

Breed Standard of the Border Collie

General Appearance

The general appearance shall be that of a well-proportioned dog. The smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to ensure that it is capable of enduring long periods of active duty in its intended task as a working sheep dog. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness is undesirable.

The Border Collie is a moderate dog without exaggeration. Balance is not simply the relationship between fore and hindquarters; balance refers to the dog as a whole - from head proportions and carriage to correct set and carriage of tail. The height at the wither being in proportion to length from prosternum to rear point of buttock - 10:9.

The body is moderately long, length being in the length of rib cage (rib cage carried well back) not the loins. The forelegs about half the height of the dog, the length of the head and neck always in balance to the whole of the dog, with correct set and carriage of tail.

Think about the phrases used in the description:

Well proportioned...Smooth outline....Quality, gracefulness and perfect balance
Sufficient substance No tendency to coarseness or weediness



Characteristics/Temperament

The Border Collie is highly intelligent, with an instinctive tendency to work and is readily responsive to training. Its keen, alert and eager expression add to its intelligent appearance, whilst its loyal and faithful nature demonstrates that it is at all times kindly disposed towards stock. Any aspect of structure or temperament foreign to a working dog is uncharacteristic.

Head

The skull is broad and flat between the ears, slightly narrowing to the eye, with a pronounced stop, cheeks deep but not prominent. The muzzle tapering to the nose, is strong and the same length as the skull. The lips are tight and clean and the nose is large with open nostrils. The colour in all dogs will be a solid colour with no pink or light pigment and shall complement the background colour of the dog.

The size of the head and the length of head and neck should always be in balance to the whole of the dog.

The standard is very specific:
Skull and muzzle should be of equal length
Stop is pronounced
Skull is broad and flat between the ears



Eyes

The eyes are set wide apart, oval shaped of moderate size harmonising with the colour of the coat but darker colour preferred, except in the case of chocolate where a lighter colour is permissible and in the case of merles where blue is permissible. The expression is mild but keen, alert and intelligent.

Clarification - the eye colour should be some shade of brown (except in the case of blue merles) and 'darker colour preferred' does not apply to all coat colours. Black genotype dogs should have black pigment and medium to dark eyes. Chocolates will have a liver coloured nose and light brown to amber eyes. Blues will have slate coloured noses and lighter eyes. In this breed reds can have either a chocolate or black genotype, therefore some reds may have liver noses and lighter eyes and some can have black noses and darker brown eyes.

Expression however is more important than colour - 'mild, keen, alert, intelligent'....
Think also about size, shape and placement – moderate, oval and set wide apart.....

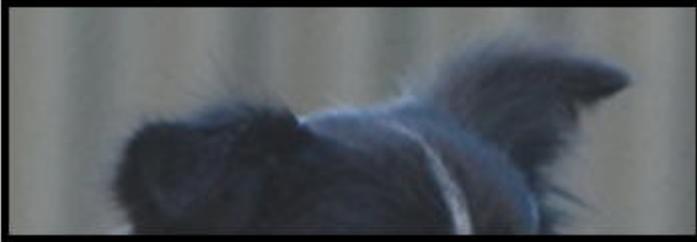


Ears

The ears should be of medium size and texture, set well apart, carried semi-erect. They are sensitive in their use, and inside well furnished with hair.

The current standard is specific in terms of size, set and carriage, however, you will find a wide variety of ear carriage within the breed.

Mobility in the ear, regardless of carriage, is important as is the correct ear placement and set. When assessing expression it is important to look to both the eyes and ears.



Mouth

The teeth should be sound, strong and evenly spaced; the lower incisors just behind but touching the upper, that is a scissor bite.

Neck

The neck is of good length, strong and muscular, slightly arched and broadening to the shoulders, without throatiness or coarseness.

Both the neck and tail should be used to balance the dog on the move. The reach of neck is important. The front feet of the Border Collie when gaing, should reach to the nose of the dog, a short neck will see a short stepping or hackneyed gait.

When a Border moves whether in a clean gait or when crouching, the dog should be able carry the neck and head at different levels.



Forequarters

The shoulders are long, and well angulated to the upper arm, neither in nor out at elbow. The forelegs are well boned, straight and parallel when viewed from the front. Pasterns show flexibility with a slight slope when viewed from the side.

Body

The body is moderately long with well-sprung ribs tapering to a fairly deep and moderately broad chest. The loins are broad, deep, muscular and only slightly arched, flanks deep and not cut up.

Hindquarters

The hindquarters are broad and muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to the set on of tail. The thighs are long, broad, deep and muscular with well-turned stifles and strong hocks, well let down and when viewed from the rear are straight and parallel.

Feet

Oval in shape, pads deep, strong and sound, toes moderately arched and close together. Nails short and strong.

Self explanatory. A strong working foot able to endure all terrains and working conditions. There should be no weakness at all.



Tail

The tail is moderately long, set on low, well furnished and with an upward swirl towards the end, completing the graceful contour and balance of the dog. The tail may be raised in excitement, but not carried over the back.

Tail is set as a continuation of the spine and should reach the hock in length
Used like a rudder to balance the dog on the move

Refer photos in the movement section for examples of correct carriage on the move and the upward swirl.

Coat

Double coated, with a moderately long, dense, medium textured topcoat while the undercoat is short, soft and dense, making a weather resisting protection, with abundant coat to form mane, breeching and brush. On face, ear tips, forelegs (except for feather), hind legs from hock to ground, the hair is short and smooth.

Phrases to remember:

'double coated', 'weather resistant', 'moderately long and dense', 'medium textured topcoat', 'short soft dense undercoat'. The coat should "outline" not obscure the body. The description 'abundant' should read as 'sufficient', the length and density of the coat being in moderation.

The "smooth outline" would indicate that a flat, straight coat is preferred.

Movement

The movement is free, smooth and tireless, with a minimum lift of the feet, conveying the impression of the ability to move with great stealth. The action, viewed from the front, should be straightforward and true, without weakness at shoulders, elbows or pasterns. Viewed from behind the quarters thrust with strength and flexibility, with hocks not close or too far apart. When trotting, the dog's feet tend to come closer together as speed increases, but when the dog comes to rest he should stand four square. Any tendency to stiltedness or to cowhocks or bowhocks is a serious fault.

The movement of the Border Collie is one of the hallmarks of the breed





Colour

Black and white, blue and white, chocolate and white, red and white, blue merle and the tri-colour black, tan and white. In each case the basic body colour must predominate and be the background colour of the dog.



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Size

Height: Dogs 48 - 53 cm (approx. 19 - 21 in) at withers. Bitches 46 - 51 cm (approx. 18 - 20 in) at withers.

Size is not a disqualifying feature and all things being equal correct conformation should be preferred.

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