

GREAT SWISS MOUNTAIN DOG

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 01/02/2021

ORIGIN

Switzerland.

UTILISATION

Originally watch- and draught dog. Nowadays also companion, guard- and family dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In 1908, at Langenthal, on the occasion of the Jubilee Show to mark 25 years of existence of the "Schweizerische Kynologische Gesellschaft" (Swiss Kennel Club) SKG, two short-haired Bernese Mountain Dogs were presented to the great promoter of the Swiss Mountain Dogs, Prof. Albert Heim. He recognised them to be representatives of the old, vanishing, large Mountain Dog or butcher's dog, whose ancestors had, in the past, been widely spread across Europe, bred as guard-, draught- or droving-cattle dogs. In 1909 they were recognised by the SKG as a separate breed, being registered in volume 12 of the Swiss Stud Book. In 1912, the club for "Grosse Schweizer Sennenhunde" was founded in order to promote this breed and keep it pure-bred. The first standard was published by the FCI not before February 5, 1939. Today, these dogs are also bred in other European countries and they are especially appreciated as family dogs, due to their calm, reliable temperament.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

A tri-colour, sturdy, heavy-boned and well-muscled dog. In spite of his size and weight, he presents endurance and agility. The difference between the sexes is distinctly obvious.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Body length (measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock) to height at withers is 10 : 9.
- Depth of chest to height at withers is 1 : 2.
- Length of skull to length of muzzle is 1 : 1.
- Width of skull to width of muzzle is 2 : 1.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Self-confident, alert, watchful, and fearless in everyday situations. Good-natured and devoted towards people familiar to him. Self-assured with strangers. Medium temperament.

HEAD

Strong, corresponding to the body, but not heavy. Dogs stronger in head than bitches.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Flat and broad. The frontal furrow beginning at the stop gradually runs out towards the top.

Stop: Hardly pronounced.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black.

Muzzle: Strong, longer than its depth. Must not be pointed, seen either from above or in profile. Nasal bridge straight, without furrow.

Lips: Barely developed, well-fitting. Black pigmentation. Not pendulous.

Jaws and teeth: Strong jaws; complete, strong, and regular scissor bite. The absence of two teeth (premolar 1 and/or premolar 2) is tolerated. Absence of the molars 3 (M3) is not taken into account.

Eyes:

Almond-shaped, of medium size, neither deep-set nor protruding. Hazel to chestnut brown, with alert, friendly expression. Lids close-fitting. Eye-rims dark.

Ears:

Of medium size, triangular, and set on fairly high. In repose, hanging flat and close to the cheeks, but raised forward when attentive. Well-covered with hair, both inside and outside.

NECK

Strong, muscular, rather thick-set. Without dewlap.

BODY

Slightly longer than its height at the withers.

Back: Moderately long, strong, and straight.

Loin: Broad and well-muscled.

Croup: Long and broad. Gently sloping. Never higher than the withers or abruptly slanting.

Chest: Strong, broad, reaching to the elbows. Seen in cross-section, the ribcage is roundish oval-shaped, neither flat nor barrel-shaped. Forechest well-developed.

Underline and belly: Belly and flanks barely tucked-up.

TAIL

Set-on harmoniously following the croup, fairly heavy, and reaching to the hocks. Pendulous in repose; when alert and in movement, carried higher and slightly curved upwards, but never curled or tilted over the back.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Straight and parallel when seen from the front, set rather broad.

Shoulder: Shoulder blade long, strong, well laid back, close-fitting to the body, and well-muscled, forming an angle with the upper arm (not too obtuse).

Forearm: Heavy-boned and straight.

Metacarpus (pastern): Firm, seen from the front, in straight line with the forearm; seen from the side, almost vertical.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Straight and not too close, when seen from the back.

Upper thigh: Fairly long, broad, strong, and well-muscled.

Stifle (knee): Forming a distinctly obtuse angle.

Lower thigh: Fairly long.

Hock joint: Strong and well-angled.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Metatarsus and feet turning neither in nor out. Dewclaws must be removed except in countries where their removal is forbidden by law.

FEET

Strong, pointing straight ahead, with well-knit, well-arched toes and strong nails.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

In all gaits, balanced movement, with good reach. Free stride, reaching well out in front with good drive from the hindquarters. At the trot, coming and going, legs moving forward in a straight line.

COAT

Double coat consisting of thick, outercoat of medium length, and dense undercoat. The latter as dark grey or black as possible. Short outer coat permissible if there is undercoat.

COLOUR

- Typically tricolour. Main colour black with symmetrical, reddish-brown (tan) markings and clean white markings.
 - The reddish-brown colour is situated between the black and the white markings on the cheeks, above the eyes, on the inside of the ears, on both sides of the forechest, on all four legs, and underneath the tail.
 - The white markings are on the head (blaze and muzzle), running down, unbroken, from the throat to the chest, also on the feet, and the tip of the tail.
 - Between the blaze and the reddish-brown markings above the eyes, a band of black should remain.
 - A white patch on the neck or a white collar around the neck is tolerated.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 65cm – 72cm (approx. 25½" – 28½").

Females: 60cm – 68cm (approx. 23½" – 26½").

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.

- Unreliable behaviour.
- Absence of any teeth other than 2 PM1 and /or PM2 (Premolar 1 or 2). The M3 are not taken into account.
- Level bite.
- Light eyes. Lids not close fitting.
- Coat: Visible yellow-brownish or light grey undercoat. Colour and markings not clear.
- Mismarking:
 - Absence of white markings on the head; blaze too wide.
 - White marking on muzzle reaching distinctly beyond the corners of the mouth.
 - White pasterns or hocks ("boots") reaching beyond the pastern joints or hock joints.
 - Noticeably asymmetrical markings.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Over- or undershot mouth, wry mouth.
- Entropion, ectropion.
- One or two blue eyes (Wall eye).
- Short coat without undercoat.
- Long coat.
- Other than tri-colour coat.
- Main colour other than black.

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FCI Standard No 58: GROSSER SCHWEIZER SENNENHUND (GREAT SWISS MOUNTAIN DOG)

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid type dogs, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs

Section 3. Swiss Mountain and Cattle Dogs
Without Working Trial