

Extended Breed Standard – Collie (Rough & Smooth)



Correct Type – Collie (Rough) Dog and Bitch

Brief History of the Collie.

The Collie is a sheepdog, developed as a herdsman's tool in the pastoral areas of the British Isles. The history of the breed is somewhat clouded, but the Collie was probably developed from different strains of working dogs, incorporating herding ability and temperament, to produce a reliable sheepdog.

'Sheepdogs' were first exhibited at Birmingham in December 1860. Later, the category included Rough Coated, Smooth Coated, Short Tailed (Old English) Sheepdogs. Collies (Rough) and Collies (Smooth) became permanently known by these names in the Stud Book published in 1895.

With regard to the written standard, in many cases the reader becomes so involved with details that the most important point – the dog as a whole – is overlooked. Whilst features of the dog require individual examination/assessment, it must be remembered that the resulting combination of all features is of utmost importance in the evaluation process.

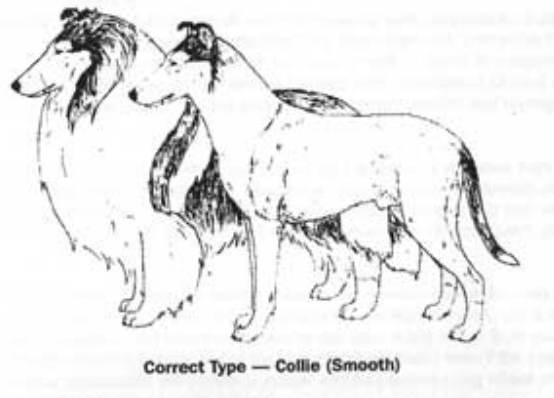
The Collie (Smooth).

The Smooth Collie is a true working dog which was purposely bred with a short, flat, harsh textured coat.

When sheep and cattle raising began to flourish in England and Scotland, varieties of Collies were developed through selection and breeding for definite desired characteristics. The short coated Collie was especially adapted for cattle driving in Northumberland country, while his long coated counterpart was better equipped to withstand the cold climate of Northern Scotland.

The Smooth Collie is a gentle dog as well as a gay and willing companion. It is a breed of the utmost intelligence with a high sense of responsibility. A medium size dog, sleek of outline, graceful in action, ideal in disposition and with a short coat which requires a minimum of grooming. With a strong property sense and family loyalty, it is an excellent watchdog.

In recent years, the Smooth Collie has been used for guiding the blind as well as a companion animal for the disabled. These jobs demand a dog with a good sense of responsibility, a willingness to please and great intelligence.



GENERAL APPEARANCE:

Collie (Rough)

“The Collie should instantly appeal as a dog of great beauty, standing with impassive dignity, with no part out of proportion to the whole”

When assessing a Collie (Rough), expect to see a dog of great beauty, with dignity and balance and a sweet, alert expression depicting gentle confidence. Balance is the key to assessing a Collie. Not only is it vital in relation to the head properties and the expression, but it is also imperative that a dog bred for shepherding work is balanced anatomically.

Collie (Smooth)

“The Collie should instantly appeal as gifted with intelligence, alertness and activity. He should stand with dignity, and his movements, governed by perfect anatomical formation, with no part out of proportion, should be smooth and graceful. He should give the appearance of a dog capable of working”

The ‘Rough’ standard mentions ‘great beauty’, whilst the ‘Smooth’ standard says ‘gifted with intelligence, alertness and activity’. It also specifically mentions ‘his movements governed by perfect anatomical formation .. should be smooth and graceful .. capable of working’.

The general appearance of the two varieties should be such that you can see they are both Collies, however, the Rough appeals because of his beauty – the Smooth – a dog of graceful outline, fit, healthy and ready to do a day’s hard work.

CHARACTERISTICS

“To enable the Collie to fulfil a natural bent for sheepdog work, its physical structure should be on the lines of strength and activity, free from cloddiness, and without any trace of coarseness. Expression, one of the most important points in considering relative values, is obtained by the perfect balance and combination of skull and foreface, size, shape, colour and placement of eye, correct position and carriage of ears”

The Collie was originally used for herding sheep in the Scottish highlands – hills and more hills – up and down all day. Only a dog with the correct structure, and a well developed musculature will have the stamina for this work. A dog with balanced front and hindquarter assembly, even if the angulation is slightly inadequate, will physically outlast and outperform a dog with greater angulation, if the better angulated animal is not well balanced.

TEMPERAMENT

Collie (Rough)

Not Specified.

In the past, the standard has included a description of the temperament:-

“Friendly disposition with no trace of nervousness or aggressiveness”

Collie (Smooth)’

“Temperament should be gay and friendly – never nervous nor aggressive”

It is not clear why this wording appears in the Smooth standard, but not in the Rough Standard.

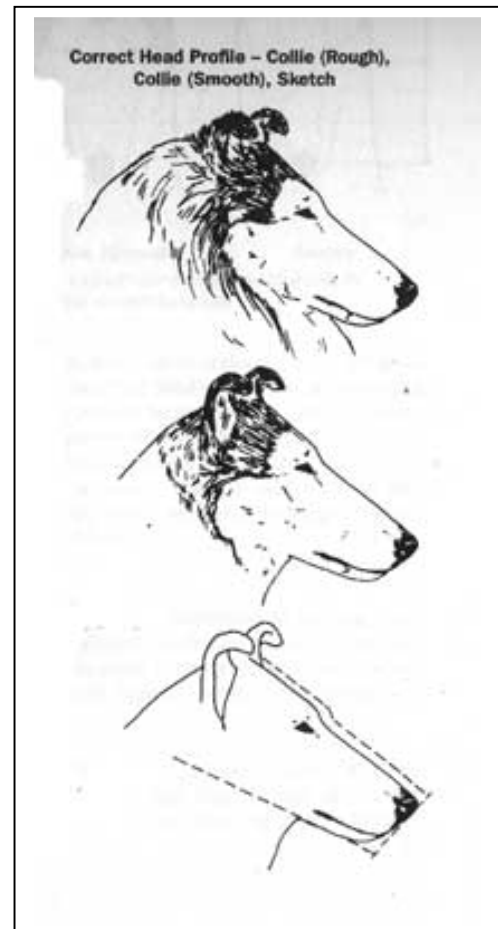
HEAD AND SKULL

“The head properties are of great importance and must be considered in proportion to the size of the dog. When viewed from the front or the side, the head bears a general resemblance to a well-blunted, clean wedge, being smooth in outline. The skull should be flat. The sides should taper gradually and smoothly from the ears to the end of the black nose, without prominent cheekbones or pinched muzzle. Viewed in profile, the top of the skull and the top of the muzzle lie in two parallel straight planes of equal length, divided by a slight, but perceptible ‘stop’ or break. A mid point between the inside corners of the eyes (which is the centre of a correctly placed stop) is the centre of balance in length of head. The end of the smooth, well rounded muzzle is blunt, but not square. The underjaw is strong, clean cut and the depth of skull from the brow to the underpart of the jaw must never be excessive (deep through).

Whatever the colour of the dog, the nose must be black”

Again, the standard calls for balance.

It is immediately apparent from the size, shape and placement of the eye, if the Collie head is the correct clean, well blunted wedge called for in the standard. Eyes that are large and round and frontally placed (instead of medium sized, almond shaped with a somewhat oblique placement) will indicate that the head is too broad or coarse. (referred to as a ‘common’ head). This head may also flare instead of tapering gradually to the muzzle.

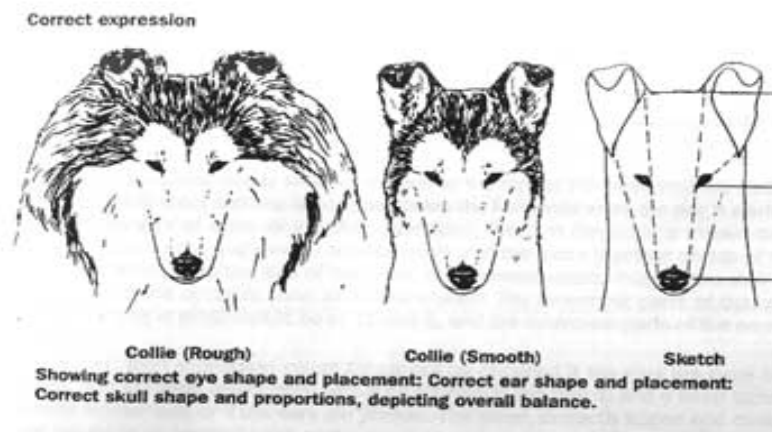


To assess the head qualities of the Collie accurately, it is necessary to do so from the side of the head – to see the planes and stop in profile, and the underjaw and depth of skull – and also from slightly behind and above the dog’s head . It is most important to check from both angles – frontal assessment alone is not adequate.

One of the most important aspects of the head is the ‘stop’. A correctly placed ‘stop’ should have its centre midway between the inside corners of the eyes. The two parallel planes of the muzzle and the skull emanate from that central point, and are equidistant from the tip of the nose to the ‘stop’, and the ‘stop’ to the occiput.

A coarse, deep head will have too much ‘stop’ (pronounced) and the expression will lack the desired alertness. A head which is too long, fine and pinched in muzzle will have too little ‘stop’. This head can often ‘run off’ at the nose, and lack underjaw. This results in a somewhat ‘down-faced’, mean expression which is also totally undesirable.

The ‘stop’ is described as ‘slight but perceptible’ Although slight, it must be noticeable – with the eye and the hand.



The muzzle should be well-rounded and blunt, well filled in under the eyes with a good underjaw, but it must not be square. The sides of the head must taper smoothly and cleanly, free from cheekiness. The occipital bone can be felt but should not be apparent, and the skull from the brow to the underjaw near the throat must not be too deep. The nose is always black.

To achieve the two parallel planes, the topline of the muzzle should be straight, with no bumps or waves, and the skull must be flat. Regardless of the length or width of the wedge (which will vary with the gender and build of the dog) the muzzle must always be blunt.

EYES

“These are a very important feature and give a sweet expression to the dog. They should be of medium size, set somewhat obliquely, of almond shape and of dark brown colour, except in the case of blue merles when the eyes are frequently (one or both, or part of one or both) blue or blue flecked. Expression full of intelligence, with a quick alert look when listening.

As stated, the eyes are medium sized, almond shaped, obliquely set (because of the elongated wedge shaped head) and except for blue merles, dark brown in colour. Light coloured eyes are undesirable and detract from the expression.

The sweetness of expression sought in Collies is determined largely by the correct size, colour, shape and placement of the eye. Eyes that are small and 'piggy', round, large or full, or set too deep in the skull cannot produce the sweet dreamy expression. Blue merles may have blue or dark brown eyes (one or both, or part of one or both) or blue flecked. Sweetness of expression can still be found in a blue merle with blue eyes.

EARS

Collie (Rough)

"These should be small and not too close together on top of the skull, nor too much to the side of the head. When in repose, they should be carried thrown back, but when on the alert, brought forward and carried semi erect, that is with approximately two thirds of the ear standing erect, the top third tipping forward naturally, below the horizontal"

The ears are comparatively small in relation to the size of the head, and are carried with two thirds erect and one third tipping below the horizontal when the dog is alerted. When moving, at ease, or in windy conditions, they are carried in a thrown back position against the dog's ruff. The standard's 'not too close together on top of the skull nor too much to the side of the head' is somewhat vague. Imagine the skull as a clock with the occipital bone at 12 o'clock. The innermost parts of the ears (when the dog is alert) should be at 11 and 1, and the outermost parts of the ears at 10 and 2.

The sweet, alert expression called for cannot be obtained if the ears are large, heavy and wide set (associated with a broad skull, and a head lacking overall refinement), or if the ears are pricked. The small correctly tipped and carried ear results in an elegant finish to the reach of neck and contributes to the sweeping outline of the whole dog.

Collie (Smooth)

"These should be relatively large, wider at the base, and placed not too close together nor too much on the side of the head"

There is an important difference in the wording of this section. 'Rough' ears should be small and not too close together. 'Smooth' ears should be moderately large, wider at the base.

This wording may have been added to overcome the obvious optical illusion which is created when the hair surrounding the ear is removed. However, many of the long standing Smooth breeders in England insist that the Smooths do carry a larger and more tapered ear.

MOUTH

"The teeth should be of good size, with the lower incisors fitting closely behind the upper incisors; a very slight space not to be regarded as a serious fault"

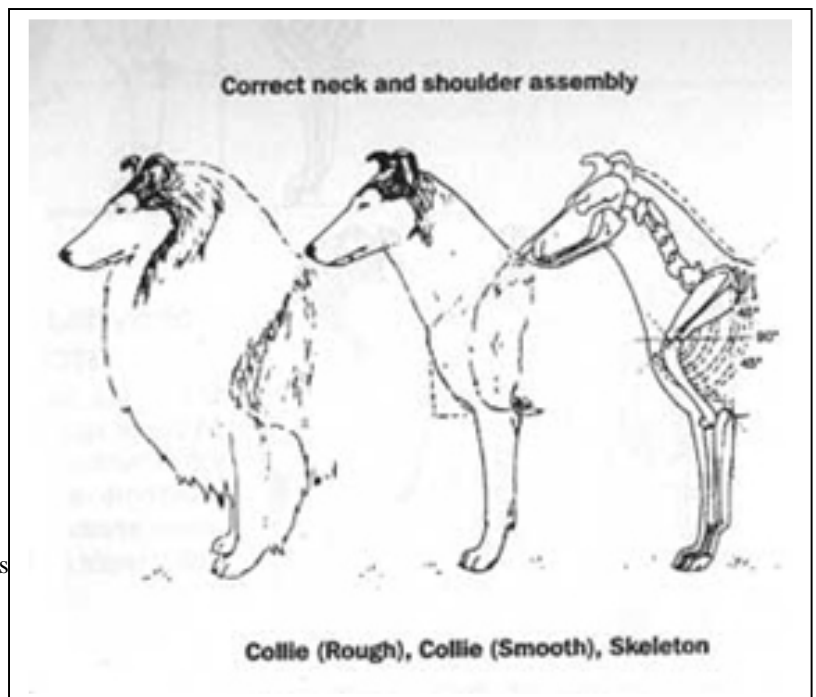
The Collie has a scissor bite, an adult set of 42 teeth, and an underjaw sufficiently strong and wide enough to accommodate the incisors set square to the jaw. Incomplete dentition can accompany weak moulding in the muzzle and a weakened underjaw. It is appropriate to say that in elongated wedge shaped heads, the mandible can be slower to develop and a slight space between the upper and lower incisors in young stock may occur.

NECK

“The neck should be muscular, powerful, of fair length, and well arched”

This description reiterates the concept of strength, activity, moderation and balance perpetuated throughout the breed standard. This states fairly clearly that ‘swan necks’ and ‘ewe necks’ and the front assemblies which accompany them are not correct. An active working dog like a Collie requires a strong muscular neck of medium length which is arched when at attention. Anything to the contrary would be a hindrance when carrying out work, as the neck is used in conjunction with sight, scent and hearing, and as a balance in movement.

A good reach of neck, slightly arched, gives the Collie its proud dignity and enables the mane to stand out and make a frame for the head.



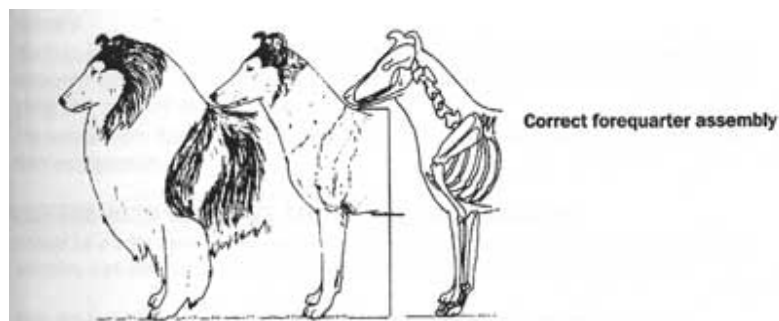
FOREQUARTERS

Collie (Rough)

“The shoulders should be sloped and well angulated. The forelegs should be straight and muscular, neither in nor out at elbow, with a moderate amount of bone”

The shoulders are well laid back and well angulated to the upperarm. Forelegs should be straight, muscular, moderately boned, neither in nor out at elbow. Pasterns must be flexible to act as shock absorbers and provide mobility. Long, weak pasterns result in displacement of kinetic energy.

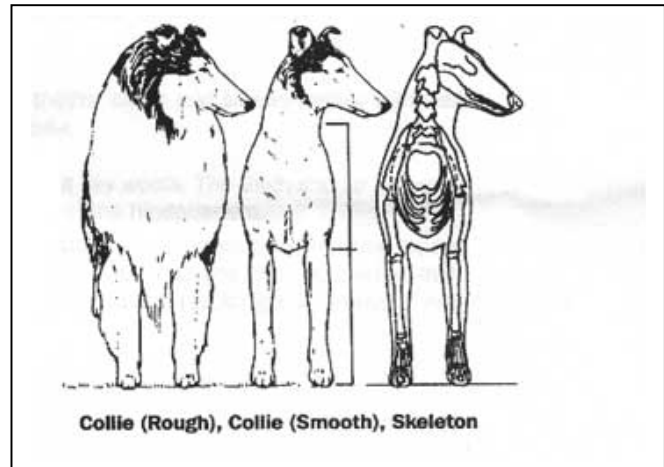
Forelegs which are placed too close together immediately show that the chest is too narrow. Likewise, an overabundance of chest, accompanied by loose elbows indicate that the ribcage is round (barrel ribbed) rather than oval.



Collie (Smooth)

“The shoulders should be sloped and well angulated. The forelegs should be straight and muscular, neither in nor out at elbows, with a moderate amount of bone. The forearm somewhat fleshy with pasterns showing flexibility without weakness”

This addition to the Smooth standard shows the emphasis throughout the Smooth standard on the dog’s strength and ability to work. Perhaps this is why the forearm is mentioned in more detail in the Smooth standard, as it is visible without the feathering of the Rough.



BODY

Collie (Rough)

“The body should be a trifle long compared to the height, back firm, with a slight rise over the loins, ribs well sprung, chest deep and fairly broad behind the shoulders”

The Collie is generally accepted as a 10:9 dog – slightly more when measured from the point of shoulder to the point of buttocks than from the withers to the ground.

Chest is deep, to the elbow, and of moderate width, providing good forechest, and broadening out to the maximum width behind the shoulders. The ribcage is oval shaped with the ribs well sprung back. A flat rib cage (slab sided) gives a racy, rangy appearance not consistent with the strength and endurance qualities called for in the standard.

The back is firm, free from dipping behind the shoulders, swaying or roaching, and of moderate length. The muscular loin is of moderate length and is slightly arched, giving way to a well sloped croup.

The topline from the crest of the neck to the tip of the tail is a flowing contour – free from exaggeration.

Collie (Smooth)

“Should be a trifle long compared to height, back level and firm with a slight rise over the loins, ribs well sprung, chest deep and fairly broad behind the shoulders”

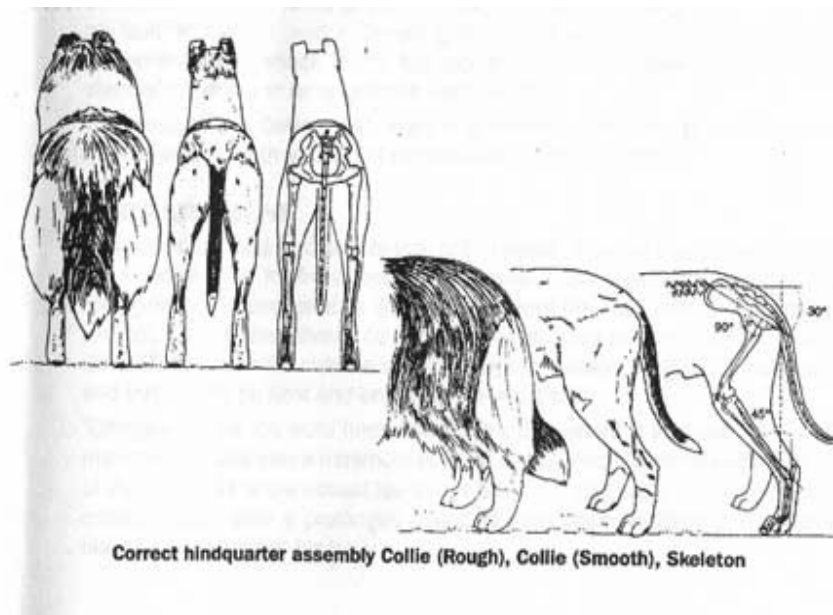
Note the inclusion of the word “level” in the phrase “back level and firm”.

HINDQUARTERS

“The hindlegs should be muscular at the thighs, clean and sinewy below, with well bent stifles. Hocks well let down and powerful”

‘Muscular, sinewy and powerful’ – important key words. The thigh should be broad and muscular to provide the power required in the hindquarters.

‘Hocks well let down’ means that the rear pasterns, as they are often referred to, are not long and weak. This can cause first and second thighs to be ‘robbed’ of their length, reducing the angulation of the hindquarters and resulting in a ‘propping’ rear action.



The croup is to the hindquarter assembly what the stop is to the structure of the head. A croup which is too sloped or steep, with a tail set that is too low results in the dog having a 'tied under' restricted hind action with a lack of drive. The tail will be either carried over the back, spitz style, or down against the legs.

A croup which is too short and flat is accompanied by a high tail set with a hind action where the energy is spent on the legs 'flying out behind' and not on the forward driving action.

FEET

"These should be oval in shape with soles well padded, toes arched and close together. The hind feet slightly less arched"

Oval shaped feet accompany correctly angulated pasterns, providing flexibility and shock absorption during sudden twisting, turning and stopping. Round feet can be accompanied by rigid, upright pasterns which lack this essential flexibility.

Well padded soles and arched toes are necessary for the Collie to provide traction and protection whilst carrying out herding duties over rough terrain.

TAIL

"The tail should be long with the bone reaching at least to the hock joint. To be carried low when the dog is quiet, but with a slight upward swirl at the tip. It may be carried gaily when the dog is excited, but not over the back"

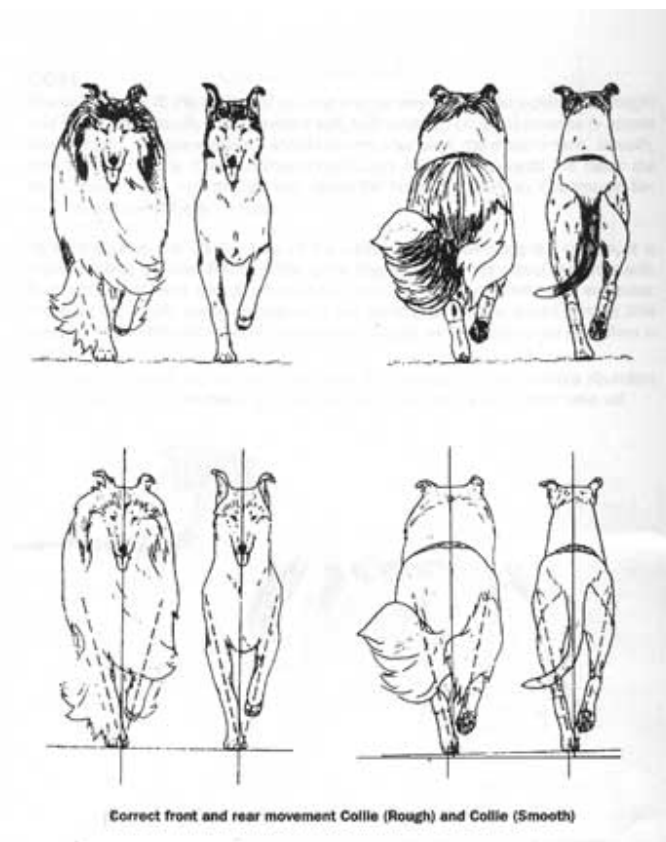
A long, well carried tail completes the picture of dignity. The 'slight upward swirl' at the end of the tail when the dog is in repose is an aid to the beauty of the outline, but the importance of the word 'slight' must not be forgotten. There should be no 'curl' to the tail, and if carried gaily, it should not come 'in' over the back. The placement and carriage of the tail can indicate whether the whole stern of the dog and its angulation are correct.

The croup must finish in a smooth, even sweep, and the tail should appear as a smooth and direct continuation of the backbone.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

“Movement is a distinct characteristic of this breed. A sound dog is never out at elbow, yet it moves with its front feet comparatively close together. Plaiting, crossing or rolling are highly undesirable. The hindlegs, from the hock joint to the ground, when viewed from the rear, should be parallel. The hindlegs should be powerful and full of drive. Viewed from the side the action is smooth. A reasonably long stride is desirable and this should be light and appear quite effortless”

‘Effortless’ is the key word here. The Collie’s movement is light and it should cover maximum ground with a minimum of effort – long reaching strides with a minimal lift of the feet. This is the advantage that a balanced dog has – it is able to sustain a constant pace over a prolonged period of time because there is no stress being placed on any part of the body.



The Collie ‘single tracks’ – the legs converge to a central line the faster the movement, until the feet form a single line of tracks. Moving towards you, it will look as if the legs may cross in front, but they should not. Moving away, the pads of the rear feet should be clearly visible and the hindlegs will move comparatively close together. Viewed from the side, the Collie should exhibit good reach of foreleg, and with well muscled, broad thighs, show powerful drive through the hindlegs.

COAT

Collie (Rough)

“The coat should fit the outline of the dog and be very dense. The outer coat straight and harsh to the touch, the undercoats soft, furry and very close; so close as to almost hide the skin. The mane and frill should be very abundant, the mask or face, smooth, also the ears at the tips, but they should carry more hair towards the base; the forelegs well feathered, the hind legs above the hocks profusely so, but smooth below. Hair on the tail very profuse”

To contribute to the classic lines of the Collie and complete the picture, it is important that the coat fit the outline of the dog. The Collie has a double coat; a soft furry undercoat, and a long, rather harsh top coat, free from silkiness or waviness. Incorrect soft, fluffy coats are generally not weatherproof, and would provide little protection from the elements. A Collie should not get wet through to the skin when in the rain.

Generally, the male will have a greater coat than the female, and a more abundant mane. The female may have more profuse petticoats and a more feathered tail.



CORRECT COAT PROFILE: FITTING THE OUTLINE OF THE DOG, COLLIE (ROUGH)

Collie (Smooth)

“A very important feature of the Smooth Collie is his short, flat top coat of harsh texture, with a very dense undercoat”

Here we see the major difference between the two varieties. The coat should be harsh, dense and quite smooth. The two breeds were developed to do different work and thus needed vastly different coats.

COLOUR

Collie (Rough)

“The three recognised colours are sable and white, tricolour and blue merle.

Sable: any shade from light gold to rich mahogany or shaded sable. Light straw or cream colour is highly undesirable.

Tricolour: Predominantly black with rich tan markings about the legs and head. A rusty tinge in the top coat is highly undesirable.

Blue Merle: Predominantly clear, silvery blue, splashed and marbled with black. Rich tan markings to be preferred, but their absence should not be counted as a fault. Large black markings, slate colour, or a rusty tinge either on the top or undercoat are highly undesirable.

White Markings: All the above may carry the typical white Collie markings to a greater or lesser degree. The following markings are favourable. White collar, full or part, white shirt, legs and feet, white tail tip. A blaze may be carried on the muzzle or skull or both."

Sable – the standard is self explanatory. With age, the colour may become darker.

Tricolour – the tan markings should be rich, and the body coat must be black. When the coat is changing, some tricolours tend to get a rusty tinge in the top coat, and in puppies, the undercoat can sometimes be visible through the top coat, lending a greyish look to the coat, however, in an adult dog, the coat must always be black.

Blue Merle – the standard is self explanatory – clear, silvery blue splashed and marbled with black. The black should not dominate. The comment about ‘rich tan markings to be preferred but their absence should not be counted as a fault’ – there is no provision for bi-colour blue merles, so tan markings are required.

Collie (Smooth)

“All white or predominantly white is most undesirable”

This statement is included in an otherwise similar description. It is not known why the ‘all white’ is mentioned, however, as blue merle is the predominant colour in the Smooth, and ‘whites’ can result from a ‘blue to blue’ breeding, this could be why this statement was included. It may have also been included as breeders would have discarded the whites as they could be hearing impaired.

<u>SIZE</u>	<i>Dogs:</i>	<i>56 to 61 cms (22-24 inches) at the shoulder</i>
	<i>Bitches:</i>	<i>51 to 56 cms (20-22 inches) at the shoulder</i>
	<i>Dogs:</i>	<i>20.5 to 29.5 kgs (45-65 lbs)</i>
	<i>Bitches:</i>	<i>18 to 25 kgs (40-55 lbs)</i>

Whilst the sizes quoted by the standard are precise, it should be remembered that animals at the extreme ends of measurement are acceptable. It is also important that the male appears masculine, and the female appears feminine.

FAULTS

Any departure from the points as laid out in the breed standard should be considered a fault and should be acknowledged in exact accordance with the degree of that particular fault. It may be fair to say that any characteristic described as ‘undesirable’ may be considered a fault, whilst the use of the words ‘highly undesirable’ would be considered to be a more serious fault.

Length of head apparently out of proportion to body; receding skull or unbalanced head to be strongly condemned.

The head itself has to be balanced; that is the length of the muzzle and the length of the skull are equal, and the head has to be in balance with the rest of the dog. Obviously a 61cm (24 inch) dog requires a longer and stronger (not coarse) head than a 51 cm (20 inch) bitch.

Weak, snipey muzzle; domed skull, high peaked occiput; prominent cheek bones; dish-faced or Roman-nosed.

A receding or domed skull or a high peaked occiput are at odds with the standard's requirement of level, parallel planes. A blunt, well-rounded muzzle with good underjaw, scissor bite and full dentition is called for, so weak, snipey muzzles, lacking strength of jaw or room for dentition must be penalised.

Prominent cheek bones, dish-faces or Roman-noses are contrary to the standard's requirement of a smooth, clean wedge. Prominent cheekbones may accompany a chiseled or moulded foreface, which gives a foxy expression – required in the Kelpie or Corgi, but highly undesirable in the Collie.

Pricked ears – low set ears.

Must be penalised as the desired expression is totally spoilt by incorrect placement or carriage of ears. Low set ears are more often than not set on a skull which is too broad, coarse or deep through.

Undershot or overshot mouth – missing teeth

As mentioned previously, missing teeth or a crowded mouth usually accompany a weak, snipey jaw which can be overshot. Undershot jaws are not often seen in this breed, but they are totally at odds with the jaw structure and dentition required and must be penalised heavily.

Round or light coloured and glassy or staring eyes are highly objectionable.

Correct expression which is of utmost importance, cannot be obtained unless the eyes are almond shaped, obliquely placed and dark brown, except in the case of blue merles (where the eyes can be blue, blue – flecked, half brown/half blue). Round eyes can be found in heads which lack the correct wedge shape and they are frontally placed, not obliquely set as required. These are particularly objectionable faults.

Body flat sided, short or cobby; straight shoulder or stifle, out at elbow; crooked forearms, cow hocks or straight hocks.

Flat sided bodies (lacking spring of rib) cannot provide sufficient heart and lung room for dogs bred to work sheep all day. Collies must be capable of short bursts of speed and sudden sharp turns, but basically they are a staying animal and must not be built like a sprinter. Short, cobby bodies with straight shoulders and/or stifles depict a dog lacking in the angulation called for in this breed. Faults such as 'out at elbow', 'crooked forearms', 'cow hocks' or 'straight hocks' are all physical impediments to the functional aspect of the Collie – a working sheepdog.

Large, open or hare feet, feet turned in or out; long weak pasterns.

Again, these faults provide a physical impediment to the breed's function. Compact, well padded, oval shaped feet which neither turn in nor out, with toes well arched are required for this breed to travel long hours over various forms of rough terrain. Long, weak pasterns lack the strength and flexibility the Collie must have for endurance, bursts of speed, together with twisting, turning and propping movements.

Tail short, kinked or twisted to one side or carried over the back.

Tails carried over the back or to one side may indicate that the length and slope of the croup and subsequent hindquarter assembly are incorrect, and therefore they should be condemned. Short, twisted or kinked tails are undesirable.

A soft, silky or wavy coat or insufficient undercoat.

A Collie's coat must be waterproof and provide protection against harsh weather conditions. A soft, silky coat will not do this, nor will a coat without adequate undercoat.

Nervousness.

Nervousness depicts a lack of mental soundness which is highly undesirable. This must not, however, be confused with wariness, which is part of a working dog's psyche.