

FOX TERRIER SMOOTH

In the far off days when I was being tested and undergoing practical examinations, to become a licensed All Breed judge, my teachers, mentors and examiners, especially those hard old Terrier men, considered the judging test on Smooths as the acid test of competence. The need to recognise and reward balance, soundness and quality as vital ingredients to breed type is paramount in every breed. However when a breed is smooth haired, not veiled by adornments of coat, stylized haircuts, colour high lighters and a myriad of other effects, breed type and conformation are revealed to knowing eyes or missed by lack of experience. In those days we were exposed to well known handlers, some of them judges, being sent in with poor specimens, and one or two good ones handled by unknowns. Those were the days.

Yes there will always be differences of opinions as to the interpretation of the Standard. Some breeders will be sticklers for size, some for colour, some for heads, and some for bone and substance plus some for movement. This will never change. This in fact makes dog shows. However many, if not most of these "sticklers" or one dimension breeders, continue, year after year, to be beaten under knowledgeable judges, by exhibits which may well be, not so outstanding in a singular feature of a Standard requirement, but made up of a harmonious balance of most of the Standard points. Yes winners can have faults, and any judge who dwells only on faults, or cannot recognise quality should take up another hobby.

Firstly a Smooth worth showing should radiate good health, strong character, bomb proof temperament and controlled enthusiasm towards his fellow competitors. His conformation should be balanced and should exhibit sound ground covering forward going movement, with a snatch of the hocks, and a forward reaching low stride of the front feet. The great ones catch the eye with their inner fire, their statuesque free standing poses, their lofty head elevation and their defiant tail carriage. The sharp alertness of their sharply turned ears and the keen expression of the deep-set circular eyes all make them worth a second look.

If, on top of the above, they can WALK around the ring on all four feet, not run around the ring to hide faulty shoulders, rolling movement, or short laboured steps, it could go far. Yet none of these great attributes should elevate any exhibit with any part of it which has a foreign appearance, whereby the whole is wrecked as untypical. All would be spoilt and rendered useless if the exhibit was adorned by pricked ears. Or say the stern was placed so low that the tail could not be carried at the vertical. If the tail were to be set on so gay that the tail squirreled onto the back. Even if the dog were possessed of a very short top coat, of a single nature, like a Pointer, or Dobermann it should be looked at with considerable suspicion, as it is not typical but foreign to have such a fault. If the marking and pigmentation were liver you must do no less than suspect a foreign influence, and as such no matter which other qualities the dog might possess it is not for the prize lists. My favourite quotation in livestock breeding is **"Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle"**.

MAKE AND SHAPE - BREED TYPE

The mysteries of breed type are revealed to the very observant breeder and judge who seek the make and shape that they have locked in their mind's eye. This understanding of type, or the make and shape understood as correct type, is a learned phenomena. No one in the world can wake up one morning and declare "I understand breed type".

Our understanding of breed type is grasping what the sum total, the very essence of the breed should be. This can be formulated in the mind's eye by exposure to the very best dogs and the most expert opinions. Were this not the case the breed type would be universal (I should have a desirable ultimate aim we could all aspire to?) Dogs of any given breed would be type judged the world over (what a super consequence). In actual fact this is far from the truth (sadly true).

Anyone who is an ardent student of breed type, judge or otherwise will have noticed that firstly breed standards are not the same. Nor are the resulting looks of the dogs. From country to country certain preferences have developed (assisted by judges willing to conform to the latest "in thing" rather than adhering to the Standard.)

These understandings of breed character result in breeds able to be recognised as American type, German type, English type, Australian, etc. (and usually mean no correct type - hence deterioration of type itself).

A simple example of this phenomenon is the different breeds themselves. In the light years of separation or isolation the Staffordshire Bull Terrier became the American Staffordshire Terrier in the land of its adoption (At least they had the decency to change the name). The English Cocker Spaniel became the American Cocker. In birds the Orpington contributed to the Australorp, the Norwich fancy canary split into the Australian Plainhead and the Belgian draughthorse although identically coloured to the original Belgian Punch is a much lighter, more active animal.

The breed's original work was to enter the hiding place of the fox and expel it from its earth, not by killing the fox but to worry it into bolting into the open so that riding to hounds could continue. The original Standard was drawn up in the late 1800s and the breeders have left the Standard very much as it was except for some vital references to make comparisons to the Hunter Horse, the Greyhound, and the Fox Hound. The original Standard stood for 120 years and is well worth learning.

The original Standards of any breed always remain relevant even if the wording is not as modern or concise as the current Standard. Half the time when Standards are changed, mostly in an attempt to clarify certain interpretations, the alterations manage to lose some very vital terms of reference, making it no clearer to the uninitiated, or opening up some other query.

The Standard of this breed is worthy of detailed study as it was only the second Standard ever officially adopted by the Kennel Club (London). It was second in age only to the Bulldog Standard. It is my belief that all the later Terrier Standards drawn up in the period 1876 to about the 1930s were often happy to use wording from the original Fox Terrier Standard, as this was a near perfect document drawn up by educated and practical men, who knew their subject.

In fact I will go so far as to say that most Standards were written by people who knew the details of the breeds being drawn up, that we need to learn the reference points and language of the day in order to understand the intended meanings. It has for a very long time been my earnest belief that Standards were drawn up for the people who already knew what the requirements of their breed was, and that it is up to us to learn the secrets by constant study and reference to the original Standards, in order to be able to adopt the current document. **Were I King for a Day I would outlaw any future changes of adopted Standards.**

No one can learn the true meaning of a Standard, nor the true meaning of Symmetry, Balance, Quality, Soundness, and Correct Breed Type unless they have been exposed to some really great dogs over a period of years. The best teacher is time and listening to experienced breeders, who if they are worth listening to, will produce worthy winners over the years. Use your eyes, your mind and your ears, and occasionally ask a pertinent question of a person qualified, by example, to give you a worthwhile answer.

The head is a vital ingredient of breed type in any animal. In fact it is the hallmark which identifies one race from another. The Smooth needs to display quality of the head piece here as well, plus have a good armoury of the 42 teeth arranged in a scissors bite. The underjaw too must be well developed with an obvious punishing power to allow it to despatch vermin. This the breed enjoys, as it was once employed purely for that purpose, around stables and fowl yards.

This country has been blessed with some master breeders who fixed the correct head type in their strains, and none were more prominent in this feature than C E Milward's world famous Grenparks. **The truly quality Smooth head is half as long as his height at the withers.** The skull is flat, with no receding of the back skull, and head planes of the skull and the bridge of the forehead

The point is made to dispel theories that no one can learn breed type. What people cannot be easily taught is their need to work at it using maximum powers of observation - to become and remain genuine students of canines. You don't need to be a Rhodes Scholar, a rocket scientist or brain surgeon, you do need to want to hone your skills.

Worldwide you will find fanciers devoted to their breed, viewing it in a certain light and from their vantage point. This is not confined to any breed or fancy. My only problem with this is that judges are rarely able to gauge just how vast the difference in breed type perception is from the Breed Standards issued by different countries. Before judging in foreign countries, it is essential to study the approved Breed Standard in vogue there. Some are too lazy, some too conceited, some have language problems and most are

unaware that the inviting club will be full of exhibitors who want to see their countries perception of 'type' prosper. Many times awards handed down by foreign judges are most welcome, especially in Terriers, as of all the Groups these seem the most universal. There are countries who incorporate disqualifications into their Standards which are not applicable in Australia.

This causes untold dismay and even harm an example of which I can relate. I recently attended a very large show where overseas judges had been invited to appraise. There I saw a truly outstanding Border

Terrier puppy sent from the ring without an award. The German judge having disqualified the novice owned youngster for a minor teeth irregularity. One that it would most certainly grow out of without any dental work and one which, in this country, does not attract any disqualification.

It is of the utmost importance to learn how the Standard is interpreted in the country you are judging. Nevertheless, I still believe that a good dog is a good dog and correct type is appreciated amongst great judges and great breeders worldwide.

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run parallel, when viewed in profile the underjaw contributes to the correct look.

The ears must be seated on the outer corners of the flat skull. They "break" well above the top of the skull and point forward to touch the skull just above the centre of the circular eye. The side carriage with the tips of the leathers pointing to the ground outside of the cheeks are untypical and more classic of the Airedale, The forehead is as least as long as the skull and is delicately chiselled.

This is achieved with the pliant skin of the forehead, especially the upper parts, drawn over the finely moulded upper mandible and teeth structured to form the forehead. The side of the skull must be cleanly chiselled, free of lumps bumps, coarse cheek muscles or protruding zygomatic arches. The relative narrowness of the skull aids the illusion of great length.

In fact when related to other breeds, the head of the Fox Terrier is long. Try and find a Dobermann with a length of head half its height at the wither. When you start running the tape measure over the Fox Terrier you will see that the balance referred to is easily proven by measurement as well as the trained eye.

Eyes are circular and as the windows to the soul, an integral part of the true expression. Dark eyes, but bright and sparkling never bulging or full. Pigmentation is very important and even the all white Fox Terrier should have dark eye rims, nose and pads. The eyes should appear deep set and alive and expressive, black eyes tend to look like a mouse, and light eyes seem untrustworthy.

The neck is a vital measure contributing to the look of quality. The arch displayed here never goes unnoticed. It also aids mobility and power to be able to vary his centre of gravity to aid his gallop. Neck length and shape allow the despatch of a rat in a single movement, where it is caught, thrown up in the air, and discarded as it hits the ground in the confident knowledge that it will never move again.

Colour only becomes important when there are indications of foreign blood. All white, white with black markings and white with tan markings, and even white with black marking with tan eye brows and cheeks patches are all correct, provided that white predominates. It is when brindle, liver, or red markings appear or white is subdued by too much colour that there should be cause for alarm.

Nothing aids the quality and mobility with ground covering strides like an obliquely laid scapula, moulded in the tent-like fashion, meeting where the tops of the shoulder blades and the dorsal vertebrae meet, commonly termed the withers. The true propulsive power is seated in the hindquarters. These must be strong, and in balance with the overall construction. Far too many display inadequate development of the second thighs, plus insufficient muscle tone. Both need constant attention.

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