogs arose according to the variety of terrains, types of stock they needed to work, and the style of herding they were used for.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

### Development of the Farmer's Dog (Border Collie) Contributors



Many sheepdogs of the British Isles share a common ancestry. Depicted on this slide are the likely influences on what eventually became the Border Collie we know today.

As with other breeds, the earliest herding dogs were probably brought to England by the Romans. The Scandinavian Spitz (which was used for herding reindeer) was likely brought to England by the Vikings and mixed with the herding dogs already present in regions occupied by the invaders. You can still see the Spitz influence in Border Collie – particularly in the prick ears of some dogs and in the ‘lion’ like rough in some males.

Other breeds were clearly used. For example the Alt Deutscher Kuli, a German Herding dog which looks a lot like an Australian Shepherd with a tail was introduced early on. These dog have coats that are usually merle colors.

Later was the introduction of the Welsh Grey, the Highland Collie (from which the modern Show Collie arose), and the Lowland Collie. Throughout the ages, the sheepdog continued to evolve, being refined not according to an artificial criteria of appearance, but being selected by how well it worked and how tractable it was to deal with.

The important thing is that a diverse background led to the development of the Border Collie. The guiding principle in the early stages was simple. When a farmer saw a dog with herding talents he appreciated, he used this dog to produce puppies to work his flock.

## THE BORDER COLLIE

Development of the Breed  
Selection Pressures

### Development of the Sheep Industry in Scotland and Northern England

- ❖ Hilly, windy, rugged terrain – required agile, clever dogs with power to move recalcitrant sheep and the instinct to gather sheep scattered over the hills. Endurance was critical for these dogs to cover the distances necessary to gather the flock and move them to market.



- ❖ “Eye” seen as an advantage since dogs having “eye” can better control stock.
- ❖ Early principle for breeding: “Let the hills prove the dog”.
- ❖ Herding trials further refined the breed.
- ❖ Establishment of the International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS).

But, it's even more complicated than producing a good herding dog. Different farmers had different criteria for what worked best for them. In the border regions of Scotland/Northern England the conditions and terrain required a certain type of dog.

With the arrival of mechanization, many farmers began handling larger flocks. Since less manpower was required for most tasks, an efficient herding dog became a real asset. Sheepdog trials played an important role by testing the merit and capabilities of the dogs in a uniform environment. The first record of a Sheepdog Trial was October 9, 1873. These trials led to head to head comparisons of herding attributes – ‘bragging’ rights. Those dogs that won trials became foundation dogs. Some of these had a tremendous influence on the breed and all Border Collies today can be traced back to a few key dogs who excelled on the trial field.

The International Sheepdog Society (ISDS) played a great role in maintaining pedigrees and registration information on the Border Collie. The ISDS originated in Scotland in 1908 and is very active to this day, maintaining a registry and governing body for the working Border Collie in Great Britain and many other countries.



### Important Early Ancestors

Old Hemp (1893-1901) – Father of the Breed, a black and white, powerful dog bred by Adam Telfer. Practically all present day Border Collies trace their ancestry back to Old Hemp



Old Kep (1901) – son of Old Hemp. Remarkable dog with tremendous eye



Wartime Cap (1937) – Bred by JM Wilson; Fathered 112 bitches.



Wiston Cap (1963) – Wiston Cap became the most ‘used’ dog in the breed’s history and therefore made a huge impact. Prick ears, a variety of coat colors, good temperament, excellent working style are thought to go back to Cap.

Gilchrist's Spot - Contributed greatly to a long line of herding champions in the 60s and 70s. Said to pass along wide outruns and good style.



Old Hemp is considered the ‘father of the breed’ as all modern Border Collies trace back to him. Bred by Adam Telfer of Northumberland, England and born in 1893 he began appearing in sheepdog trials at the age of one year and was unbeaten throughout his lifetime, a record that has never been matched. Although difficult to tell from the photo, he stood about 21 inches tall and weighed about 45 pounds. He was black and white with long straight coat and semi-erect ears. Considered the progenitor of the present day registered Border Collies, he was the progeny of two very different parents and their characteristics have persisted in the breed to the present day. His dam was very black, “strong eyed” and reticent. His sire was black, white and tan with very little “eye” and good natured. Old Hemp was a most powerful, keen worker and fascinating to watch working sheep. He sired over 200 puppies. He is said to be the dog that the modern Border Collie standard was patterned after.

Old Kep, a son of Old Hemp, figured into the breed early because of his tremendous eye.

Perhaps the biggest influence on the breed were dogs bred by JM Wilson and their descendants, many of whom were named Cap - the most famous being Wiston Cap. Wiston Cap is said to have Wartime Cap in his pedigree 16 times! This is important since he went on to be the most used dog in the breed’s history. Greater than 95% of all Border Colies today have Wiston Cap in their pedigree.

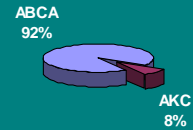


## THE BORDER COLLIE

### History – North America

- Imports in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- First herding trials in 1880's (continue under auspices of USBCHA)
- Domestic registries established (NASD, AIBC, ABCA)
- Admitted by AKC into Miscellaneous Group in 1955
- Admitted to Herding Group in 1995
- Stud book will be kept open indefinitely

*At present more than 20,000 Border Collies are registered annually in the US. Of these, only about 8% are registered with AKC.*



The history of the BC begins in North America in the late 1800's. Dogs were imported to manage both small and large flocks of sheep particularly in the west and mid-western regions of the US and Canada.

As was done in England, herding trials were established to 'test' dogs.

## Defining Characteristics of the Border Collie

- ❖ More than any other breed, Border Collies are defined by their work.
- ❖ More uniformity in working abilities than physical appearance.
- ❖ Breed standard is a 'partial' blueprint used in breeding the complete dog.



- ❖ Excellence is determined by *both* working ability and conformation – evaluation of the latter is made in the breed ring while the former is evaluated on stock. To properly judge the Border Collie, observation of the dogs working stock is necessary in order to recognize important traits which make up this breed.

It seems that those who only use their Border Collies for herding stock are unfamiliar with the characteristics that the conformation evaluators are accustomed to observing. While the herding handlers are evaluating traits like the proper work ethic, balance, eye, biddability, approach to stock, herding instinct and working style, the conformation evaluator is looking for the characteristics the standard describes like size, proportion, bone, head structure, eye shape, width between shoulder blades, strong loin and good firm strong muscular condition. Some people believe that a dog is not recognizable as Border Collie just by looking at it, preferring to evaluate the dog's reaction to stock and their style of work. While this is clearly too single minded, it is important to emphasize that this breed requires consideration of other traits in addition to physical appearance in defining the dog.

This creates many challenges and suggests that the written breed standard is only a partial blueprint to be used in conjunction with observation of the Border Collie working in order to get a picture of the complete BC. Excellence in this breed must be defined by both conformation and by working ability – one can be judged in the breed ring while the other will be judged on stock.

## The AKC Breed Standard for Border Collies

### *PREAMBLE*

*The Border Collie originated in the border country between Scotland and England where the shepherds' breeding selection was based on biddable stock sense and the ability to work long days on rugged terrain."*



The Border Collie originated in the rugged border country between Scotland and England. The breed was admitted by AKC as a herding breed April 30, 1995 after being in the Miscellaneous Class since 1955; a status from which the breed competed in the AKC Obedience Trials. In order to compete in the newly formed AKC Herding Program it was necessary for the breed to acquire regular breed status which additionally entitled participation in Conformation. The Standard that was first approved in 1995 was revised, approved becoming effective March 2, 2004.

A PREAMBLE was added to the revised standard because it is of the utmost importance to the BCSA that the function for which this breed was developed not be lost because of show ring pressures and even more important it is hoped that the people who judge the Border Collie will not make it another generic show dog that gaits swiftly around a ring and then stands like a statue with its mind fixated on a piece of bait. It is acceptable if one does this but not a mandatory behavior to appreciate the correct Border Collie. It is hoped that our working Border Collies will be able to compete in the show ring as well as on the herding field and other performance events.

## The AKC Breed Standard for Border Collies

*“PREAMBLE : ... As a result of this selective breeding, the Border Collie developed the unique working style of gathering and fetching the stock with wide sweeping outruns.”*



The Border Collie's natural ability to gather stock generally separates them from other herding breeds. They are also a heading breed meaning they prefer to control the stock by controlling the heads.

Gathering requires the ability to run out (outrun), lift the stock (collect and communicate control to the stock) and fetch them to the farmer. To successfully 'gather' a field, the dog must 'cover' all the sheep, put them in a group and calmly fetch them home.



Continuing with the PREAMBLE... Border Collies have a highly developed herding instinct which gives them a unique style of working stock. Although herding instinct is critical, it is not enough. Dog also need herding talent – the ability to put herding instinct to good use in controlling stock.

As part of their instinct, Border Collies have a strong work ethic (which equates to a longer than normal attention span), therefore, they excel at many activities because this trait can be re-directed from stock to a handler in obedience or the athleticism and biddability in the agility arena or fly ball.

## The AKC Breed Standard for Border Collies

*PREAMBLE: ... The stock is then controlled with an intense gaze known as "eye", coupled with a stalking style of movement.*



Perhaps one of the most distinguishing features of a Border Collie's herding ability is its use of "eye". Eye refers to the stare Border Collies use to intimidate stock. This "eye" creates a unique style of moving stock in which the dog relies *primarily* on his intimidating stare to make them move. Obviously there are different degrees of eye from too much (sticky eye), to too little (loose eyed). Eye is critical to other aspects of a Border Collie's herding ability including outrun, balance, pace etc.

More from the PREAMBLE... the "eye" is as much posture as it is actually staring and is quite effective when controlling stock.

## The AKC Breed Standard for Border Collies

*“PREAMBLE: ... This selective breeding over hundreds of years developed the Border Collie's intensity, energy and trainability which are features so important that they are equal to physical size and appearance. The Border Collie has extraordinary instinct and an uncanny ability to reason. One of its greatest assets is the ability to work out of sight of its master without commands. Breeding based on this working ability has made this breed the world's premier sheep herding dog, a job the Border Collie is still used for worldwide. “*



And the PREAMBLE continues... Border Collies are one of the few breeds that is still commonly used to do what they were originally bred for and LOVE to do. Their work is helping control and retrieving stock; primarily sheep, but also cattle, goats, ducks, turkeys, etc – it is moves, they'll likely work it. More recently they have been frequently used to control geese at airports, golf courses, corporation lawns etc.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Border Collie is a well balanced, medium-sized dog of athletic appearance, displaying style and agility in equal measure with soundness and strength. Its hard, muscular body conveys the impression of effortless movement and endless endurance. The Border Collie is extremely intelligent, with its keen, alert expression being a very important characteristic of the breed. Any aspect of structure or temperament that would impede the dog's ability to function as a herding dog should be severely faulted. The Border Collie is, and should remain, a natural and unspoiled true working sheep dog whose conformation is described herein. Honorable scars and broken teeth incurred in the line of duty are acceptable.

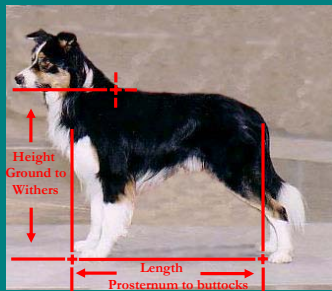


The revised standard reiterates in the GENERAL APPEARANCE section that a Border Collie is first and foremost a working herding dog, not just a show dog, and its condition should reflect that. This means that the BC should have good hard muscles, not a flabby, fat feeling body. Size is referenced as medium-sized and it is advised that the judge should severely fault “any aspect of structure or temperament that would impede the dog’s ability to function as a herding dog.”

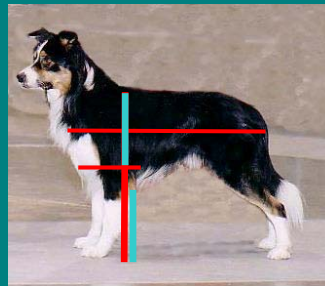


### SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

The height at the withers varies from 19" to 22" for males, 18" to 21" for females. The body, from prosternum to point of buttocks, is slightly longer than the height at the withers with the length to height ratio being approximately 10:9. Bone must be strong, medium being correct but lighter bone is preferred over heavy. Overall balance between height, length, weight and bone is crucial and is more important than any absolute measurement. Dogs must be presented in hard working condition. Excess body weight is not to be mistaken for muscle or substance. Any single feature of size appearing out of proportion should be considered a fault.



Ratio of Length to Height = 10:9

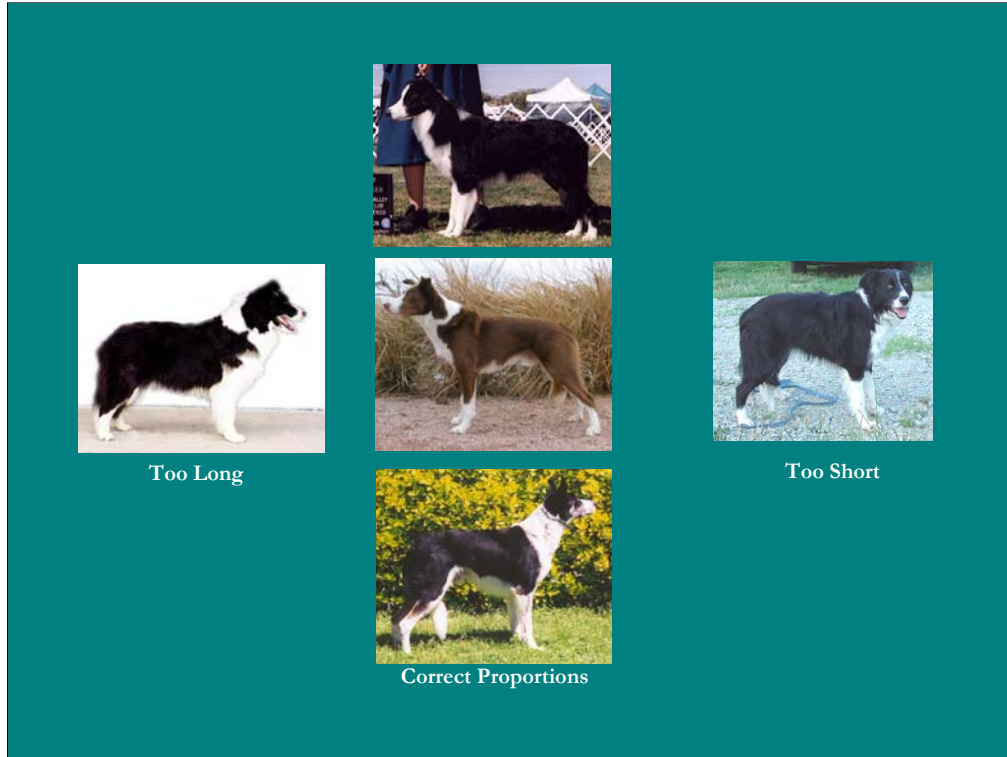


Length to height 10 is to 9

Withers to elbow slightly less than elbow to ground

Chest no further down than elbow

Although the height varies generously, from 19" to 22" for dogs and 18" to 21" for bitches, the PROPORTION ratio of 10:9 defines the slightly longer than tall a proportion that tends to remain the same regardless of height among the Border Collies that successfully gather and control stock. Another proportion that is vital to the herding Border Collie is described in the FOREQUARTERS section of the standard "Because sufficient length of leg is crucial for the type of work the breed is required to do, the distance from the wither to the elbow is slightly less than from the elbow to the ground and legs that are too short in proportion to the rest of the body are a serious fault."



Because the Border Collie must be quick and agile, the bone is medium with lighter bone being more correct than heavy bone. A Border Collie should never appear big and cloddy. Remember “Old Hemp’s” statistics....Height 21” and Weight 45#.

## HEAD

Expression is intelligent, alert, eager, and full of interest. Eyes are set well apart, of moderate size, oval in shape. The color encompasses the full range of brown eyes, dogs having body colors other than black may have noticeably lighter eye color. Blue eyes (with one, both or part of one or both eyes being blue) in dogs other than merle, are acceptable but not preferred. Eye rims should be fully pigmented, lack thereof considered a fault according to degree. Ears are of medium size, set well apart, one or both carried erect and/or semi-erect (varying from 1/4 to 3/4 of the ear erect). When semi-erect, the tips may fall forward or outward to the side. Ears are sensitive and mobile.



CORRECT



INCORRECT



The expressions depicted by these HEAD studies are all intelligent, alert, eager and full of interest. All **eyes** are properly set and are of correct shape and are acceptable colors. **Ear** shape, carriage and size are all correct on these heads.

**HEAD continued -**

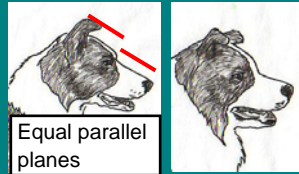
Skull is relatively flat and moderate in width. The skull and muzzle are approximately equal in length. In profile the top of the skull is parallel with the top of the muzzle. Stop moderate, but distinct. The muzzle is strong, tapering slightly to the nose. The underjaw is strong and well developed. A domed, blocky or very narrow skull is faulty according to degree, as is cheekiness and a snipty muzzle. Nose color matches the primary body color. Nostrils are well developed. Lack of nose pigmentation is a fault according to degree.



Flat & moderately wide



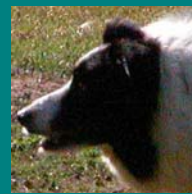
**Parallel Planes:**



Equal parallel planes

Desirable

Less desirable



Continuing with the HEAD section... the **muzzle** is strong, tapering slightly to the nose with a strong well developed under jaw. The **skull** is relatively flat, moderate in width. The **muzzle** and **skull** are approximately of equal length joined by a moderate but definite **stop**. In profile the top of the **skull is parallel with the top of the muzzle**. **Ears** do not have to match.

**HEAD continued –**

**Bite:** Teeth and jaws are strong, meeting in a scissors bite. Complete dentition is required. Missing molars or pre-molars are serious faults as is an undershot or overshot bite.

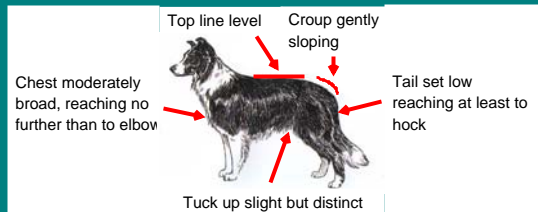
Scissors Bite, complete dentition:



**Bite** is **scissors** with full dentition required. Missing molars or pre-molars are serious faults as is an undershot or overshot bite.

### NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck is of proportional length to the body, strong and muscular, slightly arched and blending smoothly into the shoulders. Topline: Back is level from behind the withers to the slightly arched, muscular loins, falling to a gently sloping croup. Body is athletic in appearance with a deep, moderately broad chest reaching no further than the point of the elbow. The rib cage is moderately long with well sprung ribs. Loins moderately deep and short, muscular, slightly arched and with a slight but distinct tuck up. The tail is set on low and is moderately long with the bone reaching at least to the hock.



LESS DESIRABLE



The TOPLINE is described as **back** is level from behind the **withers** to the slightly arched, muscular **loins**, falling to a gently sloping **croup** that blends into the low set **tail**.

The previous standard indicated that there was no **tuck up**. The revised standard states that there is a slight but distinct tuck up. There will be and it is correct to find more tuck up in younger less mature Border Collies.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY – Cont'd:

The ideal tail carriage is low when the dog is concentrating on a given task and may have a slight upward swirl at the end like a shepherd's crook. In excitement, it may be raised proudly and waved like a banner, showing a confident personality. A tail curled over the back is a fault.



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### FOREQUARTERS

Forelegs should be parallel when viewed from front, pasterns slightly sloping when viewed from side. Because sufficient length of leg is crucial for the type of work the breed is required to do, the distance from the wither to the elbow is slightly less than from the elbow to the ground and legs that are too short in proportion to the rest of the body are a serious fault.



These are examples of correctly placed forelegs, width of chest and good feet.

**FOREQUARTERS** Cont'd:

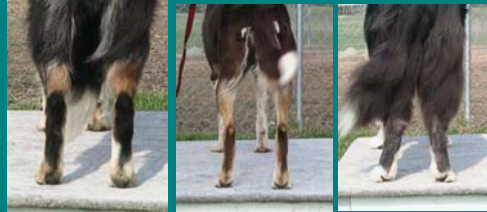
The shoulder blades are long, well laid back and well-angulated to the upper arm. Shoulder blades and upper arms are equal in length. There is sufficient width between the tops of the shoulder blades to allow for the characteristic crouch when approaching and moving stock. The elbows are neither in nor out. Feet are compact, oval in shape; pads deep and strong, toes moderately arched and close together with strong nails of moderate length. Dewclaws may be removed.



It is important that there be sufficient width between the tops of the shoulder blades to allow for the characteristic crouch when approaching and moving stock. Additionally, in order to perform this crouch the Border Collie's shoulder blades should be long, well laid back, well-angulated and equal in length to the upper arm.

### HINDQUARTERS

Broad and muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to the low set tail. The thighs are long, broad, deep and muscular. Stifles are well turned with strong hocks that may be either parallel or very slightly turned in. Dewclaws should be removed. Feet, although slightly smaller, are the same as front.



Head is carried level or slightly below withers

Hocks may be parallel or slightly turned in and are best evaluated while the dog is moving.

The original standard described the hocks as well let down, while the revision does not address the length of hock because the hock length on the successful herding Border Collies would not be described as “well let down” nor would the hocks be described as long. Hocks should be evaluated when the Border Collie is moving away, not standing.

## COAT

Two varieties are permissible, both having close-fitting, dense, weather resistant double coats with the top coat either straight or wavy and coarser in texture than the undercoat which is soft, short and dense. The rough variety is medium in length without being excessive. Forelegs, haunches, chest and underside are feathered and the coat on face, ears, feet, fronts of legs is short and smooth. The smooth variety is short over entire body, is usually coarser in texture than the rough variety and may have slight feathering on forelegs, haunches, chest and ruff. Neither coat type is preferred over the other. Seasonal shedding is normal and should not be penalized. The Border Collie's purpose as an actively working herding dog shall be clearly evident in its presentation. Excess hair on the feet, hock and pastern areas may be neatened for the show ring. Whiskers are untrimmed. Dogs that are overly groomed (trimmed and/or sculpted) should be penalized according to the extent.



The standard describes the two varieties of coat patterns. It emphasizes that whiskers are untrimmed and that Border Collies should not be overly groomed and should be penalized according to the extent of over grooming. Excessively coated Border Collies are not to be given consideration over a moderately and functionally coated Border Collie. Smooth coats are to be judge equally to rough coats.

### COLOR

The Border Collie appears in all colors or combination of colors and/or markings. Solid color, bi-color, tri-color, merle and sable dogs are to be judged equally with no one color or pattern preferred over another. White markings may be clear white or ticked to any degree. Random white patches on the body and head are permissible but should not predominate. Color and markings are always secondary to physical evaluation and gait.



All the above colors and many other combinations are to be judged equally. Remember the Border Collie is a herding dog and its color is secondary to all the other traits that are required for it to successfully control and move stock.

Ticking is commonly seen



Ticking is commonly seen in Border Collies.

GAIT

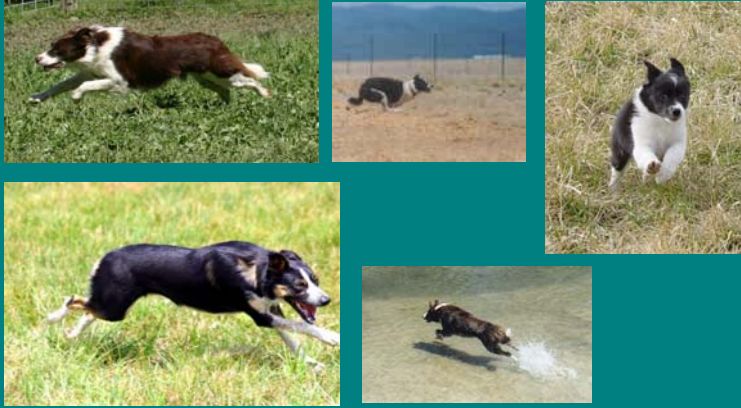
The Border Collie is an agile dog, able to suddenly change speed and direction while maintaining balance and grace. Endurance is its trademark.



Border Collies are agile and able to change speed and direction gracefully.



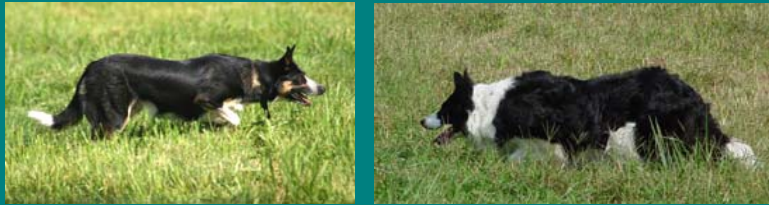
The Border Collie's most used working gaits are the gallop ...



They should be able to cover ground fluidly and efficiently – hallmarks of the endurance necessary to work stock in large, open field situations.

#### GAIT Cont'd:

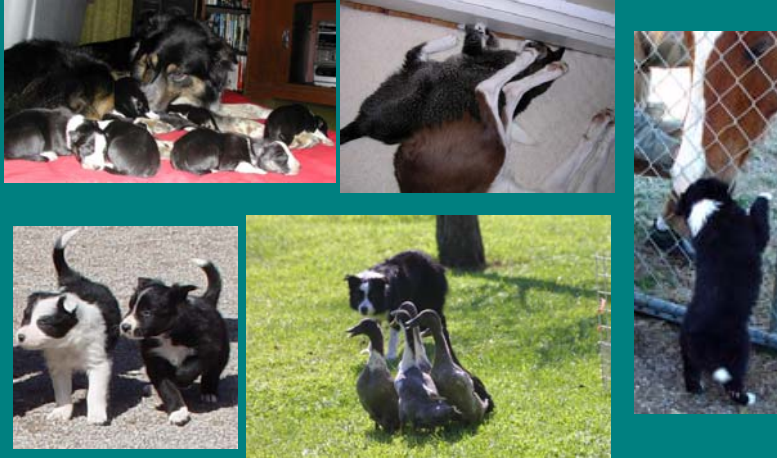
...and a moving crouch (stealth) which convert to a balanced and free trot, with minimum lift of the feet. The head is carried level with or slightly below the withers. When shown, Border Collies should move on a loose lead and at moderate speed, never raced around the ring with the head held high. When viewed from the side the trot is not long striding, yet covers the ground with minimum effort, exhibiting facility of movement rather than a hard driving action. Exaggerated reach and drive at the trot are not useful to the Border Collie. The topline is firm. Viewed from the front, action is forward and true without wasted motion. Viewed from the rear, hindquarters drive with thrust and flexibility with hocks turning neither in nor out, moving close together but never touching. The legs, both front and rear, tend to converge toward the center line as speed increases. Any deficiency that detracts from efficient movement is a fault.



Movement should suggest efficiency rather than hard driving action. Because stock react to the dog's movement, Border Collies must constantly shift from stealth/deliberate movement, to steady graceful turns to bursts speed – all done efficiently so as to allow the dog to work long hours with the least disturbance to the stock.

### TEMPERAMENT

The Border Collie is energetic, intelligent, keen, alert, and responsive. An intense worker of great tractability, it is affectionate towards friends but may be sensibly reserved towards strangers. When approached, the Border Collie should stand its ground. It should be alert and interested, never showing fear, dullness or resentment. Any tendencies toward viciousness, nervousness or shyness are very serious faults.



Border Collies are alert and intelligent. Their herding instinct is typically seen in a variety of responses to motion – chasing balls, feet, vehicles, etc. Attempts to control moving animals may get them in trouble.



Border collie are gentle, playful dogs who, when given a job, are happy family members.



**That'll Do!**

For more information on the breed or to arrange a breed presentation, contact the Border Collie Society of America, <http://www.bordercolliesociety.com>