KUSA
Kennel Union of Southern Africa

OTTERHOUND

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2019

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Big, strong Hound, primarily built for long day's work in water, but able to gallop on land.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

It is generally felt that the Otterhound's ancestry includes a French influence combined with original English Hound strains. He is a kindly fellow with a typical, loud, baying call that he can use to good effect when he needs to indicate that he has found prey that interests him, though today his primary purpose of hunting otters is banned. The breed has keen scenting ability. When following the scent of an otter on land, the scent is called a drag, and in water a wash. An Otterhound can follow a drag for up to twelve hours and, when following a wash, may swim for up to five hours. In addition to his oily coat, he has webbed feet.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Large, straight-limbed and sound, rough-coated, with majestic head, strong body, and loose, long-striding action. Rough double coat and large feet essential. Free moving.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

Distance from nose-end to stop slightly shorter than from stop to occiput.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Amiable and even-tempered. Signs of aggression or nervousness should be heavily penalised.

HEAD

Clean, very imposing, deep rather than wide, expression being open and amiable. Whole head, except for nose, well-covered with rough hair, ending in slight moustache and beard.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Nicely domed, neither coarse nor overdone, rising from stop to slight peak at occiput. No trace of scowl or bulge on forehead.

Stop: Distinct, though not exaggerated.

Facial Region:

Nose: Good wide nose, wide nostrils.

Muzzle: Strong, deep.

Cheeks: Clean cheekbones

Lips: Plenty of lip and flew, but not exaggerated.

Jaws and teeth: Jaws strong, large, well-placed teeth with perfect, regular, scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Eyes:

Intelligent, moderately deep-set eye; haw showing only slightly. Eye colour and rim pigment variable according to coat colour (a blue and tan Hound may have hazel eyes). Yellow eye undesirable.

Ears:

Unique feature of the breed. Long, pendulous, set-on level with corner of eye; easily reaching nose when pulled forward, with characteristic fold. Leading edge folding or rolling inwards giving curious draped appearance - an essential point not to be lost. Well-covered and fringed with hair.

NECK

Long, powerful, set smoothly into shoulders. Slight dewlap permissible.

BODY

Very strong.

***Topline*:** Level.
***Back*:** Broad.
***Loin*:** Short and strong.
***Chest*:** Deep with well-sprung, fairly deep, oval ribcage. Ribs carried well back, allowing plenty of heart and lung room; neither too wide nor too narrow.

TAIL

Stern set high, carried up when alert or moving, never curling over back; may droop when standing. Thick at base, tapering to point; bone reaching to hock and carried straight or in a slight curve. Hair under tail rather longer and more profuse than that on upper surface.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

Shoulder: Clean and well laid back
Forearm: Strongly boned, straight from elbow to ground.
Metacarpus (pastern): Strong and slightly sprung.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Very strong; well-muscled when viewed from any angle, standing neither too wide nor too narrow behind. Hind angulation moderate. In natural stance, hind legs from hock to ground perpendicular.
Upper thigh: Heavily muscled.
Lower thigh: Heavily muscled.
Hock joint: Hocks well let down.
Metatarsus (rear pastern): Turning neither in nor out.

FEET

Forefeet: Large, round, well-knuckled, thickly padded, turning neither in nor out. Compact but capable of spreading; web must be in evidence.
Hind feet: Hind feet only slightly smaller than forefeet. Large, round, well-knuckled, thickly padded, turning neither in nor out. Compact but capable of spreading; web must be in evidence.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Very loose and shambling at walk, springing immediately into a loose, very long-striding, sound, active trot. Gallop smooth and exceptionally long-striding.

COAT

Hair long 4cm – 8cm (approx. 1½" – 3"), dense, rough, harsh, and waterproof, but not wiry; of broken appearance. Softer hair on head and lower legs, natural. Undercoat evident and there may be a slight oily texture in top and undercoat. Not trimmed for exhibition. Presentation should be natural.

COLOUR

- All recognised Hound colours permissible: whole-coloured, grizzle, sandy, red, wheaten, blue; these may have slight white markings on head, chest, feet, and tail tip.
- White Hounds may have slight lemon, blue, or badger pied markings.
- Black and tan, blue and tan, black and cream, occasional liver, tan and liver, tan and white.

* Colours not permissible: Liver and white, a white-bodied Hound with black and tan patches distinctly separate.
* Pigment should harmonise, though not necessarily blend, with coat colour; for example a tan Hound may have a brown nose and eye rims.
* A slight butterfly nose permissible.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 69cm (approx. 27”).
Females: 61cm (approx. 4”).

N.B. *Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog’s ability to perform its traditional work.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.

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FCI Standard No 294: OTTERHOUND

FCI Classification: Group 6 – Scenthounds and related breeds.
Section 1.1. Large-sized Hounds.
Without Working Trial