



# • BREED FEATURE • AMERICAN COCKER



The lovely American Cocker Spaniel with its flowing feathers and flashy movement is indeed a site to behold in the show ring. A merry dog and the smallest of all the gundog breeds the American Cocker is truly one of the die-hard groomer's passions. To prepare an American Cocker you use almost all the grooming techniques available; clipping, scissoring, hand stripping, bathing, and blow-drying and Plush Puppy has the perfect range of products to have your yank in its most superb condition.

I won't go into all the pre bathing preparation here, i.e. trimming, stripping etc but what I will let you know is how to prepare the coat for the show and what to do to keep the coat in peak condition between shows. The American Cocker standard declares that the texture of the coat is most important. The coat should be silky, flat or slightly wavy and of a texture, which permits easy care. No cottony, frizzy coats - silky is the go! For the coat that is a little on the dry side or is fluffy or frizzy use the Plush Puppy Conditioning Shampoo with Evening Primrose. This will help moisturise and settle the coat. For a coat that is in good condition and does not need any extra help use the Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo with Henna. This shampoo will not alter the texture but will add lots of shine.

Always shampoo your coat at least twice. Dilute the shampoo through your hydrobath if you have one about 10:1 i.e. ten parts water to one part shampoo and give it time to do its job on the coat. Use undiluted for the really dirty areas such as the ears, under the tail area and under-carriage. The Plush Puppy Deep Cleansing Shampoo is wonderful for cleaning very heavily soiled areas of the coat - Ideal for the oil build up you get on the ears and it is a wonderful clarifier for the coat used once a month to remove any product build up. Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo with Wheatgerm is great to use on areas of the coat that you want to appear fuller and great for a dog "out of coat". This can be used just in the areas that require that more!

For Parti's you can use Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening. This is great for the white areas for its toning qualities reducing red and warm tones and is perfectly safe on all colours. Use at 1 part shampoo to 10 parts water. Another amazing product for white areas is Plush Puppy Wonder Blok this product

is one of our proudest achievements in helping to maintain a white stain free coat. It's not a bleach and contains no harmful chemicals. This product is designed to remove gently, unwanted warm/red tones to the coat. Best used on a damp/wet coat. Gently rub into the areas requiring allow time (5-10 minutes) and rinse. For maximum effects repeat or allow a longer time for this amazing product to work. As with all products take care around eyes.

Due to the face structure of this breed a great product is Plush Puppy Let's Face It; this is what the dog showing world has needed for way too long. Another one of the famous Plush Puppy products that with the latest of technology and the highest amounts of naturally sourced ingredients has developed a product that is a must! This is a hypoallergenic sulfate free low foaming shampoo designed for faces. It's no tear formula with the highest quality Blue Cypress Extracts, Panthenol with Pro Vitamin B and SugaNate. These special ingredients clean, soothe, adds moisture, aids healing and anti-inflammatory benefits. A small golf ball sized amounts directly to the face and eye area allows you to thoroughly clean without causing irritation. Can be used in and around ears also with the same benefits. Its low foaming design allows ease of rinsing yet complete cleaning.

After shampooing with the correct choice of shampoo for your particular situation, apply a squish through the longer parts of the coat with a diluted mix of up to 10:1 of Plush Puppy Silk Protein Conditioner which will serve to keep featherings untangled and hydrated. It is not necessary to use a conditioner on the shorter body coat as you risk making the coat fluffy when the coat is needed to sit flat.

Plush Puppy Swishy Coat helps the coat to fall gracefully back into place after moving. It is designed to reduce the wave and frizz in the coat. It will straighten and smooth the coat without softening it and will make blow-drying easier. Mix a tablespoon of Swishy Coat to a small Plush Puppy Spray Bottle, add an inch of warm water and really shake well till the mixture goes a whitish, then you can top up the rest of the bottle. Spray this lightly

through the coat, including the under layers after towel drying and before blow drying.

When you blow dry use a Plush Puppy Pin Brush or Plush Puppy Anti-Static Brush (I use both, the pin where there are knots and the Anti-Static when there are no knots) and really stretch and smooth the coat out as you go. Always dry in the direction that you want the hair to lay. The hair must be bone dry - no moisture at all.

Plush Puppy Blow Dry Cream softens and flattens and will add weight to tame a boofy or unruly coat. Mix and apply just as per the Swishy Coat. If you have a coat that needs straightening and de-boofing you can mix Swishy Coat and Blow Dry Cream in the same bottle and mix with water if you like. Use a



tablespoon of Swishy Coat and a teaspoon of Blow Dry Cream. Increase the Blow Dry Cream ratio if required. The Puffy Dog Firm Hold Styling Mousse is fantastic for the hocks to give them a great full look and help them stand out creating that lovely flow of coat from under the tail right through to off the hock. I put this on after towel drying by getting about a golf ball size dollop in my palm and scrunching it through the hocks. This is the only area of the coat where I use a soft slicker brush and brush against the natural lay of the coat, so brush the hock up, still paying careful attention to get the coat really straight and really dry.

Plush Puppy Volumising Cream is a superb grooming tool to use on a coat that is thin. Mix it in the same manner as the Swishy coat, i.e. one tablespoon to a small Plush Puppy Spray Bottle. You can apply it when the coat is damp or when the coat is dry. It will coat each individual hair and give the appearance of more coat. You can use it all over the coat or just in a specific area. When you are trying to volumise the coat you can blow dry the coat in a fluffing up kind of manner to help increase the volume. For easier use we now have the "new Plush Puppy Volumising Spray is a 'Ready To Use' for quicker, easier and fuller coat results. Perfect either before blow drying or used to 'fluff' up the coat at the show. A light even spray, brush in until dry or use a dryer. This is a hair thickener to add volume - not a hair stiffener and not detectable as it leaves the coat with a natural fuller look and feel.

For maintenance baths I use the Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil. It contains natural extracts that promote hair growth, repair of damaged hair

and are very good skin conditioners. It also dramatically reduces matting and knots. It is one of the finest oils made and it easily washes out with any of our shampoos. I do always shampoo at least twice as I said earlier. Seabreeze Oil can be applied at 1 tablespoon to 1 litre of warm water. I use a sponge to make sure full coverage of all the feathers. It can also be used in your conditioning rinse. Just put one tablespoon along with a quarter cup of Silk Protein Conditioner into approximately a half gallon or 2 litres of water. Saturate this well through the coat and leave it all in. Blow dry as you normally would for a maintenance bath. Plush Puppy Reviva Coat is fantastic for in between baths. Just apply it by squirting a dollop into your hand and scrunching into the coat as required and just leave it to dry on its own. It contains UV filters as well. You can't overdose on this product. It is very handy to help when you have to brush out a knot as it makes the job much easier and you will lose less coat. It is superb as a maintenance conditioner (in between shows).

Plush Puppy Protein Coat Balm is my favourite show ring product. It helps with static, flyaway and drying out. The best attribute of this product is that it will not undo all your blow drying hard work. The worst thing you can do to your coat at a show is spray it with a water based spray. Humidity is the enemy of a silky straight coat. Make every effort to keep your dog out of moist or humid situations at shows. Keep your crate covered up if you have to. Protein Coat Balm is the perfect finishing cream. Just squirt a few pumps into your palm, smear your hands together, and then smooth your hands over the coat.

The very best grooming spray is Plush Puppy OMG. Used at a rate of 1 part OMG to 30 parts water. This is the greatest and will leave the coat looking and feeling amazing.

Then comb the coat into place. Do this just before you go into the ring. There is no point doing it an hour before hand. You can use Protein Coat Balm multiple times throughout the day without altering the texture or look of the coat. It's great stuff! Plush Puppy Pixie Dust will give the coat a stunning shimmer in the sunlight and can be used on any colour coat. The trick is to apply a little dust to a bristle brush then wave the brush in the air a bit. Then brush over the coat to give a light dusting of shimmer. The effect in the sunlight is super! Plush Puppy Shine and Comb is just super, used lightly on the back coat. Mist it down over the coat just before you go into the ring to give a classic natural shine.

So there you have it! All ready to flash around the ring and take everyone's breath away with your glamorous American Cocker Spaniel with its lustrous, silky feathers and long luxurious ears flying in the wind. **Simon Briggs**  
*Director of Grooming*



## Petcetera Etc.

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Fax: 61 (0)2 9627 4242

Mail: P.O. Box 47, Emu Plains, NSW, 2750.

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 Anniversary show under Ms D Cuthbert (SA)...

...the same weekend her littermate  
 - America's Number One Black Cocker  
*Am Gold Grand Ch Beachstone's Blacklist*  
 took two more All Breeds BIS!!

**Pauline Grutzner & Marjory Adkins**    [sunfire@hotmail.net.au](mailto:sunfire@hotmail.net.au)





A.1. We (Paul & Debbie) have been in American Cockers since 1979 and bred our first litter in 1982 (born the night before and morning of our wedding!)

Paige acquired her first American from us in 2009 and officially joined the Staryanks prefix 3 years ago.

I think it is fair to say that their personality is what first drew all of us to the breed.

A.2. In the early 2000's there were some very good quality dogs and bitches being exhibited, however there was not a great deal of depth given the numbers that were being shown.

There are probably lower numbers overall now, however the best dogs are as good if not better than those in that era. Depth in quality is still probably an issue.

A.3. The General Appearance in the breed standard does a very good job of summarising the important features of the breed.

1. Head. The head is the first thing that makes the breed an "American" Cocker and is distinctive to the breed. Without the correct head type, a Yank is not a real Yank.

2. Topline & Tailset  
These go together and provide that lovely outline **on the move** that makes our breed what it is.

When presenting to trainee and aspiring judges we stress that you cannot judge our breed "on the stack" as good handlers can make a dog or bitch with an incorrect topline and tailset look correct. It is only when viewed on the move in profile that the "slightly sloping" topline (from the withers to the tailset) can be assessed.

3. Temperament  
The standard calls for a "merry" dog. "Equable in temperament with no suggestion of timidity".

A happy and merry Yank provides that "it" factor that the top show dogs have.

4. Structure and movement  
These factors again go hand in glove as a dog that is not put together well will not move well and display that lovely free moving gait.

Whilst the standard states that "he is a dog capable of considerable speed", that does not mean that the breed should be shown as though the fastest moving dog should be the winner! If you ever attend Greyhound racing, some of the fastest sprinters do not have what we would consider correct angulation, however they take more strides to cover the same distance! Judges should never be confused by this.

5. Coat  
The coat is the icing on the cake and finishes off a good dog.

In listing these attributes, it does not mean that other points such as neck, feet, etc. are not important, just that these points are what we consider the "hallmarks" of our breed.

A.4. The standard does a good job of describing the breed characteristics, however a slight modification to improve it would be to change the description of the topline to "sloping slightly **when the dog is in motion**" in

the General Appearance and again in the Body – Topline: Sloping slightly towards muscular quarters "**The slight slope is to be evident when the dog is in motion**".

This would make it quite clear when this breed attribute should be displayed.

A.5. We don't believe that size is a problem in the breed.

Some people (including judges) may be confused when seeing an American the same size or slightly taller than a Cocker, however it may not be that the Yank is oversize, it may well be that the Cocker is small or they are comparing a male with a female.

Several years ago there was a tendency that a number of bitches were becoming too small, however this does not seem to be as much an issue in recent times.

The thing to remember is that the breed is a Gundog and should be of sufficient size to flush and carry small game.

A.6. 1. Do your research to be sure the breed is right for you. It is a lot easier these days with the internet. Check out websites, features of the breed and talk to the breeders.

2. ALWAYS buy from a registered breeder.

3. Particularly if looking for a pup to show, be patient. Most conscientious breeders will not necessarily always have puppies available. Personally, we strongly believe that the only reason to breed is to improve the quality of the breed. Having litter after litter in the hope of producing that will be a winner is a recipe for failure, not success

**Paul & Debbie Wilkes  
& Paige Hopkins Staryanks**

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A.1. I bought my first American Cocker in 1980 and bred my first litter in 1983. I loved the glamour, the attitude and the way they covered ground as well as their great temperaments.

A.2. 15 years ago was just before the TD ban and there were more Americans being shown on a regular basis – entries were larger at Royals and Specialties – there were some lovely quality Americans around then and they dominated the breed and the group but there were many more poor specimens of the breed and a lot more hereditary problems in particular cataracts. Fast forward 15 years and the dedicated breeders are still here, the breed is sounder and probably in the best shape I have seen it in 35 years. There are not as many dogs but the quality is definitely there – a lot of money has been spent bringing in dogs from the USA and Europe from top kennels and this is being reflected in the number of Americans that are winning Best in shows. It is now up to the breeders in Australia to use these dogs wisely, keep up the testing and move forward.

A.3. I always say an American is

### *We asked Breeders*

**Q.1. How long have you been breeding American Cockers? Why are they your chosen breed?**

**Q.2. How do you think today's American Cockers rate with those of say 15 years ago?**

**Q.3. Could you list in order of priority the 5 most important points you think a judge should look for in the American Cocker?**

**Q.4. If you were able to add a sentence to the American Cocker breed standard what would it be?**

**Q.5. Is size a problem in American Cockers?**

**Q.6. What would your advice be to a potential puppy buyer when looking for a American Cocker?**

made up of 4 things Topline (his slightly sloping topline), Tailset (right off the back and tail carried at the correct angle), Head (the beautiful figure 8 head with the same width to the muzzle as the backskull and those beautiful melting eyes!) and Coat (the correct texture not cottony or woolly not excessive and cool to the touch) – if you can get all of these in the one dog you are well on the way to a Best In show winner. For number 5 I will throw in Balance – all parts working together – A sloping topline is not much use if it is produced by straight shoulders and an overdone rear joined by a long back and the dog sidewinding around the ring or too short and it cannot gait properly! He must have a well angulated front to match his driving rear

A.4. I think that our standard is a very involved one and goes into great detail in many places but I would like to remove the line about being the smallest Gundog (or have it clarified that this is in America!) for the trouble it causes – see below!

A.5. I don't believe we have a problem with size in American Cockers – most yank people are right onto size with many of us owning measures and can tell you what height the dogs are. At a recent Judges training session here in Victoria very few of the 20 plus trainees could accurately tell the height of a yank and a Cocker. I believe that the problem is there are a lot of small English Cockers around and the judges and Cocker breeders quote the fact that the American Cocker is supposed to be the smallest member of the Gundog group. Now this is straight out of the US standard which we have adopted but it ignores the fact that this was written before the Sussex Spaniel had a size (13-15 ins in the USA) which puts him below the yank and ...IN America English Cockers are bigger – Dogs 16-17 (15.5-16 here) inches and bitches 15-16 (15-15.5 here) inches which does put them well above Americans! In Australia you can have a top of the measure yank dog and a bottom of the measure English Cocker dog and both are correct!

A.6. Do your homework! The American Cocker is a lovely breed but not for everyone! If it is for a pet go to one of the

two clubs in Australia either Victoria or NSW. In Victoria we will not recommend a breeder if the parents do not carry current eye clear certificates. There is a reason this breed has a minimum breeding age of 24 months. Ask to see the parents certificates – talk to the breeder. They are a high maintenance breed – Can you afford the grooming or will you learn to do it yourself.

They are a breed that thrive on human interaction – they are not a breed that can be left outdoors to their own devices with no interaction or companionship. If you are looking for a show dog – the world is your oyster – there are plenty of colours and types to choose from. Go to the shows – preferably one of the specialties – talk to the breeders – ask the questions – and be prepared to be cross examined – there are not a lot of litters bred so you will probably have to wait for that special pup and they are too much work if your pup is not a good one! They are not the breed for everyone – there is a lot of work in turning out these dogs – you have to be dedicated and willing to learn and put in the hard yards (or pay someone to do it!) Find a breeder that will help you and work with you – join the clubs and learn all you can before you buy your pup!

**Pauline Grutzner Sunfire**

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A.1. Fell in love with them in the 70's their merry lovable disposition and good looks have been in the breed for 30 years

A.2. I think we have kept the standard up for all those years and more breeders are always looking for improvement and the standard hasn't been changed to suit a fashion.

A.3. Head, toppling tail set, size, movement and coat.

A.4. I like the standard as it is  
A.5. Yes it can be but our aim is always to keep to the size standard

A.6. What would your advice be to a potential puppy buyer when looking for a American Cocker?

Always buy from a reputable breeder, talk to breeders and be prepared to love grooming

**Maureen Hanley Sinderby**



# The Sinderby Team



Maureen and Brian  
would like to say a big

*thank you*

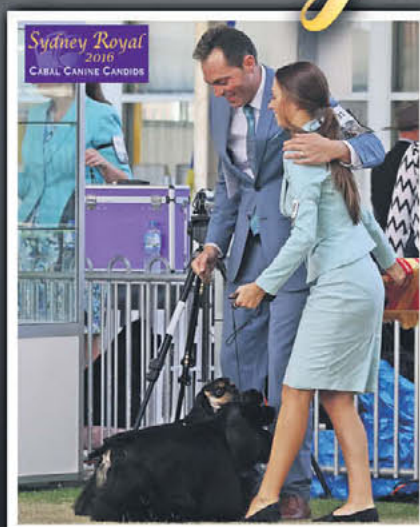
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Judge: Mrs Debbie Campbell-Freeman (USA)

Best in Show All Breeds - Judges: Specialist - Mr Keith Brown (NZ)  
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*Introducing  
his daughter...*

*Rhianna*

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**GENERAL APPEARANCE:**

The Cocker Spaniel (American) is the smallest member of the Gundog Group. He has a sturdy, compact body and a cleanly chiselled and refined head, with the overall dog in complete balance and of ideal size. He stands well up at the shoulder on straight forelegs with a topline sloping slightly towards strong, moderately bent, muscular quarters. He is a dog capable of considerable speed, combined with great endurance. Above all, he must be free and merry, sound, well balanced throughout and in action show a keen inclination to work. A dog well balanced in all parts is more desirable than a dog with strongly contrasting good points and faults.

**PROPORTIONS:** The measurement from the breast bone to back of thigh is slightly longer than the measurement from the highest point of withers to the ground. The body must be of sufficient length to permit a straight and free stride; the dog never appears long and low.

**TEMPERAMENT:** Equable in temperament with no suggestion of timidity.

**HEAD AND SKULL:** To attain a well proportioned head, which must be in balance with the rest of the dog, it embodies the following:

**EXPRESSION:** The expression is intelligent, alert, soft and appealing.

**SKULL:** Rounded but not exaggerated with no tendency toward flatness; the eyebrows are clearly defined with a pronounced stop. The bony structure beneath the eyes is well chiselled with no prominence in the cheeks. The muzzle is broad and deep, with square even jaws. To be in correct balance, the distance from the stop to the tip of the nose is one half the distance from the stop up over the crown to the base of the skull.

**NOSE:** Of sufficient size to balance the muzzle and foreface, with well developed nostrils typical of a sporting dog. It is black in colour in the blacks, black and tans, and black and whites; in other colours it may be brown, liver or black, the darker the better. The colour of nose harmonises with the colour of the eye rim.

**LIPS:** The upper lip is full and of sufficient depth to cover the lower jaw.

**EYES:** Eyeballs are round and full and look directly forward. The shape of the eye rims gives a slightly almond shaped appearance; the eye is not weak or goggled. The colour of the iris is dark brown and in general the darker the better.

**EARS:** Lobular, long, of fine leather, well feathered and placed no higher than a line to the lower part of the eye.

**MOUTH:** Teeth: Strong and sound, not too small and meet in a scissor bite.

**NECK:** The neck is sufficiently long to allow the nose to reach the ground easily, muscular and free from pendulous “throatiness”. It rises strongly from the shoulders and arches slightly as it tapers to join the head.

**FOREQUARTERS:** The shoulders are well laid back forming an angle with the upper arm of approximately 90 degrees which permits the dog to move his forelegs in an easy manner with forward reach. Shoulders are clean-cut and sloping without protrusion and so set that the upper points of the withers are at an angle which permits wide spring of rib. When viewed from the side with the forelegs vertical, the elbow is directly below the highest point of the shoulder blade. Forelegs are parallel, straight, strongly boned and muscular and set close to the body well under the scapulae. The pasterns are short and strong. Dewclaws on forelegs may be removed.

**BODY: TOPLINE:** Sloping slightly towards muscular quarters. The chest is deep, its lowest point no higher than the elbows, its front sufficiently wide for adequate heart and lung space, yet not so wide as to interfere with the straightforward movement of the forelegs. Ribs are deep and well sprung. Back is strong and sloping evenly and slightly downward from the shoulders to the set-on of the tail.

**HINDQUARTERS:**

Hips are wide and quarters well rounded and muscular. When viewed from behind, the hind legs are parallel when in motion and at rest. The hind legs are strongly boned, and muscled with moderate angulation at the stifle and powerful, clearly defined thighs. The stifle is strong and there is no slippage of it in motion or when standing. The hocks are strong and well let down. Dewclaws on hind legs may be removed.

**FEET:** Feet compact, large, round and firm with horny pads; they turn neither in nor out.

**TAIL: DOCKED:** Docked tail is set on and carried on a line with the topline of the back, or slightly higher; never straight up like a Terrier and never so low as to indicate timidity. When the dog is in motion the tail action is merry.

**UNDOCKED:** Set on a line with topline of back. Moderate length. Feathering in proportion to the coat of the dog. Thicker at the root and tapering towards the tip. Carried on a line with the topline of back, or slightly higher, but never curled over the back or so low as to indicate timidity. When dog is in motion, merry tail action.

**GAIT/MOVEMENT:**

The Cocker Spaniel (American), though the smallest of the Gundogs, possesses a typical sporting dog gait. Prerequisite to good movement is balance between the front and rear assemblies. He drives with strong, powerful rear quarters and is properly constructed in the shoulders and forelegs so that he can reach forward without restriction in a full stride to counterbalance the driving force from the rear. Above all, his gait is co-ordinated, smooth and effortless. The dog must cover ground with his action; excessive animation should not be mistaken for proper gait.

**COAT:** On the head, short and fine; on the body, medium length, with enough undercoating to give protection. The ears, chest, abdomen and legs are well feathered, but not so excessively as to hide the Cocker Spaniel (American)’s true lines and movement or affect his appearance and function as a moderately coated, sporting dog. The texture is most important. The coat is silky, flat or slightly wavy and of a texture which permits easy care. Excessive coat or curly or cottony textured coat shall be severely penalised. Use of electric clippers on the back is not desirable. Trimming to enhance the dog’s true lines should be done to appear as natural as possible.

**COLOUR:** Black --Solid colour black to include black with tan points. The black should be jet; shadings of brown or liver in the coat are not desirable. A small amount of white on the chest and/or throat is allowed; white in any other location shall disqualify.

Any Solid Color Other than Black (ASCOB)--Any solid colour other than black, ranging from lightest cream to darkest red, including brown and brown with tan points. The colour shall be of a uniform shade, but lighter colour of the feathering is permissible. A small amount of white on the chest and/or throat is allowed; white in any other location shall disqualify.

Parti-Coloured--Two or more solid, well broken colours, one of which must be white; black and white, red and white (the red may range from lightest cream to darkest red), brown and white, and roans, to include any such colour combination with tan points. It is preferable that the tan markings be located in the same pattern as for the tan points in the Black and ASCOB. Roans are classified as parti-colours and may be of any of the usual roaning patterns. Primary colour which is ninety percent (90%) or more shall disqualify.

Tan Points--The colour of the tan may be from the lightest cream to the darkest red and is restricted to ten percent (10%) or less of the colour of the specimen; tan markings in excess of that amount shall disqualify. In the case of tan points in the Black or ASCOB, the markings shall be located as follows:

- 1) A clear tan spot over each eye;
- 2) On the sides of the muzzle and on the cheeks;
- 3) On the underside of the ears;
- 4) On all feet and/or legs;
- 5) Under the tail;
- 6) On the chest, optional; presence or absence shall not be penalized.

Tan markings which are not readily visible or which amount only to traces, shall be penalized. Tan on the muzzle which extends upward, over and joins shall also be penalized. The absence of tan markings in the Black or ASCOB in any of the specified locations in any otherwise tan-pointed dog shall disqualify.

**SIZES:** The ideal height at the withers: for an adult dog is 38.1 cms (15 ins) and for an adult bitch, 35.6 cms (14 ins). Height may vary 1.25 cms (&1/2; inch) above or below this ideal.

A dog whose height exceeds 39.4 cms (15.5 ins), or a bitch whose height exceeds 36.8 cms (14.5 ins) shall be disqualified.

An adult dog whose height is less than 36.8 cms (14.5 ins) and an adult bitch whose height is less than 34.3 cms (13.5 ins) shall be penalised.

Height is determined by a line perpendicular to the ground from the top of the shoulder blades, the dog standing naturally with its forelegs and lower hind legs parallel to the line of measurement.

**PROPORTIONS:** The measurement from the breast bone to back of thigh is slightly longer than the measurement from the highest point of withers to the ground. The body must be of sufficient length to permit a straight and free stride; the dog never appears long and low.

**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.