

## SOUTH AFRICAN MASTIFF

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/08/2019

### KUSA CLASSIFICATION

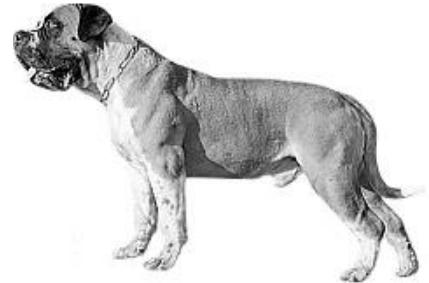
Developing breed.

### ORIGIN

South Africa

### UTILISATION

Although the South African Mastiff ® is a family companion, it should always be ready and willing to protect its family.



### BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In the harsh, and often hostile country of South Africa, farm dogs (dogs of uncertain heritage – not pure-bred or from any breed society) were kept as family dogs and were mostly developed for guarding the homestead. They were medium- to large-sized dogs with a Mastiff-like appearance. The first collective group of people to establish a Breed Association for these dogs formulated a breed standard in 1983, and SABBS (South African Boerboel Breeders Association) was born. Many splinter associations and societies later, the breed standard and interpretation warped to such an extent that many might say it no longer served the purpose it was originally bred for. In order to achieve the objective of creating a working dog capable of protecting its family, the breed standard of the South African Mastiff ® was determined, which relates to the physical constitution as well as the traits and characteristics of this breed.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

A large, impressive, and powerful dog. Strong and muscular. The dog must look athletic and strong.

### IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Depth of chest should be equal to the height at withers.
- Length of muzzle should be equal or a bit shorter than the length of head.
- Length of body, measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock, should be equal to the height at withers.

### BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

The dog must be calm and well-balanced in terms of character; confident and self-assured; natural and good-natured; as well as attentive and willing to please. The dog must possess instinctive behaviour, resilience, and self-assurance in order to be suitable as a companion, guard, and protection dog. Once introduced to visitors at home in its own territory, the dogs must behave calmly and not present any threat to the visitors. The dog must behave calmly and not present any threat to the judge or to any person or dog in public areas.

### HEAD

#### Cranial Region:

**Skull:** Blocky. Broad and flat between the ears with the width, depth, and length being equal.

#### Facial Region:

**Nose:** Black. Broad, with well-opened nostrils when viewed from front, flat (not pointed or turned up) in profile.

**Muzzle:** The muzzle is short, broad, and deep and well attached to the head, keeping nearly parallel in width to end of nose, thus forming a right angle with upper line of face; of great depth from point of nose to underjaw. The muzzle should present square. The lower jaw is broad and square, showing no weakness.

**Lips:** Fleshy and loose, covering the lower lips and jaw, but should not hang lower than the lower jaw line. Strong pigmentation is preferred.

**Jaws and teeth:** Canine teeth healthy, powerful, and wide apart. A complete set (42 teeth according to the dental formula). Scissor bite or reversed scissor bite, but never so much as to become visible when mouth is closed. An overshot bite is a serious fault.

**Cheeks:** Muscles of temples and cheeks (temporal and masseter) well developed.

#### **Eyes:**

Medium size, almond-shaped, horizontally set, and wide apart, but not protruding. Colour light yellow to dark brown. Operative corrections are forbidden.

#### **Ears:**

V -shaped, moderate thickness, and medium-sized ears. They are set high against the skull and drop sideways, close to the cheeks when in repose. When alert, the ears should form a straight line with the top of the skull.

#### **NECK**

Slightly arched, very muscular. A slight dewlap is acceptable. The skin is loose but smooth between the forelegs.

#### **BODY**

**Topline:** Level and without interruption. A slightly higher hindquarter is acceptable when taking the musculature of the glutes [ed: *The gluteal muscles - a group of muscles that make up the buttock area*] into consideration.

**Withers:** The withers are well laid back with good muscle development and are closely attached to the body.

**Back:** The back is wide, firm, strong, long, and well-muscled. Ratio of length between back and loin is two-thirds back and one-third loin.

**Loin:** The loin is broad, strongly developed, and well-muscled.

**Croup:** The croup should not droop or crouch and be the same height as the withers.

**Chest:** Measured from the withers to the brisket should be the same as from the elbow to the ground. Brisket extends below the elbow. The circumference of the ribcage would be in relation to 3 : 2 to the height of the dog measured at the withers. Well-sprung ribcage.

#### **TAIL**

The tail is set high and extends at least to the hock, but not beyond the middle of the hind pastern. Slightly longer hair on the tail is acceptable but not desired. The tail is carried hanging downward in a gentle curve, whereby in a state of excitement and in motion, it is raised and carried higher with the end pointing upwards, but not over back. Operative corrections are forbidden.

#### **LIMBS**

##### **Forequarters:**

**General appearance:** Straight when seen from all sides, and parallel when seen from the front, with neither the elbows nor the feet turning in- or outwards. The front legs are set wide apart to allow maximum chest development. The pastern should be short, thick, and slightly angled to the front when viewed from the front and side, to allow for the dog to move purposefully and fluently.

**Shoulder:** The shoulders are well laid back, with good muscle development, and are closely attached to the body.

**Elbow:** Elbows may not be turned out or pushed in. The forearm s are straight when seen from all sides and are muscled.

**Forearm:** Legs straight, strong, and set wide apart, bones being large

**Metacarpus (pastern):** Paws should point straight forward with a slight turn in pastern. The pastern should be short, thick, and slightly angled to the front when viewed from the front and side to allow for purposeful and fluent movement.

##### **Hindquarters:**

**General appearance:** The hindquarters should be powerful and well angulated to enhance effective propulsion. Strength in hindquarters is of paramount importance; cow hocks in mature adults is unacceptable. The legs are strong and well-muscled.

**Upper thigh:** The upper and second thigh is well developed with prominent musculature.

**Lower thigh:** Well-developed.

**Hock joint:** Hocks bent, wide apart, and quite squarely set when standing or walking. The hocks are strongly developed and firm, thick, and short; and bend slightly forward to support the weight of the dog.

**Metatarsus (rear pastern):** The hind pastern stands vertically under the hock.

#### **FEET**

Rounded, well-closed, and arched; the soles are hard but not brittle. The nails are strong, short, and of dark colour.

## GAIT / MOVEMENT

The movement should be powerful with easy extension and purposeful. Driven from the rear, fluent, sound, with ground-covering strides. Level topline maintained while on the move, with only slight sideways movement. The gait should be long with a high knee action. Any tendency towards over-angulation of the hindquarters reduces the stability and the stamina, and thereby the working ability of the dog.

## SKIN

The skin is thick and loosely fitting. Dark pigmentation is preferred. White pigmentation is acceptable, but pink is undesirable.

## COAT

Hair is short and close-lying. Long hair is not acceptable.

## COLOUR

- red brindle, fawn brindle, piebald brindle
- red, brown, fawn
- Irish-spotted
- piebald and extreme piebald.

\* White is acceptable but subject to a healthy skin, good pigmentation, black nose and eye rims.

\* The colour black is not allowed.

\* Strong masks, where the black reaches the eyes and beyond, is preferred.

\* Masks are classified as strong, medium, slight, or none.

\* Where no mask is present, the nose must be black.

## SIZE

### Ideal height at withers:

**Males:** 70cm – 75cm (approx. 27½" - 29½").

**Females:** 70kg – 75kg

### Ideal weight:

**Males:** 65cm – 71cm (approx. 25½" - 28").

**Females:** 65kg – 71kg

**N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

## FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

### Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Atypical specimen.
- Faults that prohibit a dog from winning any award at dog shows; wrong type of bite; unacceptable colour; over- or undersized, etc.

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This breed is not yet recognised by the FCI  
Developing Breed: SOUTH AFRICAN MASTIFF