

NEWFOUNDLAND

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 01/07/2026

ORIGIN

Canada. (Patronage: FCI)

UTILISATION

Sledge dog for heavy loads, water dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The breed originated on the island of Newfoundland from indigenous dogs and the big black bear dog introduced by the Vikings after the year 1100. With the advent of European fishermen, a variety of new breeds helped to shape and reinvigorate the breed, but the essential characteristics remained. When the colonisation of the island began in 1610, the Newfoundland Dog was already largely in possession of his proper morphology and natural behaviour. These features allowed him to withstand the rigours of the extreme climate and sea's adversity, while pulling heavy loads on land or serving as a water and lifeguard dog.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Newfoundland is massive, with powerful body, well muscled and well coordinated in his movements.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The length of the body from the point of shoulders to the point of buttock is greater than the height at the withers. The body is compact. The body of the bitch may be slightly longer and is less massive than that of the dog.
- The distance from the withers to the underside of the chest is slightly greater than the distance from the underside of the chest to the ground.

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT

The Newfoundland's expression reflects benevolence and softness. Dignified, joyful and creative, he is known for his sterling gentleness and serenity.

HEAD AND SKULL

Massive. The head of the bitch follows the same general conformation as the male's one, but is less massive.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Broad, with slightly arched crown and strongly developed occipital bone.

Stop: Evident, but never abrupt.

Facial Region:

Nose: Large, well pigmented, nostrils well developed. Colour: Black on black and white and black dogs, brown on brown dogs.

Muzzle: Definitely square, deep and moderately short, covered with short, fine hair and free from wrinkles. The corners of the mouth are evident, but not excessively pronounced.

Flaws: Soft.

Jaws/teeth: Scissor or level bite.

Eyes:

Relatively small, moderately deep set; they are wide apart and show no haw. Colour: Dark brown in black and white and black dogs, lighter shades permitted in brown dogs

Ears:

Relatively small, triangular with rounded tips, well set back on the side of the head and close lying. When the ear of the adult dog is brought forward, it reaches to the inner corner of the eye on the same side.

NECK

Strong, muscular, well set in the shoulders, long enough to permit dignified head carriage. The neck should not show excessive dewlap.

BODY

Bone structure is massive throughout. Viewed from the side, the body is deep and vigorous.

Top line: Level and firm from the withers to the croup.

Back: Broad.

Loin: Strong and well-muscled.

Croup: Broad, sloping at an angle of about 30°.

Chest: Broad, full and deep, with good spread of ribs.

Abdomen and underline: Almost level and never tucked up.

TAIL

The tail acts as a rudder when the Newfoundland is swimming; therefore, it is strong and broad at the base. When the dog is standing, the tail hangs down with, possibly, a little curve at the tip, reaching to or slightly below the hocks. When the dog is in motion or excited, the tail is carried straight out with slight upward curve, but never curled over the back nor curved inward between the legs.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: The forelegs are straight and parallel also when the dog is walking or slowly trotting.

Shoulders: Very well muscled and well laid back.

Elbows: Close to the chest.

Pasterns: Slightly sloping.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Because driving power for pulling loads, swimming, or covering ground efficiently is largely dependent upon the hindquarters, the rear structure of the Newfoundland is of prime importance. The pelvis has to be strong, broad and long.

Upper thighs: Wide and muscular.

Stifle: Well bent, but not so as to give a crouching appearance.

Lower thighs: Strong and fairly long.

Hocks: Relatively short, well let down and well apart, parallel to each other; they turn neither in nor out.

FEET

Forefeet: Large and proportionate to the body, well rounded and tight, with firm and compact toes. Webbing of toes is present.

Hindfeet: Firm and tight. Dewclaws, if present, should have been removed.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

The Newfoundland moves with good reach of the forelegs and strong drive of the hindquarters, giving the impression of effortless power. A slight roll of the back is natural. As the speed increases, the dog tends to single track with the topline remaining level.

COAT

Hair:

The Newfoundland has a water resistant double coat. The outer coat is moderately long and straight with no curl. A slight wave is permissible. The undercoat is soft and dense, denser in winter than in summer, but always found to some extent on the croup and chest. The hair on the head, muzzle and ears is short and fine. The front and rear legs are feathered. The tail is completely covered with long, dense hair, but does not form a flag. Trimming and scissoring are not encouraged.

Colour:

Black, white and black and brown.

- **Black:** The traditional colour is black. The colour has to be even as much as possible, but a slight tinge of sunburn is permissible. White markings on chest, toes and/or tip of tail are permissible.
- **White and Black:** This variety is of historical significance for the breed. The preferred pattern of markings is black head with, preferably, a white blaze extending onto the muzzle, black saddle with even markings and black croup and upper tail. The remaining parts are to be white and can show a minimum of ticking.
- **Brown:** The brown colour goes from chocolate to bronze. White markings on chest, toes and/or tip of tail are permissible. White and black dogs and brown dogs are to be shown in the same class as blacks.

SIZE

Average height at withers:

Adult males: 71cm (approx. 28").

Adult females: 66cm (approx. 26").

Average Weight:

Males: approx. 68 kg.

Females: approx. 54 kg.

Large size is desirable, but is not to be favoured over symmetry, general soundness, power of the structure and correct gait.

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.

- General appearance: Legginess, lack of substance.
- General bone structure: Sluggish appearance, fine bone.
- Character: Aggressiveness, shyness.
- Head: Narrow.
- Muzzle: Snipey or long.
- Flews: Pronounced.
- Eyes: Round, protruding, yellow eyes, showing pronounced haw.
- Back: Roached, slack or swayed back.
- Tail: Short, long, kink tail, curled tip.
- Forequarters: Down in pastern, splayed toes, toeing in or out, lack of webbing between toes.
- Hindquarters: Straight stifles, cowhocks, barrel legs, pigeon toes.
- Gait/Movement: Mincing, shuffling, crabbing, too close moving, weaving, crossing over in front, toeing-out or distinctly toeing-in in front, hackney action, pacing.
- Hair: Completely open coat. Lack of undercoat.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Overshot or undershot bite, wry mouth.
- Short and flat coat.
- Markings of any other colour than white on a black or brown dog.
- Any other colour than black or white and black or brown.

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FCI Standard No. 50: NEWFOUNDLAND

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schanuzer, Molossoid, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs.

Section Section 2.2.2. Molossian types: Mountain type
Without working trial.