AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL

Extended Breed Standard of

THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Produced by
The National Golden Retriever Breed Council (Australia)
in collaboration with its Affiliated Clubs and
The Australian National Kennel Council

Standard 1994 Kennel Club London
FCI Standard No: 111

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Breed Standard Extensions Adopted 2004

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AN EXPLANATION OF THE BREED STANDARD

The Golden Retriever is an active, powerful, medium sized water-going retriever, coloured from the palest cream to deep gold. A typical Golden is noted for its **biddable** nature, **kindly expression** and powerful level movement. The breed was developed in Scotland by Lord Tweedmouth as a soft mouthed gundog capable of active work in a variety of conditions.

Goldens are members of the "Retriever" sub group. Each variety of Retriever has its own characteristics (**"CHARACTERISTICS"**), which underline the purpose intended for the breed and which distinguish one breed of Retriever from the other.

It is essential when assessing the Golden Retriever, that particular emphasis is placed on breed **CHARACTERISTICS.** The absence of, or weakness in, these **CHARACTERISTICS** could prevent the dog from carrying out the job for which it was bred and threatens the Golden Retriever's individuality amongst the "Retriever" sub group.

The objective of these notes is to explain the Golden Retriever Breed Standard to ensure all Golden enthusiasts including aspirant judges have as complete an understanding as possible of the complex subtleties that "makeup" an ideal Golden Retriever.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

The Golden Retriever originated in Scotland. An improvement in guns over time led to an increase in the number of birds being shot over longer distances and more difficult terrain and more birds were being lost. Therefore, a need arose for a **specialist retrieving dog**. People had commenced to train their setters and pointers to retrieve but this tended to spoil the holding of the point, so they started to work on a breed to use **specifically for retrieving**.

For many years, legend had it that the breed originated from a troupe of Russian circus dogs purchased by the First Lord Tweedmouth and taken to Guisachan Estate, near Loch Ness in Scotland.

It was not until 1952 that this theory was discredited by the findings of breed historian, Elma Stonex, and the sixth Earl of Ilchester who used Lord Tweedmouth's carefully documented stud book to substantiate a quite different explanation for the breed's origin.

The history of the breed, as officially recognised by the Kennel Club in 1960, is recorded in Crufts Catalogues, and reads as follows:

"The origin of the Golden Retriever is less obscure than most of the Retriever varieties, as the breed was definitely started by the first Lord Tweedmouth last century, as shown in his carefully kept private stud book and notes, first brought to light by his great-nephew, the Earl of Ilchester, in 1952. In 1868 Lord Tweedmouth mated a yellow Wavy-Coated Retriever (Nous) he had bought from a cobbler in Brighton (bred by Lord Chichester) to a Tweed Water-Spaniel (Belle) from Ladykirk on the Tweed. These Tweed Water-Spaniels, rare except in the Border Country, are described by authorities of the times as like a small Retriever, liver-coloured and curly-coated. Lord Tweedmouth methodically line-bred down from this mating between 1868 and 1890, using another Tweed Water-Spaniel, and outcrosses of two black Retrievers, an Irish Setter and a sandy coloured Bloodhound. (It is now known that one of the most influential Kennels in the first part of the century which lies behind all present day Golden Retrievers was founded on stock bred by Lord Tweedmouth.)" [1]

More recently, Anne and Frank Weeks and Valerie Foss have undertaken extensive research into the breed's history and foundation stock. This is detailed in Valerie Foss' Golden Retriever pedigree books and makes very interesting reading. [2]

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BREED STANDARD

THE EARLY DAYS – 1908

When first exhibited in 1908, Golden Retrievers were classified by the English Kennel Club as a variety of Retriever and not as a distinct breed. They were exhibited in mixed classes for Flat-coated (or Wavy-coated) Retrievers "of any colour".

1911

Mrs Charlesworth, with the help of fellow enthusiasts, founded the Golden Retriever Club. The club drew up a Standard of Points, which included a scale of points as a guide to the importance of the various features mentioned therein. This was also the year that the English Kennel Club officially classified the breed as a separate variety of Retrievers – "Golden or Yellow Retrievers".

1936

The darker dogs gained much more popularity than the lighter ones in the breed's earlier days. However the paler shades were gradually accepted and in 1936 were acknowledged by the admission of "cream" in the standard.

1940

This was the year that the Kennel Club's official Standard for the breed was issued. It omitted the scale of points and the words immediately following "nose should be black". It also changed the misleading "Teeth should be even" to "Teeth should be sound and strong. Neither undershot or overshot, the lower teeth just behind but touching the upper teeth".

For 50 or more years the Breed Standard remained essentially unchanged.

In the 1980's, the Kennel Club reviewed all Breed Standards and the ideal weight of a dog and a bitch was omitted whilst the ideal height was retained. [3]

The Golden Retriever Breed Standard currently in use is reproduced in bold italic type throughout this Breed Standard Extension.

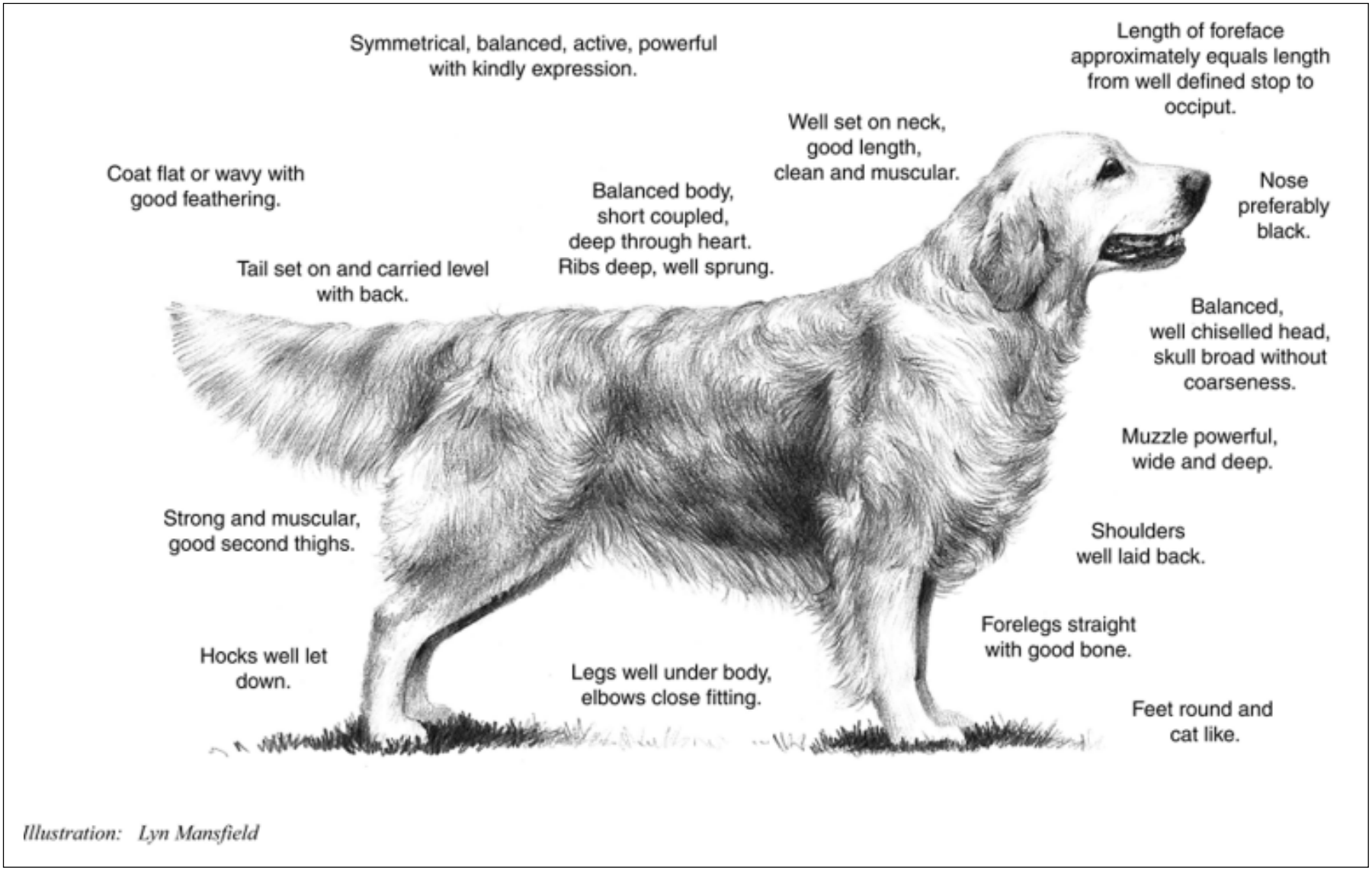


Illustration: Lyn Mansfield

• GENERAL APPEARANCE

Symmetrical, balanced, active, powerful, level mover, sound with kindly expression.

The first impression of a Golden Retriever should convey that of an unexaggerated, medium sized, balanced, powerful and active gundog.

5

Balance is one of the breed's greatest assets, whether it is hunting, swimming or being exhibited.

"A balanced Golden Retriever possesses everything in proportion and is a great joy to behold".[6] Lack of balance can be evident in many ways. For instance, a dog with a long neck and ultra-short body is not balanced, nor is one whose head and body are not in proportion, or which is too long or too short on leg. These do not present a **symmetrical** outline and are thus not as aesthetically pleasing nor as well equipped to carry out their gundog duties as a balanced specimen.

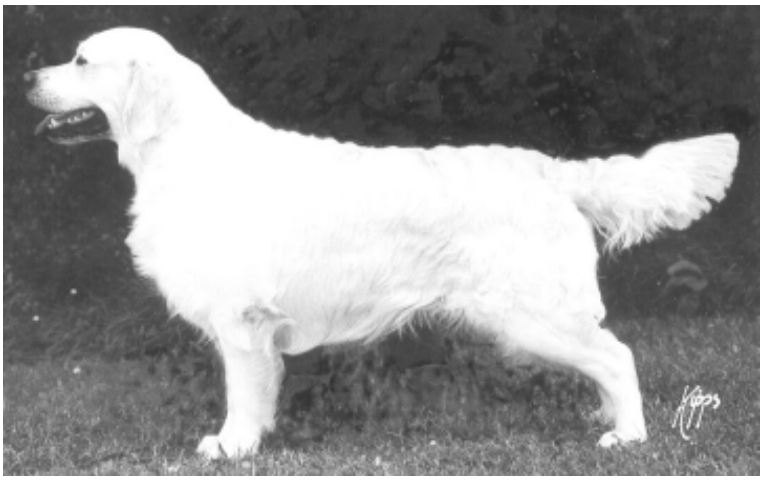
The Golden Retriever is a dog of medium length, appearing neither cobby, excessively long, short in leg or too square. As a gundog, the Golden should be active, alert and **sound** in every respect. He is a free striding and **level mover**, that should be able to carry game over long distances and to jump obstacles. To do this a Golden needs to be strongly built with plenty of substance, a moderately broad chest, strong level back and good bone. The lack of any of these qualities would inhibit the dog's ability to effectively carry out the role for which it was bred.

An overly large or coarse Golden is undesirable as is one that is fine and weedy.

A Golden's kindly expression is a key breed **CHARACTERISTIC**. It should give an indication of the Golden's temperament and convey an impression of its kind and gentle nature. Any suggestion of a scowl, or mean, sly foxy expression is totally foreign.

GENERAL APPEARANCE ~ DOGS

The following specimens depict the general appearance typical of this breed.



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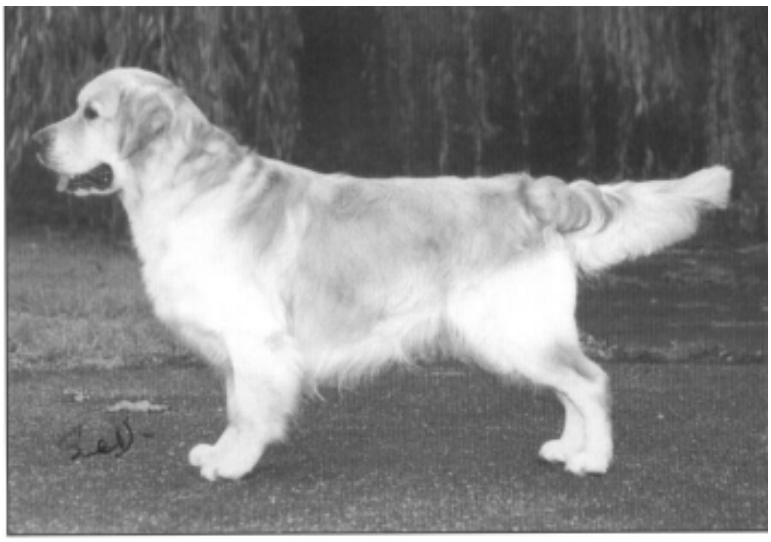

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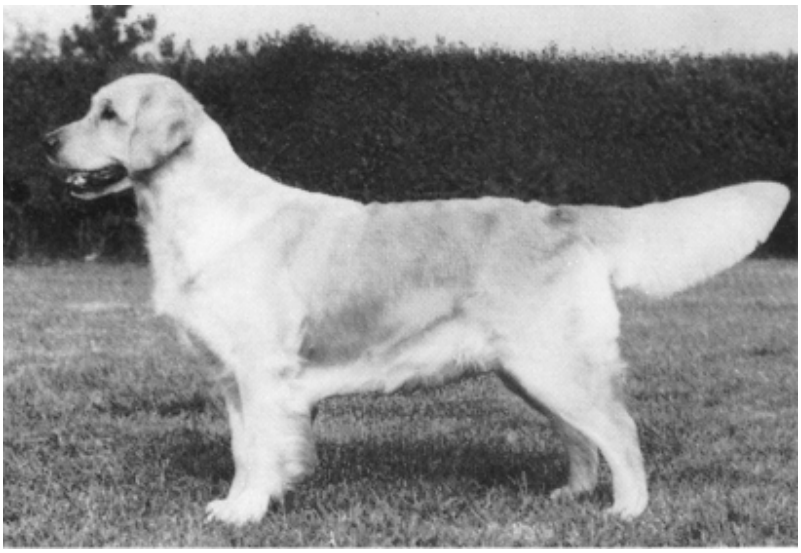
GENERAL APPEARANCE ~ BITCHES



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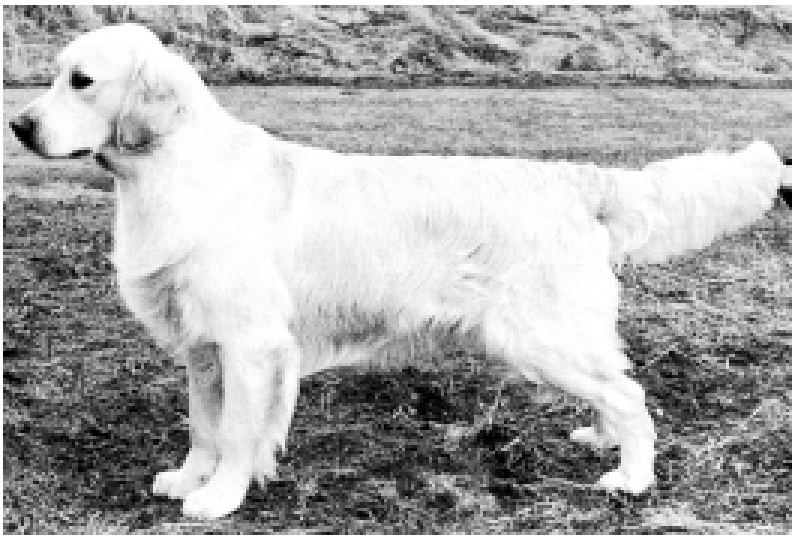

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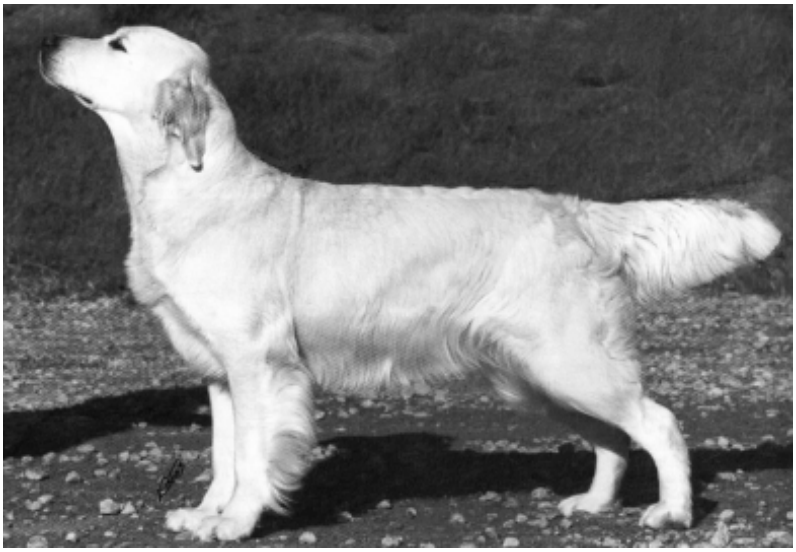

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• CHARACTERISTICS

Biddable, intelligent and possessing natural working ability.

14

The typical Golden just aches to please. This **biddable** or **eager** nature combined with the **natural intelligence** of the breed underlines the natural working ability Lord Tweedmouth aimed for. These characteristics are equally valuable and fundamental to a Golden's role as a companion, family, obedience or working dog.

"Most Goldens will go to endless pains to please their owners at all times." [13]

It is important to remember that this is a working breed that should be capable of a day's work, often retrieving over uneven terrain and jumping any obstacles encountered along the way. Its work also requires the Golden to be a powerful swimmer, so in order to carry out these duties the Standard requires a dog that is strong and well put together.

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Judges should give consideration to correct breed type and conformation that would ensure the Golden Retriever has the ability to perform in the field.

• TEMPERAMENT

Kindly, friendly and confident.

The temperament of the Golden Retriever is a breed **CHARACTERISTIC**.

"The ability to steal into your heart is all tied up with the Golden Retriever's kindly, friendly, confident manner."[16] Goldens often smile and this appearance should reflect their true disposition. They are not "one-man dogs" and one would expect a Golden to be friendly to strangers as well as friends.

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Eager to join in games, Goldens become an integral part of family life.

Goldens are well known as family dogs and will easily "fit in" because of its kind nature and will to please. However over assertiveness should be discouraged.

Any unprovoked aggression or timidity to either humans or dogs, be it in the show ring or general community is **totally unacceptable** in a Golden and should be severely penalised.

The Golden makes a wonderful companion for the elderly, the handicapped and the young.

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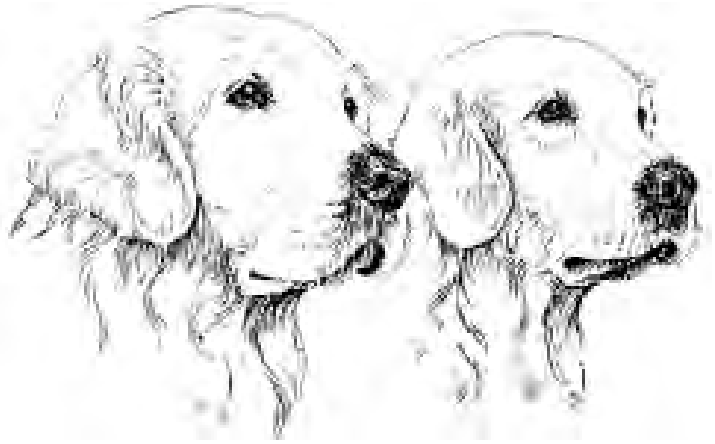
• HEAD AND SKULL

Balanced and well chiselled, skull broad without coarseness; well set on neck, muzzle powerful, wide and deep. Length of foreface approximately equals length from well defined stop to occiput. Nose preferably black.

The head of the Golden Retriever is a breed **CHARACTERISTIC**; being a feature which gives each member of the Retriever group its individuality and by which it can be instantly recognised.

The skull and muzzle should be well balanced and in proportion. The Standard requires that the distance between the well-defined stop to the tip of the nose should be equal to the distance from the stop to the occiput. The latter should not be prominent.

The skull should be broad, without coarseness, slightly rounded but not appearing too domed. A skull that is completely flat and wedge shaped gives a foxy appearance, which is quite wrong and often you will find the ears set too high. If the head is too domed, the ears give the impression of being too low set. Whilst the Standard does not give any indication as to exactly how broad, remember the word "balanced" and the broadness should not be excessive.



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A bitch should have a head which is distinctly feminine, but not weak. The head of a male should be distinctly masculine, impressive (and larger in proportion to his larger size).[19] The gender of the dog should be recognizable when looking at the head.

The chiselling should be beneath the eyes and between them in the formation of a well-defined stop. Any appearance of frowns or wrinkles around the forehead either when alert or in repose should be penalised.

The muzzle is a very important feature for a retriever. It should have sufficient capacity and strength to carry game. In the case of a Golden, this could mean a quite large duck or pheasant. A muzzle which appears too short, apart from being unbalanced, could affect the dog's carrying capacity. The muzzle should have a good length, width and depth. A weak muzzle and underjaw or one with too much flew will hamper the dog in carrying out its job as a retriever.

A black nose is preferred. Sometimes in cold weather the pigment will appear lighter, but should not be flesh coloured. Bitches in season also tend to lose pigment at times. The black pigment on the eye rims will confirm the nose colour to be temporary.

HEADS

It would be impossible to choose a head which would appeal to everyone, however the heads on this page illustrate the balance and expression required in the Standard.

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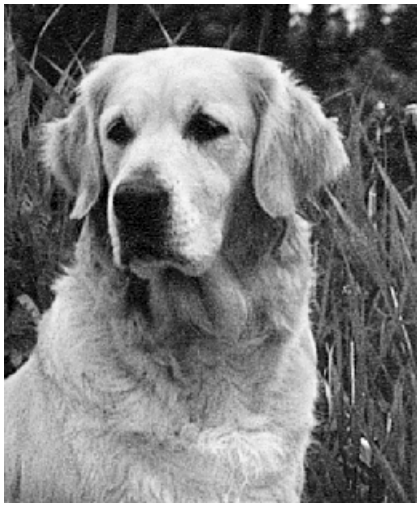

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• EYES

Dark brown, set well apart, dark rims.

The soft kindly expression of the dark eye is an important **CHARACTERISTIC** of the breed.

The shape, colour and positioning of the Golden's eyes are key elements in determining correct expression which should be alert, lively and intelligent and ABOVE ALL, **KINDLY**, **SOFT** and **GENTLE**.

The position of a Golden's eyes should be towards the front of the skull and set on a horizontal axis. They should be of medium size and not pronounced.

The ideal colour of the eye is dark brown. Whilst various shades of dark brown are acceptable, black is not desired because it masks expression. Yellow or light eyes are totally unacceptable as they give the Golden a harsh expression which is quite out of character and should be penalised.

To complete the picture the eye rims should be dark and tight. The eye rims should not be loose and the eye must not show haw.

The shape of a Golden's eye is as important in determining expression as is colour, yet the ideal shape is not specified in the Breed Standard. Experience and the parts of the standard relating to characteristics and temperament suggest the following correct and incorrect interpretations.

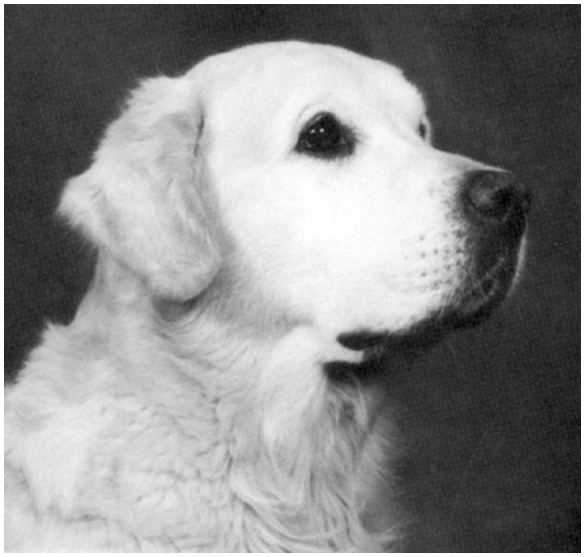
19

CORRECT
Correct shape.
Dark brown set well part
dark rims. Kindly expression.

INCORRECT
Too large and round.
Too black giving a
glaring untypical expression.

INCORRECT
Slanting triangular shape,
Iris too light, giving hard,
mean expression.
Light eye rims.

These specimens illustrate the correct soft, kindly and gentle expression, which once seen is never forgotten.



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27 *Photo by V Sterrett*

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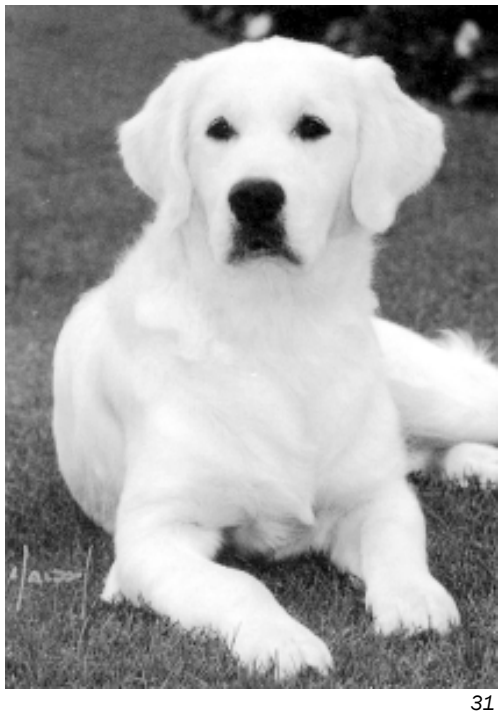

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• EARS

Moderate size, set on approximate level with eyes.

The top of a Golden's ears should be set approximately level with the top of the dog's eyes and should look in balance with the head overall. "Again the set of the ear can completely change the expression".[32] An ear set which is too high will be too like a terrier, whilst ears set too low will be too much like a hound. The same can be said for ear size. The following diagrams illustrate correct and incorrect ears and ear carriages.

CORRECT *In repose*

CORRECT *At attention*

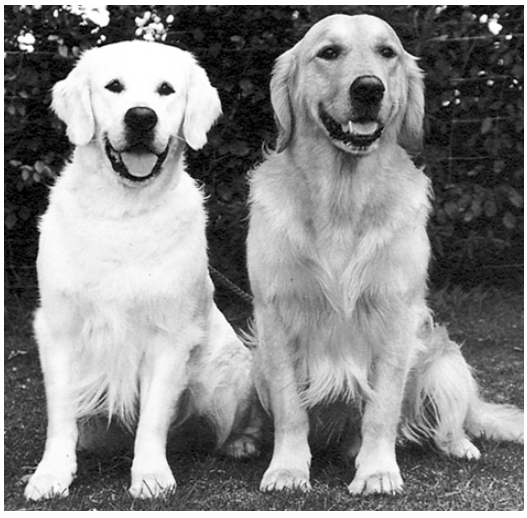
INCORRECT *Too large*

19

INCORRECT *Too low-set and houndy*

INCORRECT *Too high-set*

INCORRECT *Too small and 'flyaway'*



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When a Golden is alert the ears create a "frame" for the typical Golden expression. However, not all will oblige at the perfect moment and should not be penalised for this.

• MOUTH

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, ie upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

The Golden Retriever is a retrieving breed. A Golden's muzzle is the tool it uses to carry out its job as a retriever carrying game over all terrain. Any weakness in this feature would be detrimental to the Golden doing the job for which it was bred.

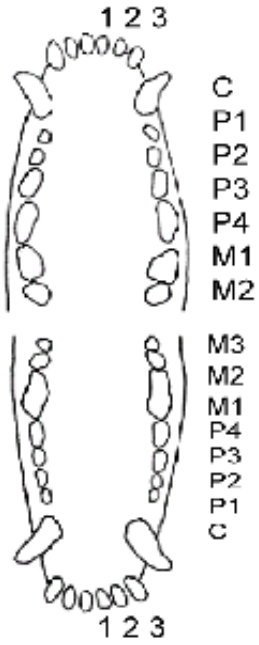
The Standard not only requires the normal scissor bite, but spells out the requirement for it to be "perfect, regular and complete". This describes a mouth with full dentition – ie 42 teeth. Over time, missing and/or mis-aligned teeth in either the top or bottom jaw could lead to structural alteration of the shape and strength of the dog's muzzle and therefore is a highly undesirable fault.

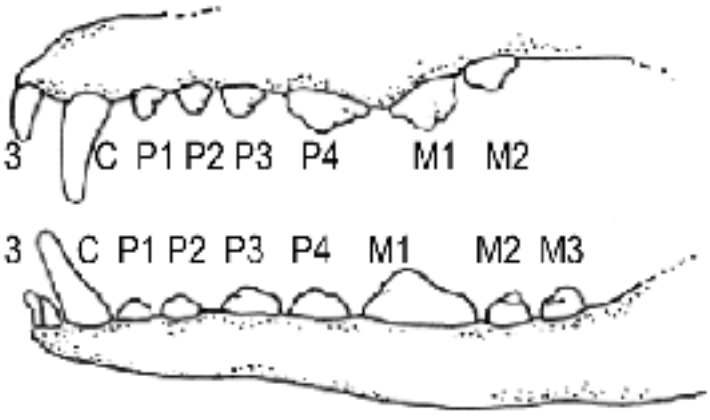
Scissor bite | Level or pincer bite | Overshot | Undershot

CANINE DENTITION

The total number of teeth in the adult dog is 42, this being made up of 12 incisors, 4 canines, 16 pre-molars and 10 molars.
The dental formula for the dog may be expressed in the following terms:

Upper Jaw	Lower Jaw	
6	6	Incisors
2	2	Canines
8	8	Pre-molars
4	6	Molars





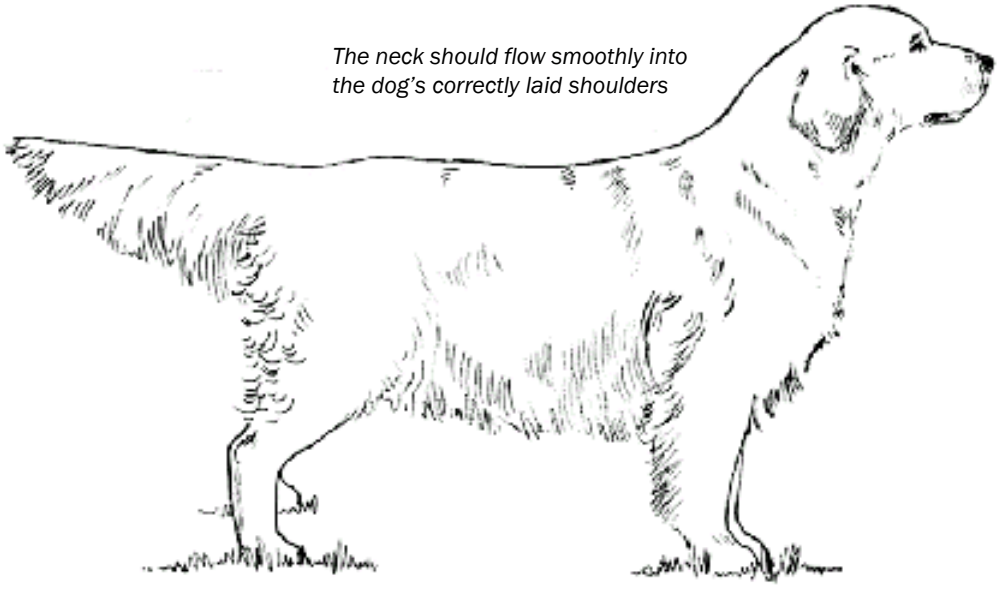
- **NECK**

Good length, clean and muscular.

The neck of the Golden Retriever has major tasks to perform. A properly muscled neck of correct length must bear the weight of the fallen game through water and over rough country. It must allow the dog to carry its head and use its nose for scenting purposes and to pick up game without crouching or excess flexing of the shoulder joint. For this purpose it must be muscular and clean, not thick, fat or flabby.

34

A Golden's neck is a key visual guide to overall balance. The neck should flow smoothly into the dog's correctly laid shoulders with no abrupt angles or dips.



The neck should flow smoothly into the dog's correctly laid shoulders

35

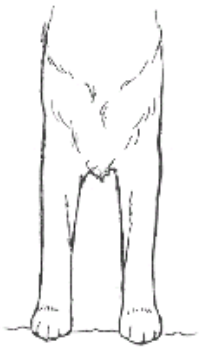
• FOREQUARTERS

Forelegs straight with good bone, shoulders well laid back, long in blade with upper arm of equal length placing legs well under body. Elbows close fitting.

When assessing this aspect of the Breed Standard "forelegs straight with good bone," balance in relation to the overall size and structure of the dog is fundamental. Seen from the front, the legs should look like figure (a) below and not like (b) or (c). Viewed in profile the pasterns should slope slightly to the ground.

(a) Correct front with good width and depth of chest, straight sound legs.

(b) Faulty 'fiddle-front', loose elbows, turned pasterns, feet pointing outwards.



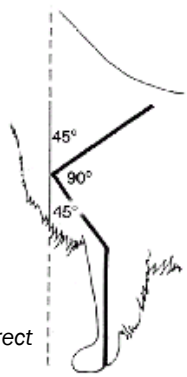
(c) Straight, but far too narrow and lacking both depth and breadth of chest.

36

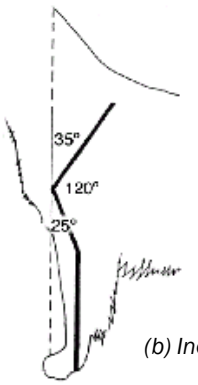
The front construction of the Golden Retriever, together with good depth of chest presents the required picture of legs set well under the body, which applies to both profile and front views. The shoulders should ideally appear as shown in diagram (a) below, with the shoulder blade and upper arm (humerus) being of equal length. From the side view the pads of the feet will rest directly beneath the centre of the shoulder blade. The prosternum is visible, but never exaggerated.

Shoulders which are too upright and lack upper arm do not allow for maximum forward reach of the front legs. The ideal shoulder angulation enables this maximum forward reach when the dog is moving, and contributes to the smooth flowing gait of the Golden Retriever.

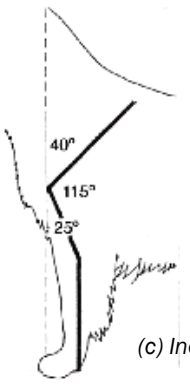
The following drawings illustrate desirable and undesirable shoulder assemblies.



(a) Correct



(b) Incorrect



(c) Incorrect

37

The blades at the withers should be neither too wide apart nor too close together as either of these scenarios could cause the dog difficulty in lowering its head to pick up game. If too wide apart the shoulders will look overloaded.

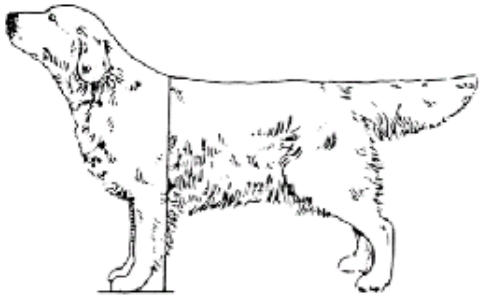
• BODY

Balanced, short coupled, deep through heart. Ribs deep, well sprung. Level topline.

The Golden is not a square dog and should never look too cobby or excessively long. A dog of medium length, appearing slightly longer than high gives the correct balance and outline for this breed. The length, depth and breadth should all be in the correct proportions to give the acceptable balanced picture.

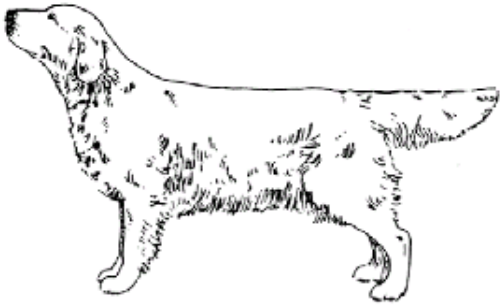
Ideally, the measurement from the withers to elbow and elbow to ground should appear equal. A Golden should never appear short in leg. At times a heavy coat can give a false impression of depth. Therefore judges should use their hands to ascertain the actual proportions of the dog.

Picture (a) is a good example of a preferred outline for a Golden Retriever, whilst (b) and (c) illustrate outlines which are less desirable.



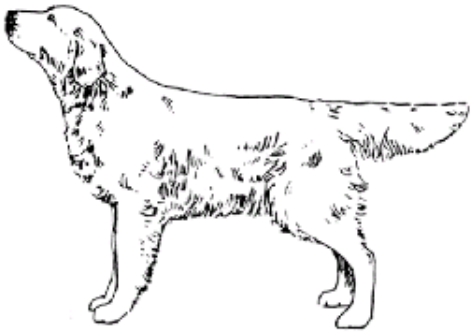
A CORRECT

A classic example of correct balance and symmetry



B INCORRECT

The length of back has increased by 10%. This makes the body far too long and the legs appear to be too short by comparison.



C INCORRECT

The length of leg has increased by 10% making the dog unbalanced and high on leg.

38

Correct length of leg is also a very important feature and not solely for aesthetic purposes. Remember that as a retrieving breed, the Golden is required to carry quite large and heavy game. The correct length of leg is necessary to ensure that any retrieved game is kept well clear of the ground. Picture a short legged dog trying to keep large game off the ground!

39

Even though these dogs appear to be the same in outline, B and C are too long

CORRECT

SHORT COUPLED *with correct length of back (being in proportion to the dog's height.)*

Rib Cage deep and long.

Short in loin and therefore short coupled.

INCORRECT

LONG COUPLED *but with correct length of back (in proportion to its height).*

Rib Cage lacks depth at the last ribs so length of the loin is increased.

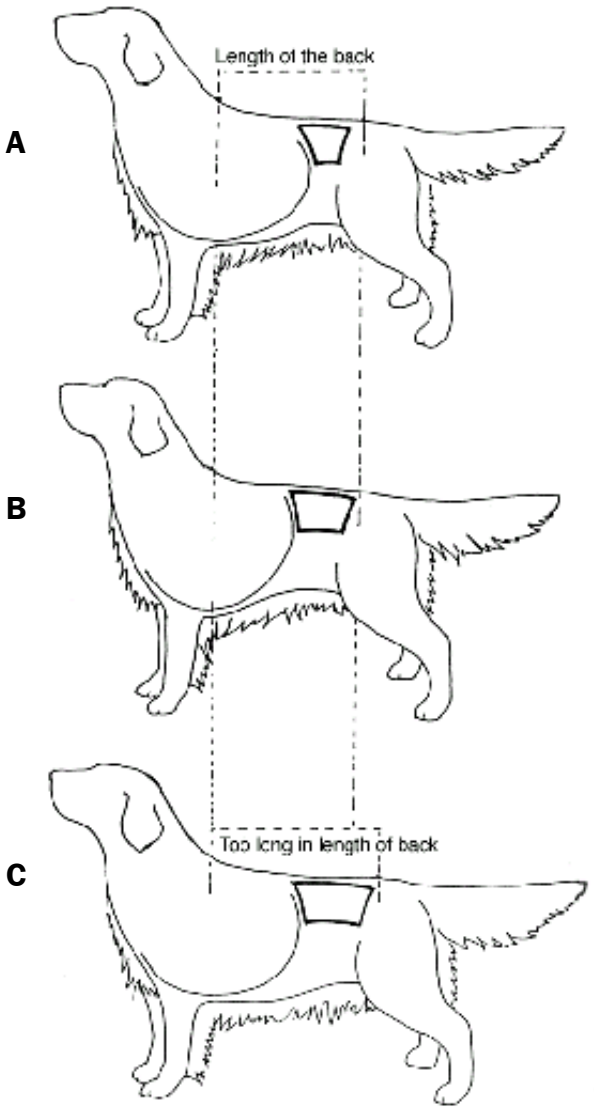
Long in loin.

INCORRECT

LONG COUPLED

Rib Cage deep and long which is correct but length of back too long, therefore the length of loin is increased. A weaker structure.

Too long in loin.



40

The Golden is short coupled and deep through the heart. Although shortness of loin is desirable, the back should not be ultra-short or cobby, for excessive shortness of back usually goes with upright shoulders and a short neck. The rib cage should be carried well back, thus the expression "well ribbed up". It must allow room for vital organs, particularly the dog's lungs, and should be nicely rounded but not barrel shaped. Equally, slab-sided or flat rib cages are undesirable.

Judges should be wary of dogs displaying a short ribcage (ie "short ribbed"), and which are therefore longer in loin, despite appearing compact in outline when standing. Lack of forequarter angulation and therefore loss of "chest in front of the dog" can often cause this compact outline.

BODY *continued*

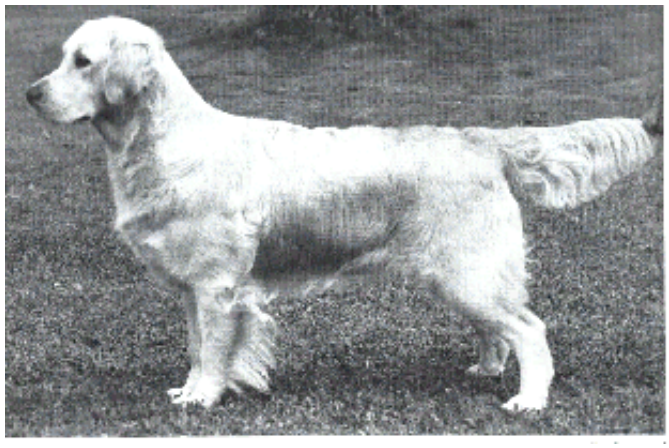
The chest should be moderately broad with good depth, when viewed from either the side or the front. Too much width can often be associated with loaded shoulders and create a cloddy appearance, whereas a narrow chest can cause the dog to appear racy and / or "setter like".

The Golden Retriever is a slowly maturing breed and full depth of body is usually not reached until at least 3 years of age.

When judging the Golden Retriever, breed type and ability to perform should be the foremost criteria.

"Ideally (the topline) will appear absolutely level when viewed in profile."[41] This should be the case in both a stationary or moving Golden. The overall attractiveness of the profile is enhanced by a correct and level tail set. Remember however that the topline and tail set are two different features.

TOPLINES



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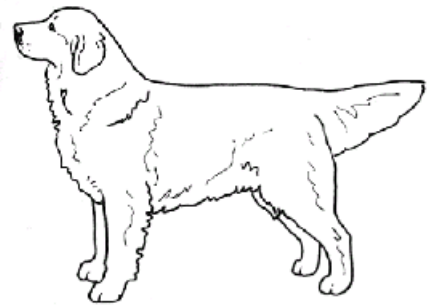
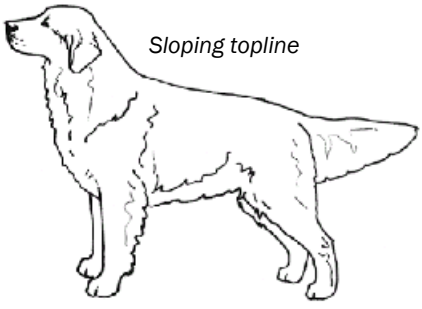
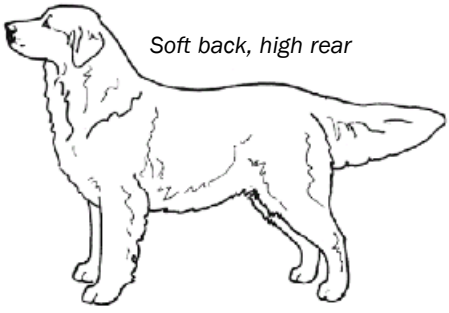


Above and left:
Correct level topline



INCORRECT



INCORRECT

36

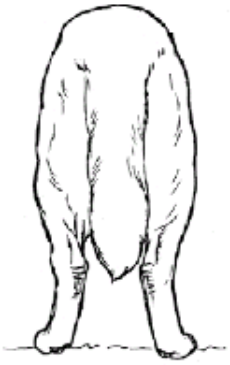
• HINDQUARTERS

Loin and legs strong and muscular, good second thighs, well bent stifles. Hocks well let down, straight when viewed from rear, neither turning in nor out. Cowhocks highly undesirable.

As Goldens were bred as a working dog capable of long stints of duty on land or in water, strong, correctly built hindquarters provide the power needed to fulfil this requirement. Structurally the set of the pelvis and femur should match the angles of the scapula and humerus.

The angle of the croup is slight giving sufficient width between muscle anchors. This will contribute to a broad first thigh and give rise to the required well bent stifle.

(a)
CORRECT REAR
Good breadth, strong muscling, straight sound legs



(b)
INCORRECT
Cowhocked, weak hocks point in, feet outward.

(c)
INCORRECT
Bowed rear is a different form of weakness. Hocks turn out.

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The distance from the hock joint to the ground should be short. Broad, hard muscular loins and thighs are desired and when viewed from the rear, a straight line from the hip joint to the foot should be formed by the components of the hindquarters as shown in figure (a) above.

Well bent stifles as illustrated below will create the desired movement which is strong and driving. Straight stifles and long hocks will make the hindlegs swing backwards rather like a pendulum, resulting in more of a flicking or kicking up action – this is not correct.

INCORRECT

STRAIGHT STIFLE

The lack of angulation will limit the backward extension of the leg and therefore restricts "drive" from the rear.

CORRECT

WELL ANGULATED STIFLE

With well developed and muscular thighs. This structure allows for optimum power and motive force from the rear quarters.

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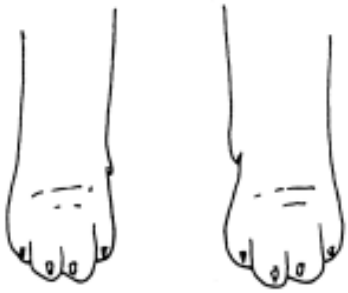
• FEET

Round and cat-like.

This requirement is essential to enable a Golden to perform the functions he was bred to do. The diagrams below show the difference between correct, round and cat-like feet and undesirable splay feet and hare feet.

Puppies sometimes go "down on their feet" whilst teething and the front feet can sometimes turn slightly "east/west". However, these features should not be apparent in the mature specimen.



CORRECT

Round and cat like.

INCORRECT

Splay feet.

CORRECT

Cat foot. Campact with arched toes and well developed pads. Nails short

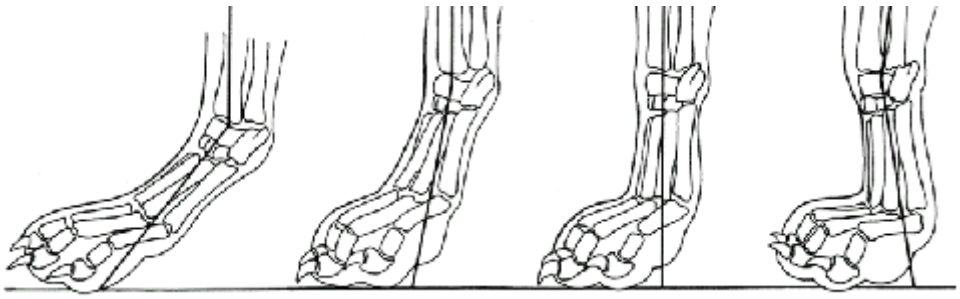
44

INCORRECT

Hare foot. Toes long and flat. Nails too long.

A key factor in good feet is good pasterns. The following diagrams show correct pasterns and some common faults.

PASTERNS



44

INCORRECT

Pastern broken down with displaced bones and poor muscle tone. A weak pastern.

CORRECT

Pastern with the correct slope, and with no suggestion of weakness. Effective for shock absorbency.

INCORRECT

Straight pastern. This pastern will not absorb shock as well as a sloping one.

INCORRECT

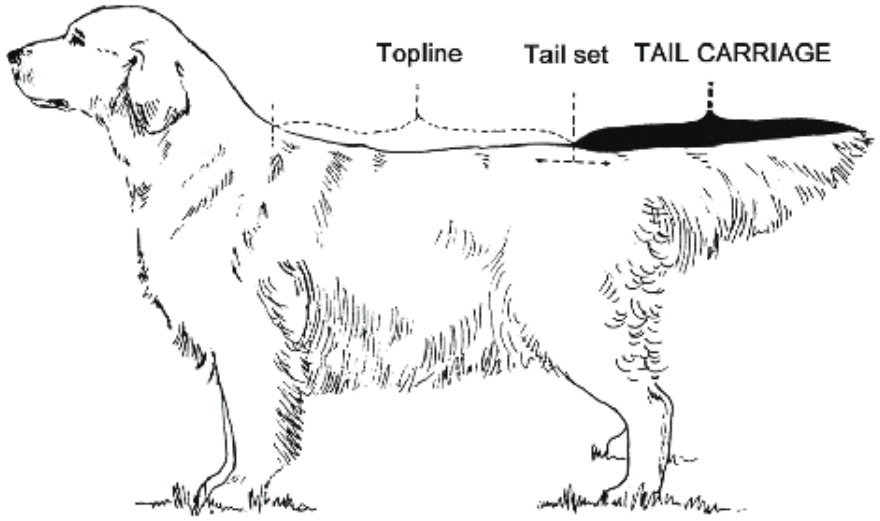
Knuckled over. A weak pastern.

• TAIL

Set on and carried level with back, reaching to hocks, without curl at tip.

The tail is set on level with the back and is a continuation of the spine, enhancing the level topline. The correct tailset, carriage and length greatly enhances the general balance of the dog. Indeed a tail that is either too long or too short can spoil this balanced picture. The tail is well feathered and should be carried level with the back, ideally with a sideways wag.

The tail should not be hooked or curled over the back.



45

The tail is the dog's "rudder" and balancing device, as well as an indication of emotion and temperament. Strong enough to be used as a serviceable rudder for a swimming dog, it should be heavily muscled, particularly at the base, and very densely coated overall giving a thick appearance. It should not be rope-like, whippy or setter like.

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As a balancing aid,
the tail assists in movement.

A proper tail helps the dog in
manoeuvring in the water.

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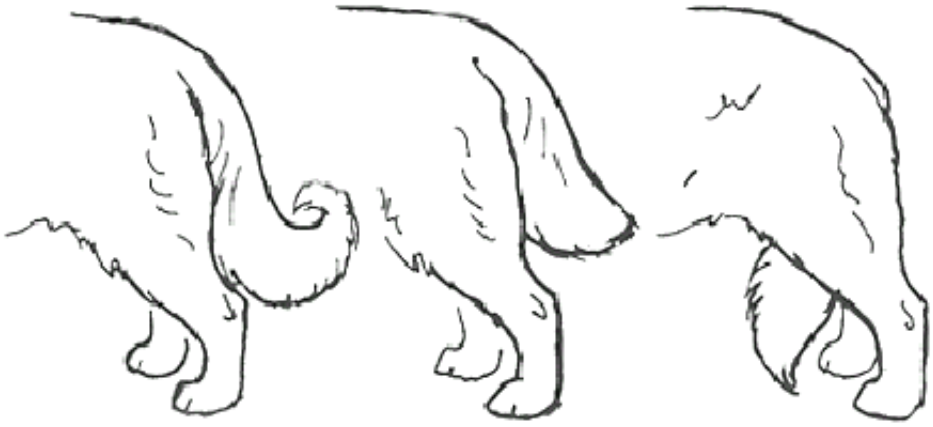
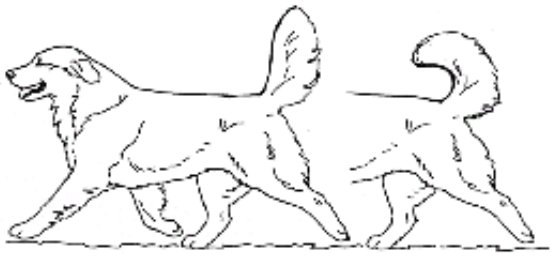
TAILS continued



These are all deviations from the ideal.

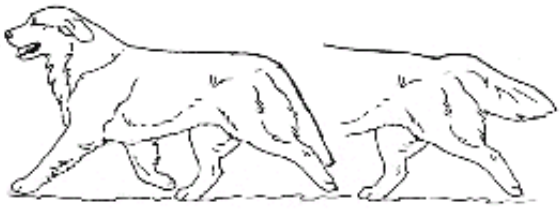
A *When gaiting, a level tail carriage is correct*

B *Some upward curve is also acceptable.*



C *An upright or 'hound tail' is atypical.*

D *A tail curved over the back or formed in a ring is absolutely incorrect.*



E *'Water tail' will affect the tail carriage, but is a temporary condition.*

F *If the judge suspects that the tail carriage has been affected by alteration, the dog should be eliminated from competition.*

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• GAIT / MOVEMENT

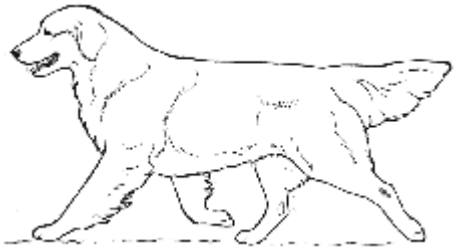
Powerful with good drive. Straight and true in front and rear. Stride long and free with no sign of hackney action in front.

Goldens are bred for endurance and stamina in the field. To achieve this, the Golden's structure should produce economy of movement which is enhanced by level movement and an absence of body roll in mature dogs. A rolling movement is sometimes seen in puppies and immature Goldens and they will occasionally appear high in the rump during certain growth periods. These aspects should however improve as the dog ages and should not be accepted in the mature adult.

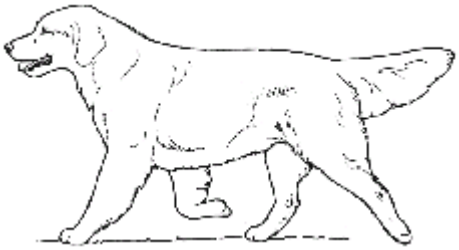
The fore and hind legs and feet move in a straight line, turning neither in nor out with elbows kept close to the body. The stride should be long and free, both in front and behind, with no unnecessary lifting up of the front legs, such as in the hackney action. The hind legs should flex well from the stifles and hocks, thus thrusting the dog forward powerfully with good drive.

The movement of the Golden Retriever should give you the impression of a dog capable of endurance, moving effortlessly over the ground. It is a steady and unhurried movement.

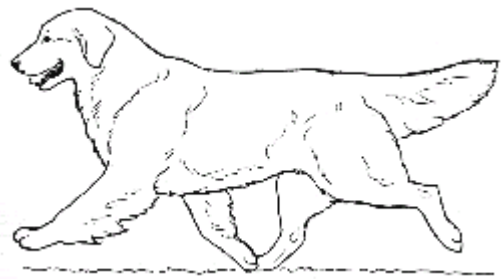
It should be remembered that in the field each Gundog was bred for its own particular scope of work and this may be reflected in each having their own distinctive style of movement. The Golden Retriever, whilst able to perform swiftly when the need arises, is overall a confident, methodical worker. The Golden Retriever is NOT a racehorse.



Good moving dog, balanced length of stride front and rear, good foot timing, strong level topline, good carriage of head and tail.



The short-strided dog lacks ease and efficiency. The right front pastern is slipping upward too far indicating some weakness and/or lack of timing. This dog lacks proper angulation and balance and appears stilted and choppy.



A showy but incorrect type of movement; the foot timing is poor. Note that diagonal pairs of legs are not coordinated properly; the trot should be a two-beat gait but this dog isn't doing it. The left front too high: the dog is over-reaching (right rear foot overtaking the right front), and kicking up behind with the left rear; which is not extending properly.

MOVEMENT Continued

Good front at the trot.
Legs will tend to converge toward the centre line of travel, in order to stay under the centre of gravity, but remain straight from shoulder to foot, giving a sound straight line of support.

Faulty.
Elbows out, loose shoulders, twisting pasterns. Also called "winging".

Faulty.
Foot turns inwards as it takes the dog's weight. "Pin-toeing".

Good rear at trot.
Legs tend to converge toward the centre line of travel, in order to stay under the centre of gravity, but remain straight from hip to foot, giving a sound straight line of support.

Faulty.
Bowed rear.
The straight line of support is lost, hocks flex outward.

Faulty.
Cowhocks.
Weakness allows hock to flex/twist inward.

• COAT

Flat or wavy with good feathering, dense, water-resisting undercoat.

The coat is another **CHARACTERISTIC** of the breed.

Flat or wavy coats, without curl, are equally acceptable and neither should be given preference when judging. The thick water-resistant undercoat is essential and provides protection for the dog working in all weather conditions as well as when swimming. The texture of the coat should be consistent with this objective. Long silky setter-like coats are not typical of this breed. To provide the necessary protection, the outer coat should be medium harsh to touch. Good feathering on the front and hind legs as well as the underside and tail adds greatly to the attractive and overall appearance of the dog.

It is the quality of the coat which counts, NOT the quantity. The coat should never hide the outline of the dog nor be of such quantity to impede the dog in carrying out its work. As a Golden is required to swim, the correct coat is important for protection in all temperatures.

Males shed coat annually; bitches more regularly depending on their seasons.

A Golden Retriever's coat may be trimmed to enhance the appearance and to help create a better impression of balance. Likewise a heavily coated dog could appear stuffier in neck than it actually is and some dogs carry "caplike" hair just behind the shoulder blades which could give the illusion of an incorrect topline. Judges should use their hands to determine the actual conformation of the dog.

An example of dogs with flat and wavy coats — both equally acceptable.

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• COLOUR

Any shade of gold or cream, neither red nor mahogany. A few white hairs on chest only, permissible.

A judge should in no way be influenced by a personal colour preference and should remember the variation of colour allowable in this breed.

The Standard allows for a great variation in colour – from the palest cream to dark gold, but not red or mahogany. When a Golden Retriever and an Irish Setter stand side by side, they should be recognisable from each other and not appear to be the same colour. Goldens can reach quite dark shades of gold. These coats are very attractive, particularly when enhanced with paler feathering. It should be noted that some of the darker coloured Goldens may show greying on the face when mature adults and this should not be penalised.

On the other end of the scale cream can be very pale and cream puppies can take many years to reach their final colour. Puppies darken with age and the best indication of their adult colour is to note the colour of their ears.

Very pale puppies can also have hints of their final adult colour on their hocks and the tail. It is quite amazing at times to see the colour darken on a predominantly cream puppy. Alternatively, even the palest of cream puppies can have ears to match, and when mature will still be a correct shade of cream.

The Golden Retriever is a self coloured dog in that no patches of any solid colour are permissible. The beautiful shadings sometimes displayed ranging through the permissible colour parameters add to the attractiveness of this breed.

The great variation of colour allowable in the Golden Retriever ranges from palest cream to dark gold, but not red or mahogany.

- **SIZE**

Height at withers: ***Dogs:*** ***56-61 cms (22-24 inches).***
Bitches: ***51-56 cms (20-22 inches).***

Before penalising an exhibit on height, judges should take note of the 4 inch difference allowable in the Standard between the smallest bitch (20 inches) and the tallest dog (24 inches). A dog at the top of the Standard can appear quite tall when in a class of minimum sized dogs or against a minimum sized bitch, and conversely a bitch can appear small.

Dogs that are short in leg might appear smaller than they actually are and will make the dog with the correct length of leg proportions appear taller.

- **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.***
- **NOTE** ***Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.***

SUGGESTED READING

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Breed Standard for the Golden Retriever is at the one time clear, concise and obtuse. The more you read the standard the more you realise that something is missing and requires explanation. This document aims to provide appropriate explanation.
The National Golden Retriever Council wishes to thank all those involved in the preparation of this document. There are far too many contributors to name individually, however, the contribution of the Council's Breed Extension Working Party deserves particular recognition.

The members of the Working Party were:

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National Golden Retriever Council, 2004

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