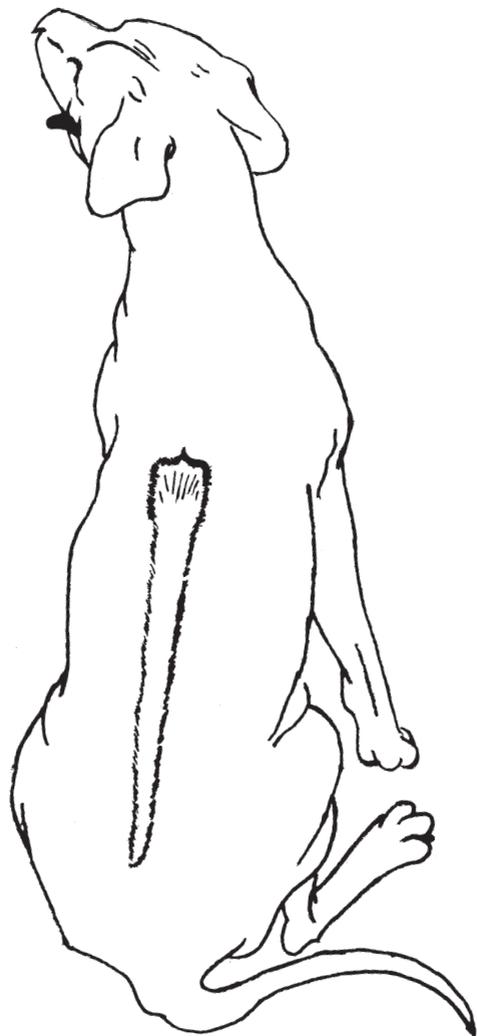


**AFFILIATED TO
THE ZIMBABWE KENNEL CLUB**



**HANDBOOK OF
THE
RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK CLUB**

(The Parent Club – Founded 1922)



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This booklet is presented by THE RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK CLUB (The Parent Club - Founded 1922) with the hope the interpretations will be given careful study by all judges, breeders and fanciers, thus eliminating the diversity of concepts on the Standard that are currently so widespread.



FRANCIS RICHARD BARNES, the convenor, founder and first chairman of the Rhodesian Ridgeback (Lion Dog) Club, founded in 1922. Mr Barnes also was responsible for formulating the original breed standard. From a family portrait, taken when Mr Barnes was 50 years old. He passed away on the 15th of April 1962 at the age of 87 years.

Reproduced by courtesy of his son, the late Mr. E. Barnes.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BREED AND THE CLUB

By: The Late Mylda L. Arsenis

Long before the white man set foot in southern Africa ridged hunting dogs were there - a trusted and prized possession of African Hottentots. From descriptions found in the writings of early historians, it is known that the Hottentot Hunting Dog was of a Spitz type. One such description is found in 'The Yellow and Dark-Skinned People of Africa South of the Zambesi', by George McCall Theal (published in 1910). He wrote that the Hottentot dog was 'an ugly creature, his body being shaped like that of a jackal, and *the hair on his spine being turned forward*: but he was a faithful, serviceable animal of his kind.'

Possibly the only extant illustration of Hottentot dogs showing ridges is to be found in Dr. David Livingstone's book, 'Livingstone's Missionary Travels in South Africa', published in 1857. The dog in the foreground of this old engraving resembles a jackal, and clearly shows a ridge of hair on its back.

Earlier this century the late Professor Ludvic von Schulmuth, a noted cynologist, spent a considerable time in Africa, delving into the history of African dogs. He became convinced that the Hottentot Hunting Dog was a very old breed, and had itself descended from an animal that was not pure dog as we know it today, but was something akin to a jackal, or a hyena. Apart from his investigations among living remnants of the early African breeds, he was fortunate (in 1936) in unearthing the remains of several Hottentot dogs, in a 'dig' near the Orange River. Those skeletal remains helped him to form a clear picture of what the dogs had looked like when alive. In one instance in particular, enough was preserved to show the ridge, the erect ears, broad flat skull and long bushy tail, all tallying with the known description of the Hottentot Hunting Dog.

Some cynologists have suggested that Hottentot Hunting Dogs were not indigenous, but many centuries ago were brought to Africa from an island called Phu Quoc in the Gulf of Siam (Thailand), the only other place on earth where ridged dogs Spitz type are to be found. However, what evidence is available would suggest the contrary to be the case.

A thousand years ago and well into the nineteenth century, there were Arab slave-traders transporting their human cargoes from Africa to the East. Later, Portuguese and Dutch merchants sailed to and from the

East, carrying a wealth of African merchandise in the form of ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers, gold, etc. It was not uncommon for monkeys and parrots to be taken on board as pets, so why not dogs? Is it not reasonable to conclude that some Hottentot dogs found new owners aboard ships bound for the East?

In those far off days the island of Phu Quoc may have served as a port of call to replenish water and food supplies. Dogs may have been traded for fresh water and other necessities, or perhaps puppies were left behind on the island. Another suggestion is that ships carrying dogs may have been wrecked off the coast of Phu Ouoc. Isolated, the dogs have bred true-to-type for centuries, so that today there is preserved on Phu Quoc what may well be the perfect example of the original Hottentot Hunting Dog.

Rhodesian Ridgeback enthusiasts are interested in the Hottentot dog, because it is from this old African breed that our modern Ridgeback has derived its ridge. Various Portuguese, Dutch and German sporting breeds, brought to the Cape by early settlers and crossed with Hottentot dogs, produced ridged hunting dogs that were much sought after by big game hunters.

In 1875, two such ridged dogs were brought to Matabeleland (now part of Rhodesia), from Swellendam in the Cape, by the pioneer missionary, Charles Helm. It is almost certain that present day Rhodesian Ridgebacks have partly descended from these two dogs.

By crossing his own hunting pack with the ridged dogs belonging to the Rev. Charles Helm, in the 1870's, the big game hunter Cornelis van Rooyen produced dogs very similar in appearance and type to the modern Rhodesian Ridgeback. It may rightly be said that van Rooyen did more than any of his contemporaries in developing and popularising the Ridgebacks for hunting purposes. Visitors to his farm at Mangwe, south of Plumtree were always impressed by his great attachment to his dogs. Throughout his life van Rooyen was seldom without one or more Ridgebacks.

At the turn of this century another man, who was to feature very prominently in the history of both the breed and the Club, appeared on the scene. He was Francis Richard Barnes, the first Secretary and Joint Founder of the Salisbury Kennel Club in 1897, and who also judged at this Club's first All-Breeds Show.

In 1910 Mr. Barnes left Salisbury to settle in Bulawayo. It was while living in Bulawayo that he became interested in Ridgebacks, and in 1915 bought his first dog, 'Dingo', from a Mr. Graham Stacey. Mr. Stacey in turn had obtained his first Ridgebacks from Cornelis van Rooyen. In those early days, as most Ridgebacks stemmed from van Rooyen's famous lion hunting pack, they were simply referred to as 'van Rooyen's lion dogs', and to come into possession of a dog of this breeding was considered to be a most valuable acquisition.

Later, Eskdale Judy was bought and produced two well-known Eskdale Ridgebacks, Leo and Jock. Another bitch, Eskdale Connie, was purchased from Mr. 'Bob' Dickson. These were the Ridgebacks that formed the nucleus of Eskdale Kennel.

The need to formulate a standard for Ridgebacks had become increasingly apparent to Mr. Barnes. There were many ridged dogs about - so there was every need for a standard which would be accepted and adhered to by recognised breeders and owners. Mr. Barnes determined that a Club should be formed, and that it should put into effect the accepted standard.

In 1922 a provisional meeting, more in the nature of a friendly discussion, was held in the home of a Mr. W.H. Peard, at Suburbs, Bulawayo. It was at this original meeting that the Rhodesian Ridgeback (Lion Dog) Club came into being.

Shortly after this, but still in the year 1922, Rhodesian 'lion dog' owners were circularised and invited to attend a meeting to be held in conjunction with the Bulawayo Kennel Club's Show. Some 25 to 30 persons responded to the invitation and attended, either with or without their dogs. Suggestions for a standard were called for and considered. Mr. Barnes later compiled the accepted standard. Except for minor changes, that original standard still is the accepted standard for Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

Years later, 'F.R.' admitted that he had had the Dalmatian standard in mind and had actually 'poached' on it when drawing up the Rhodesian Ridgeback (Lion Dog) standard. A comparison of the two standards reveals a similarity in general appearance, head and skull, eyes, ears, neck, forequarters, hindquarters, body, feet, tail and coat.

Due credit must also be given to Mr. Barnes for his perseverance and great foresight in not only formulating a standard for Rhodesia's

Ridgebacks, and founding the Parent Club, but in his untiring efforts to have both the breed and the Club recognised by the South African Kennel Union. After considerable correspondence had passed between Mr. Barnes and the S.A.K.U. (now the Kennel Union of Southern Africa), official recognition of both the breed and the Club came in 1924. At that time the Rhodesian Ridgeback was placed in the Gun Dog Group, but in 1949 was transferred to the Sporting Hound Group, where it remains to this day.

In the years following 1922, many Rhodesian breeders played a part in helping to develop the breed in accordance with the accepted standard. Prominent among these were:

Mrs. M.L. Dickson's Drumbuck Kennels which produced Drumbuck Bango, sired by Drumbuck Jock, ex Eskdale Gracie. He proved an outstanding sire, possibly the best Mrs. Dickson ever bred, and features in the ancestry of many Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

Drumbuck Bango, mated to Miss Mabel Wellings' first Ridgeback, Agrippa (purchased by Miss Wellings in the 1920's) gave us Cleopatra of Leo Kop, the first Ridgeback to be registered under this well-known affix (in 1933). The ancestry of most Leo Kop Ridgebacks may be traced back to this original breeding.

Mr. T. Kedia Law's Avondale Kennels became prominent through overseas exports, mainly to India, and from a sketch of one of his dogs, Mapandora of Avondale, by Nina Scott Langley, which appeared in Hutchinson's Dog Encyclopaedia.

'Tractor' Arthur Smith's Sipolilo Ridgebacks consisted of a hunting pack, with which he extensively hunted large and small game in the Umvukwes District of Rhodesia, in the late 1920's. Although 'Tractor' Smith was a prospector, he was often down on his luck, and it was on these frequent occasions that his pack came to his aid, for they hunted to provide an adequate supply of fresh venison for both their master and themselves. The most famous Sipolilo dog was one named Ginger, the progenitor of many present day Ridgebacks.

Captain and Mrs. B. Miles based their Muneni Kennels on Sipolilo stock. That excellent stud dog of the early days, Jock of Ealing, was bred by Captain Miles and sired by his Muneni Temba, ex Muneni Dingwa.

Mr Vernon H. Brisley's Viking Kennels also were founded on Sipolilo stock. For many years he bred first class Ridgebacks outstanding among these being Viking Cheeky Boy and Viking Towser. Mr. Brisley was keenly interested in promoting the breed and often exhibited his dogs at Shows. The Vernon Brisley Puppy Cup, originally offered through the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club in 1929, still is a floating trophy, competed for annually in Harare (Salisbury) at a Championship Show held in conjunction with the Royal Agricultural Society's Show. Sad to relate, numerous setbacks both in breeding and farming caused Mr. Brisley to become discouraged. In the end he gave up breeding Ridgebacks and shortly before the outbreak of World War Two, he switched to one of the terrier breeds.

Mrs. D.E. Strickland's Lion's Den Kennels, were based on Viking blood. Her Rhodesian Champion, Starlight of Lion's Den, was for many years depicted on the cover of the Parent Club's Handbook, while Mrs. Strickland herself held the office of Secretary.

Major H.G. Mundy 'of Shipley' may not have bred on as large a scale as some of the above breeders, but he always strove to breed quality. He was a noted authority and judge of Rhodesian Ridgebacks, and by radio broadcasts and writing did much to popularise 'our Dog'. He will long be remembered as one of the stalwarts, whose tremendous drive and enthusiasm kept the Club going during the difficult years of World War Two.

Martin Kingcome, M.R.C.V.S., did not breed Rhodesian Ridgebacks, but it was his interest in the breed that prompted his intensive research on Dermoid Sinus, during the early 1940's. His findings and recommended treatment, did much to eliminate this skin lesion in Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

Both the breed and the Club have come a long way since 1922. Through the years the Rhodesian Ridgeback has been developed and immeasurably improved, thanks to judicious and selective breeding by conscientious breeders. Today it may rightly be said that the country's own dog is one of the most distinctive and attractive breeds in the world and retains all the qualities of his illustrious forebears.

THE HUNTING AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE BREED

The name 'Lion Dog' became attached to the Ridgeback because several of the earlier big game hunters, such as van Rooyen, Selous, Upcher and others, found them outstandingly the best for lion hunting. This led many unthinking persons to assume that the dogs were the actual killers of lions. A little thought would have made it clear that no dog known would have any chance in actual fight with a lion. What Ridgebacks do, and do so effectively, is to harass a lion by constant and cleverly made feint attacks until he, or she, is held up in sheer bewilderment, giving the hunter exactly what he is waiting for - a deliberate shot at close range. To do this effectively needs courage, agility, endurance, and an instinctive skill, which this breed seems to possess in a striking degree.

A trained hunting pack will, upon scenting game (not necessarily lion), fan out, one running directly towards the quarry and the others circling with the object of cutting off any retreat. Here again the dogs' amazing agility is displayed - the ability to turn in a split second, swerve and feint, or maintain a fast pace should their quarry break and run, and a chase ensue.

Hunting alone, a Ridgeback will harry larger game, but often uses his weight in a direct breast-charge on smaller game. This charge is given very fast, in a kind of hit-and-run attack, leaving the dog on his feet yards away, and out of striking distance of his quarry.

His excellent scenting powers are scarcely second to the special gun-dog breeds, and he can be trained to be a very satisfactory gun-dog. If you wish to have a brace of birds for the pot, and will take a little trouble to show him what you want, he certainly will find them for you.

Many extraordinary stories of the sagacity of the Ridgeback could be related. Fidelity is a marked characteristic, and he will repay affection many times over. There is no finer pal among dogs, nor more intelligent companion. For the lone person the Ridgeback is the ideal dog.

A Ridgeback is peculiarly attached to his owner and his family, and as a guard for home and property he has proved invaluable. He is distinctly

reserved with strangers, although not aggressive or treacherous, and his low growl to a stranger is a warning to stop, which is obeyed without question. His friendship, once given, is for life.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback Club is the 'Parent Club', and was formed in 1922 to standardise this breed.

The Standard set down in this handbook is accepted as correct by the Zimbabwe Kennel Club, the Governing Body to which this Club is affiliated.

Persons wishing to have further information relating to the breed and the Club are invited to write the Hon. Secretary at:

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**THE RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK STANDARD
AND
THE PARENT CLUB'S INTERPRETATION
OF THE STANDARD**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MARILYN MARSCHAT-RHODES

We wish to thank her for her permission to use her
drawings for this booklet.

STANDARD - Revised 1996

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

ORIGIN: Southern Africa

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY: The Rhodesian Ridgeback is presently the only registered breed indigenous to southern Africa. It's forebears can be traced to the Cape Colony of southern Africa, where they crossed with the early pioneers' dogs and the semi-domesticated, ridged Hottentot hunting dogs. Hunting mainly in groups of two or three, the original function of the Rhodesian Ridgeback or lion dog was to track game, especially lion, and, with great agility, keep it at bay until the arrival of the hunter. The original standard, which was drafted by F.R. Barnes, in Bulawayo, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), in 1922, was based on that of the Dalmatian and was approved by the South African Kennel Union in 1926.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The Rhodesian Ridgeback should represent a well balanced, strong, muscular, agile and active dog, symmetrical in outline, and capable of great endurance with a fair amount of speed. The emphasis is on agility, elegance and soundness with no tendency towards massiveness. The peculiarity of the breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge is the escutcheon of the breed. The ridge must be clearly defined, symmetrical and tapering towards the haunch. It must start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to the hip (haunches) bones. The ridge must contain only two crowns, identical and opposite each other. The lower edges of the crowns must not extend further down the ridge than one-third of it's length. A good average width of the ridge is 5 cm (2").

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT: Dignified, intelligent, aloof with strangers, but showing no aggression or shyness.

HEAD

CRANIAL REGION:

Skull: Should be of a fair length (width of head between ears, distance from occiput to stop, stop to end of nose, should be equal), flat and broad between the ears; the head should be free from wrinkles when in repose.

Stop: The stop should be reasonably well defined and not in one straight line from the nose to the occipital bone.

FACIAL REGION

Nose: The nose should be black or brown. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown nose by amber eyes.

Muzzle: The muzzle should be long, deep and powerful.

Lips: The lips should be clean, closely fitting the jaws.

Mouth: Jaws strong, with a perfect and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. The teeth must be well developed, especially the canines or holders.

Cheeks: Cheeks should be clean.

Eyes: Should be set moderately well apart, round and bright and sparkling, with intelligent expression, their colour harmonising with colour of the coat.

Ears: Should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at base, and gradually tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head.

Neck: Should be fairly long, strong and free from throatiness.

BODY

Back: Powerful.

Loins: Strong, muscular and slightly arched.

Chest: Should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious; the brisket should reach to the elbow.

Forechest: Should be visible when viewed from the side.

Ribs: Moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel-hoops.

Tail: Should be strong at the root and gradually tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should be of moderate length. It should not be

attached too high nor too low, and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS: The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong and well boned, with the elbows close to the body. When viewed from the side, the forelegs should be wider than when viewed from the front.

Pasterns should be strong with slight spring.

Shoulders: The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed.

Feet: The feet should be compact and round, with well arched toes, and tough elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads.

HINDQUARTERS: In the hind legs the muscles should be clean, well defined, good turn of stifle and strong hocks well let down.

GAIT/MOVEMENT: Straight forward, free and active.

COAT

HAIR: Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance, but neither woolly nor silky.

COLOUR: Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes is permissible, but excessive white hairs here, on belly, or above toes is undesirable. A dark muzzle and ears permissible. Excessive black hairs throughout the coat are highly undesirable.

SIZE:

The desirable heights are:

Dogs 63 cm (25") to 69 cm (27")

Bitches 61 cm (24") to 66 cm (26")

WEIGHT:

The desirable weights are:

Dogs: 36.5 kg (80 lbs)

Bitches: 32 kg (70 lbs)

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.

NB: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

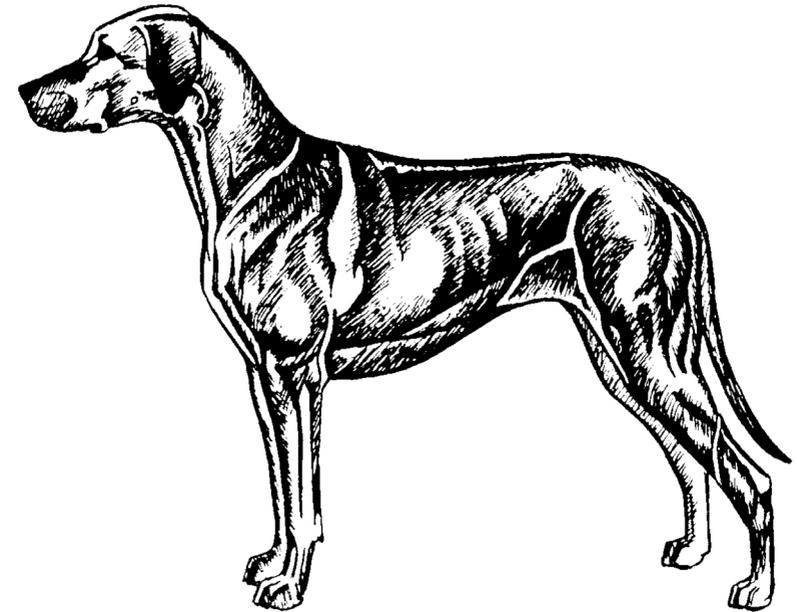
Scale of Points in their Relative Importance

Ridge.....	20
Head and eyes.....	15
Neck and shoulders.....	10
Body, back, chest and loins.....	10
Legs and feet.....	15
Coat.....	5
Tail.....	5
Size, symmetry, general appearance.....	20
 TOTAL.....	 100

Whilst the points of this scale are indicators of the importance attached to each of the various features, in practice judging in the ring is done by comparisons with other dogs, and not on score cards. A dog is judged as a unit and it is up to the judge to pay attention to the details in making his/her assessment.

THE PARENT CLUB'S INTERPRETATION OF THE STANDARD

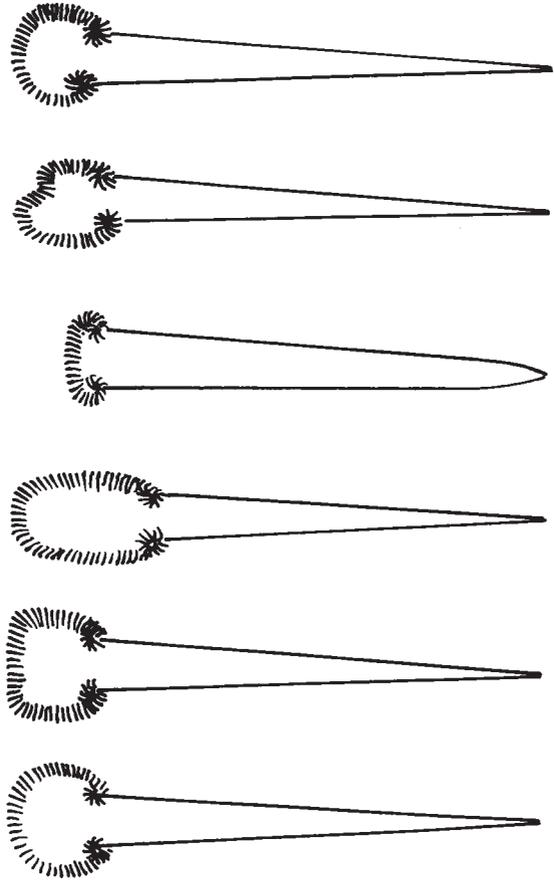
GENERAL APPEARANCE



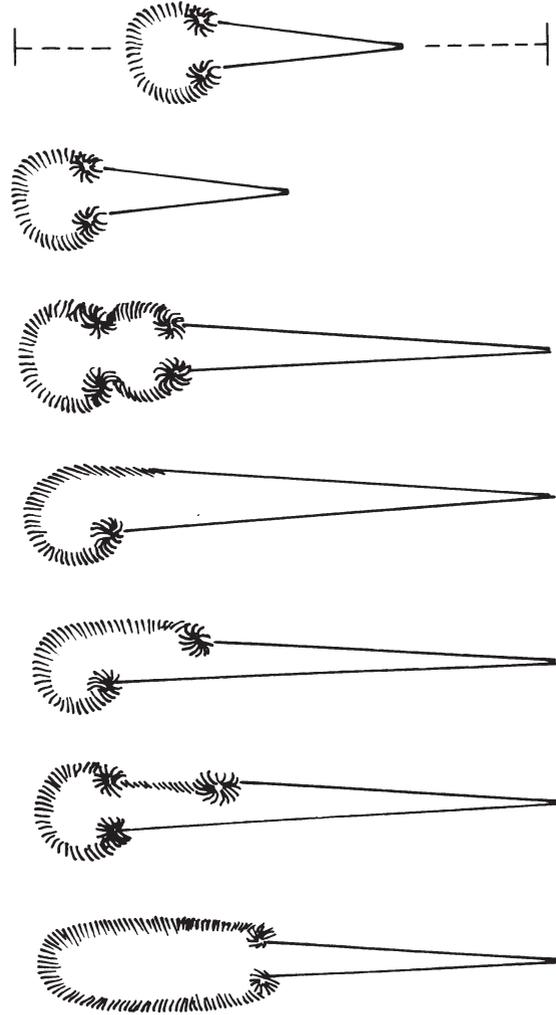
This illustration of a well-balanced Ridgeback indicates what the Standard is striving for.

THE RIDGE

The shape of the ridge is determined at birth and does not alter. The absence of a ridge must be considered a major fault.



ALL OF THESE RIDGES ARE CORRECT



SAMPLE OF INCORRECT RIDGES

HEAD

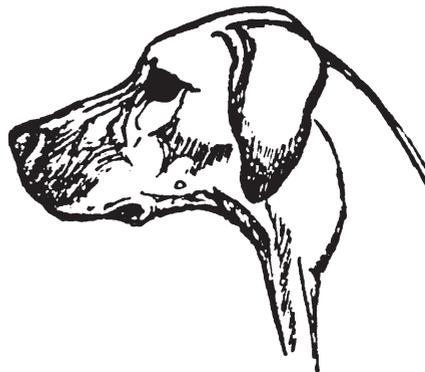
The distance from the tip of the nose to the stop, from the stop to the occiput (bony protuberance at rear of skull), and the width of the skull should be equal. It is important that the distance from the tip of the nose to the stop should never be less than the other two dimensions (i.e. a short muzzle is undesirable).

The planes of the muzzle and skull should be parallel.

Refer to the drawing on page 35 which details the points of the Rhodesian Ridgeback.



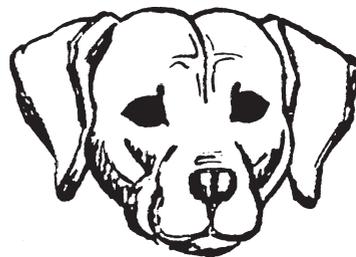
**CORRECT
FRONT VIEW**



**CORRECT
SIDE VIEW**

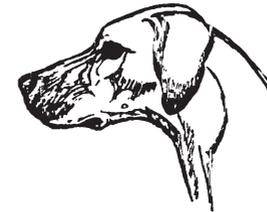


**INCORRECT
TOO FINE**

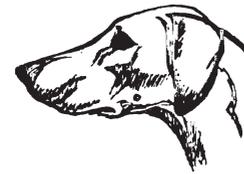


**INCORRECT
CHEEKY - ROUND & HEAVY**

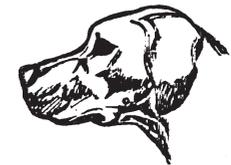
MUZZLE



CORRECT

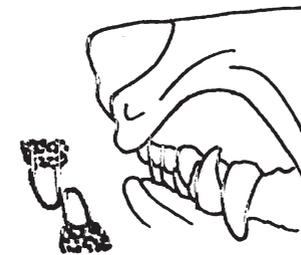


**INCORRECT
SNIPEY MUZZLE**



**INCORRECT
COARSE—
BULL-MASTIFF HEAD**

MOUTH



CORRECT

**SCISSORS BITE WITH
THE UPPER INCISORS
STRIKING—JUST ALONG
THE FRONT FACE OF
THE LOWER ONES.**

FACIAL REGION

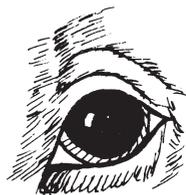
EYES

ROUND EYE
CORRECT

BULGING EYE
INCORRECT

SUNKEN EYE
INCORRECT

FRONT
VIEW



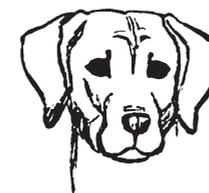
SIDE
VIEW



FACIAL REGION

EARS

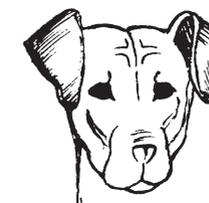
CORRECT



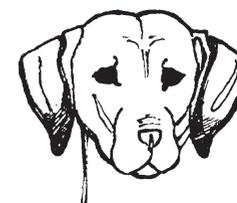
INCORRECT



EARS HIGHER
THAN HEAD



BUTTON EAR



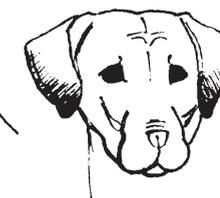
LOW-SET EAR



ROSE EAR

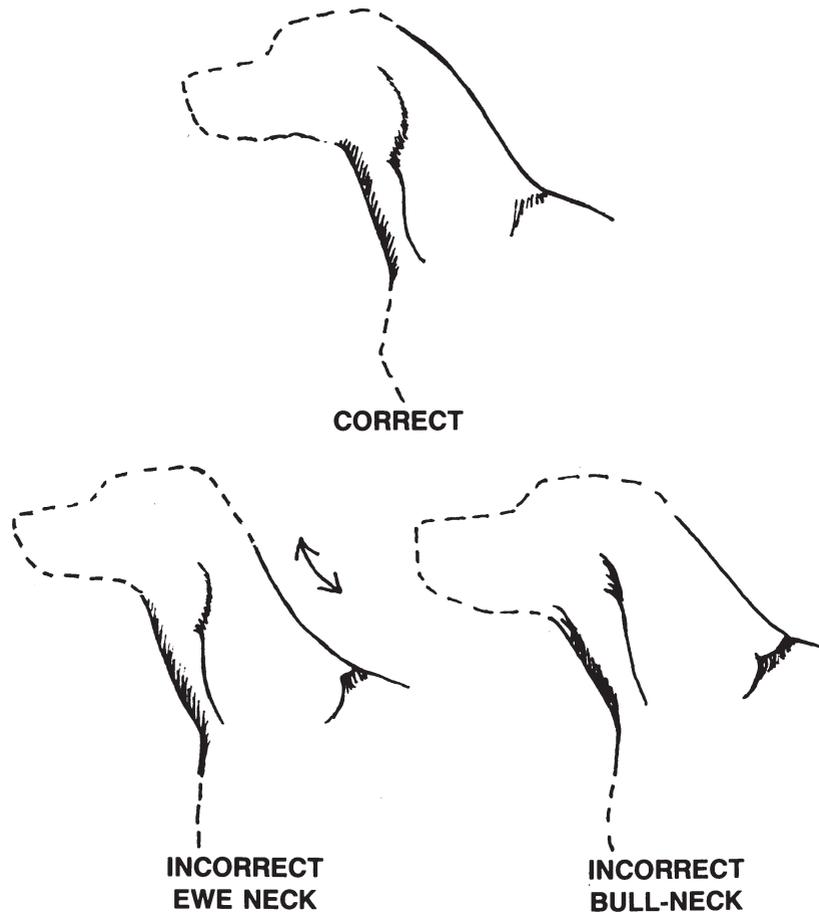


FLYING EAR

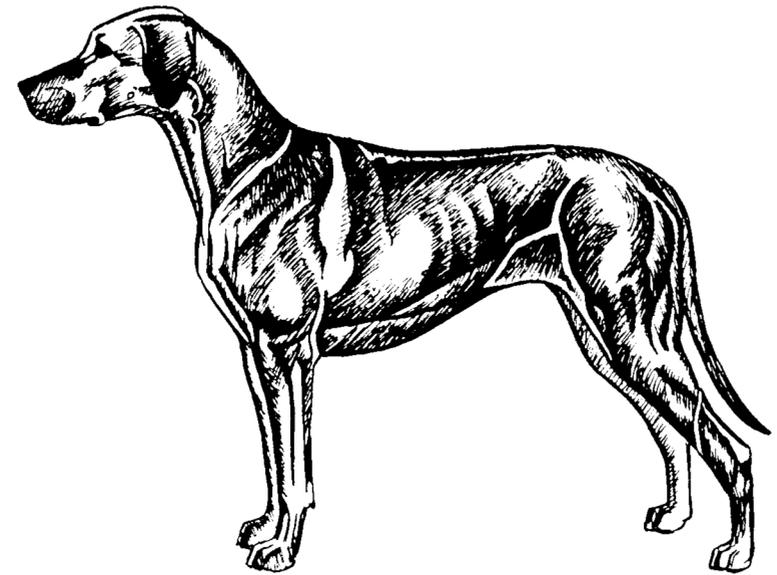


SHORT EAR

NECK



BODY

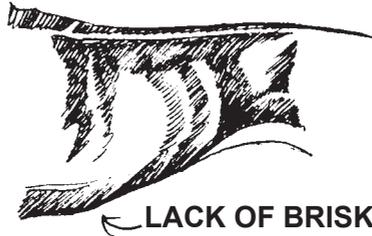


CORRECT

BODY

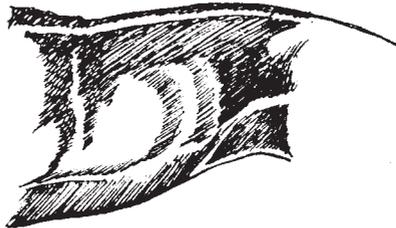
BACK AND LOINS

INCORRECT
HERRING GUT

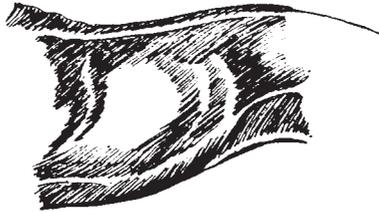


LACK OF BRISKET LENGTH

INCORRECT
CAMEL BACK



INCORRECT
ROACH BACK



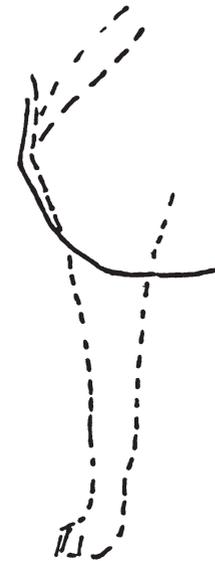
INCORRECT
SWAY BACK
AND
HIGH REAR



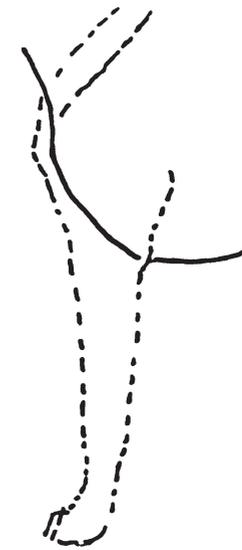
BODY

FORECHEST

FORECHEST:
DOTTED LINE INDICATES POINT OF
SHOULDER, SHOULDER LAY BACK & LEG.
SOLID LINE INDICATES FORE-CHEST.



CORRECT



INCORRECT

Forechest is used by the dog in a breast charge on game.

TAIL



**CORRECT CROUP
AND TAIL SET
WHILE STANDING**



**CORRECT
WHILE MOVING**



**KINK TAIL
INCORRECT**



**GAY TAIL
INCORRECT**

TAIL



**INCORRECT
STEEP CROUP**



**INCORRECT
FLAT CROUP**

FOREQUARTERS

FEET AND PASTERNS



**CORRECT
PASTERNS & FOOT
(STANDING STILL)**

FOREQUARTERS

FEET AND PASTERNS

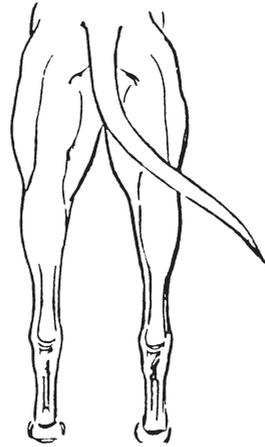


**INCORRECT
SPLAY OR FLAT FEET**

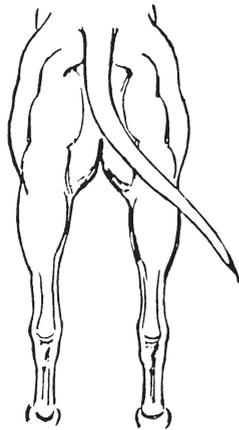
**INCORRECT
WEAK PASTERNS 'OVER' AT PASTERNS**



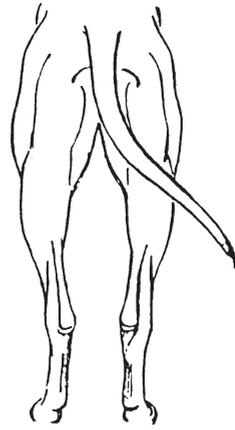
HINDQUARTERS



CORRECT



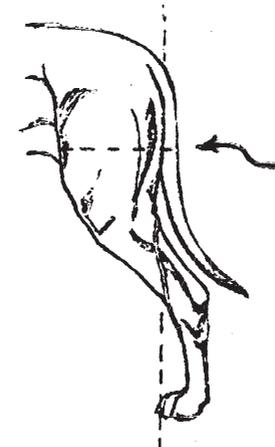
**INCORRECT
MUSCLE-BOUND**



**INCORRECT
COW-HOCKED**

HINDQUARTERS

STIFLE AND HOCK



**WIDTH
OF
THIGH**

CORRECT



STRAIGHT STIFLE



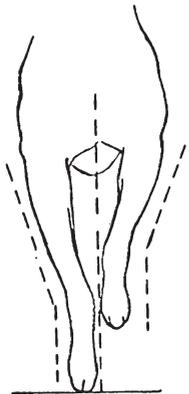
OVER-ANGULATED



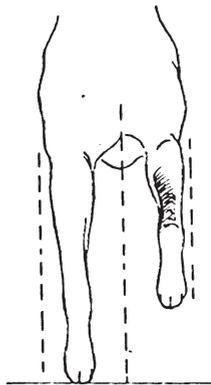
LONG ON HOCK

GAIT/MOVEMENT(FRONT)

**CORRECT
SINGLE-TRACKING
AT A
MODERATE TROT**



**INCORRECT
CLOSE-MOVER**



**INCORRECT
PERPENDICULAR MOVEMENT-
OUT OF KINETIC BALANCE
& LESS FUNCTIONAL
ALSO HIGH-STEPPING WHICH
RESULTS IN 'POUNDING'.**

GAIT/MOVEMENT(REAR)

**CORRECT
SINGLE-TRACKING AT
A MODERATE TROT**



**INCORRECT
CLOSE-MOVER**



**INCORRECT
HOCKS DEFLECTED
OUTWARD. USUALLY
EVIDENCED WHEN
WEIGHT APPLIED.**



**INCORRECT
COW-HOCKED**

COAT

COLOUR

There are many shades of light wheaten to red wheaten and this is best explained by an extract from the Rhodesian Ridgeback Minute Book, Annual General Meeting, Item 10, March 22, 1945:

“It was decided that “wheaten” implied the colour of a ripe ear of wheat of which there were two main types, mainly white wheats and red wheats. The ear of the red wheat is usually of a fairly dark reddish brown colour while that of a white wheat is of a golden yellow or paler yellow shade. The three primary Ridgeback colours are therefore “wheaten”, “red wheaten” and “fawn”. Red wheaten implies bordering on a chestnut colour with lighter or darker shades in places. Given this information, it was thought that a determination as to colour should not be difficult.”

This description still applies today.

