

KERRY BLUE TERRIER

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 01/07/2025

ORIGIN

Ireland.

UTILISATION

Used in the hard job of tackling otters in deep waters, to engage badger underground, and to hunt vermin. A good watchdog and loyal companion.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 3]

Like the other Irish Terrier breeds, it is assumed that the Kerry Blue has been in the country for centuries, but, once again, because of its humble origins as a rat catcher and all-round farm dog, there are few, if any references to the breed before the 20th century. The first probable literary references to the Kerry Blue date from 1847, in which the author describes a bluish slate-coloured dog, marked with darker blotches and patches, and

often with the tan about the legs and muzzle. This blackish-blue Irish Terrier was supposed to be prevalent in Kerry but it has been developed in other counties as well. The blue didn't make its first appearance on the show benches until 1913, and the Dublin Blue Terrier Club was formed in 1920. The Kerry Blue became quickly so popular as a sort of mascot for Irish patriots, that there were actually four clubs promoting its interests for a short time, and between 1922 and 1924 these clubs sponsored no fewer than six shows and six field trials. By 1928, this impressive, balanced Terrier, with its beautiful soft blue coat, became popular worldwide, and its reputation as an excellent working and companion dog agreed with the breed assessment as "well-nigh perfect".



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Upstanding, well-knit and proportioned, well-developed, muscular body.

CHARACTERISTICS

Compact, powerful Terrier, showing gracefulness and an attitude of alert determination, with definite Terrier style and character throughout.

TEMPERAMENT

Disciplined gameness.

HEAD

Well-balanced, long, proportionally lean, with slight stop, and flat over the skull. Foreface and jaw very strong, deep, and punishing; nose black; nostrils of due proportion.

Eyes:

Dark as possible. Small to medium, with keen Terrier expression.

Ears:

Small to medium and V-shaped; carried forward but not too high.

Mouth:

Gums and roof of mouth dark with perfect, regular, scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK

Strong and reachy, running into sloping shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders flat as possible with elbows carried close to body while standing or moving. Legs straight, bone powerful. Front straight, neither too wide nor too narrow.

BODY

Short-coupled with good depth of brisket and well-sprung ribs. Deep chest. Topline level.

HINDQUARTERS

Large and well-developed, stifle bent, and hocks close to ground, giving perfect freedom of hind action.

FEET

Round and small. Nails black.

TAIL

Previously customarily docked.

Docked: Set-on high and carried erect.

Undocked: Set-on high of moderate length to give an overall balanced appearance. Thick at the base and evenly tapering to tip, straight as possible and carried jauntily. An excessive gay or curled tail undesirable.

[*refer note below]

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free and powerful. Forelegs and hind legs moving straight and parallel, stifles turning neither in nor out.

COAT

Soft and silky, plentiful, and wavy.

COLOUR

- Any shade of blue, with or without black points.

* Tan permissible in puppies, also a dark colour up to the age of 18 months.

* A small white patch on chest may occur.

* Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 46cm – 48cm (approx. 18" – 19").

Females: Slightly less.

The most desirable weight for a fully developed male is: 15 – 17kg

Females should weigh proportionately less, but 16kg is the most desirable weight to aim for.

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.*

***Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked or natural. Under no circumstances are Judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked or natural tails, and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.**

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.

©Copyright Kennel Club, London 09/2007 – Reprinted with permission

The publisher of this edition is the Kennel Union of Southern Africa. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without permission in writing from the publisher.



When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 3: KERRY BLUE TERRIER

FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.

Section 1 – Large- and medium-sized Terriers .

Without working trial.