



CKC Breed Standard
Irish Terrier
January 2004
Standard Provided by ABIDS

General Appearance: This Terrier must be active, lithe, and wiry in movement, with great animation; sturdy and strong in substance and bone structure, but at the same time free from clumsiness, for speed, power, and endurance are most essential. The Irish Terrier must be neither cobby nor cloddy, but should be built on lines of speed, with a graceful, racing outline.

Temperament: The Irish Terrier is game and asks no quarter. He is of good temper, most affectionate, and absolutely loyal to mankind. Tender and forbearing with those he loves, this rugged, stout-hearted terrier will guard his master, his mistress, children in his charge, or their possessions, with unflinching courage and with utter contempt of danger or hurt. His life is one continuous and eager offering of loyal and faithful companionship and devoted, loving service. He is ever on guard, and stands between his house and all that threatens.

Size: The most desirable weight in show condition is 27 lb. (12 kg) for Dog and 25 lb. (11 kg) for the Bitch. The height at the shoulder should be approximately 18 inches (46 cm). The weights herein mentioned are ideal and serve as a guide to both breeder and judge. In the show ring, however, the informed judge readily identifies the oversized or undersized Irish Terrier by its conformation and general appearance. The weights named should be regarded as limit weights, as a rule, but it must be considered that a comparatively small, heavily-built and cloddy dog - which is most undesirable and not at all typical - may easily be of standard weight, or over it; whereas another Terrier which is long in leg, lacking in substance and built somewhat upon the lines of a Whippet - also undesirable and not at all typical - may be of the exact weight, or under it; therefore, although the standard weights must be borne well in mind, weight is not the last word in judgement. It is of the greatest importance to select, in so far as possible, terrier of moderate and generally accepted size, possessing the other various necessary characteristics.

Coat and Colour: Coat should be dense and wiry in texture, rich in quality, having a broken appearance, but still lying fairly close to the body, the hairs growing so closely and strongly together that when parted with the fingers the skin is hardly visible; free of softness or silkiness, and not so long as to alter the outline of the body, particularly on the hindquarters. At the base of the stiff outer coat, there should be a growth of finer and softer hair, differing in colour, termed the undercoat. Single coats, which are without any undercoat, and wavy coats, are undesirable; the curly coat is most objectionable. On the sides of the body, the coat is never as harsh as on the back and the quarters, but it should be plentiful and of good texture. Should be whole-coloured; the bright red, red wheaten, or golden red colours are preferable. A small patch of white on the chest, frequently encountered in all whole-coloured breeds, is permissible but not desirable. White on any other part of the body is most objectionable.

Head: Long, but nice proportion to the rest of the body; the **skull** flat, rather narrow between the ears, and narrowing slightly towards the eyes; free from wrinkle, with stop hardly noticeable except in profile. The **jaws** must be strong and muscular, but not too full in the cheek, and of good punishing length. The foreface must not fall away appreciably between or below the eyes; instead, the modelling should be delicate and in contradistinction, for example, to the fullness of foreface of the Greyhound. An exaggerated foreface which is out of proportion to the length of the skull from the occiput to the stop, disturbs the proper balance of the head, and is not desirable. Also, the head of exaggerated length usually accompanies oversize or disproportionate length of body, or both, and such conformation is not typical. On the other hand, the foreface should not be noticeably shorter than is the skull from occiput to stop. Excessive muscular development of the cheeks, or bone development of the temples, conditions which are described by the fanciers as “cheeky”, or “strong in head”, or “thick in skull”, are objectionable. The “bumpy” or “alligator” head, sometimes described as the “taneous” head, in which the skull presents two lumps of bony structure with or without indentations above the eyes, is unsightly and to be faulted. The hair on the upper and lower jaws should be similar in quality and texture to that on the body, and only of sufficient length to present an appearance of additional strength and finish to the foreface. The profuse, goat-like beard is unsightly and undesirable, and almost invariably it betokens the objectionable linty and silken hair

in the coat. **Nose** must be black. **Lips** should be close and well fitting, almost black in colour. **Teeth** should be strong and even, white and sound; and neither overshot nor undershot. **Eyes** dark hazel in colour; small, not prominent; full of life, fire and intelligence. The light or yellow eye is most objectionable. **Ears** small and V-shaped, of moderate thickness, set well on the head and dropping forward closely to the cheek. The ear must be free of fringe, and the hair much shorter and somewhat darker in colour than on the body. A “dead” ear, hound-like in appearance, must be severely penalized. It is not characteristic of the Irish Terrier. An ear which is too slightly erect is undesirable.

Neck: Should be of fair length and gradually widening towards the shoulders, well and proudly carried, and free from throatiness. Generally, there is a slight frill in the hair at each side of the neck, extending almost to the corner of the ear.

Forequarters: Shoulders must be fine, long, and sloping well into the back. Legs moderately long, well set from the shoulders, perfectly straight, with plenty of bone and muscle; the elbows working clear of the sides; pasterns short, straight, and hardly noticeable. The feet should be strong, tolerably round, and moderately small; toes arched and turned neither out nor in, with black toenails. The pads should be deep, not hard, but with a pleasing velvety quality and perfectly sound; they must be entirely free from cracks or horny excrescence. Corny feet, so-called, are to be regarded as an abominable blemish, as a taint which must be shunned. Cracked pads frequently accompany corny growths, and these conditions are more pronounced in hot and dry weather. In damp weather and in winter, such pads may improve temporarily, but these imperfections inevitably reappear and the result is unsound feet, a deplorable fault which must be heavily penalized. There seems to be no permanent cure for this condition, and even if a temporary cure were possible, the disease is seldom, if ever, eradicated, and undoubtedly it is transmitted in breeding. The one sure way to avoid corny and otherwise unsound feet is to avoid breeding from Dogs or Bitches which are not entirely free from this taint.

Body: The body should be moderately long - neither too long nor too short. The short back, so coveted and so appealing in the Fox Terrier, is *not* characteristic of the Irish Terrier; it is objectionable. The back must be symmetrical, strong and straight, and free from an appearance of slackness or “dip” behind the shoulders. The chest should be deep and muscular, but neither full nor wide. The ribs fairly sprung, deep rather than round, with a well-ribbed back. The loin strong and muscular, and slightly arched. The Bitch may be slightly longer in appearance than the Dog.

Hindquarters: Should be strong and muscular; powerful thighs; hocks near the ground; stifles moderately bent. Cow-hock - that is, where the hocks are turned in and the stifles and feet turned out - are intolerable. The legs should be free from feather, and covered, like the head, with hair of similar texture to that on the body, but not so long.

Tail: Should be docked, and set on rather high, but not curled. It should be of good strength and substance, of fair length and well covered with harsh, rough hair, and free from fringe or feather. The three-quarters dock is about right.

Gait: Both forelegs and hind legs should move straight forward when travelling; the stifles should not turn outwards.

Disqualifications: *Nose any other colour than black. Mouth much undershot or overshot. Ears cropped. Any other colour than red, golden red, or red wheaten. A small patch of white on the chest is permissible; otherwise particoloured coats disqualify.*

Scale of Points

Head, ears and expression	20
Legs and feet	15
Neck.....	5
Shoulders and chest	10
Back and loin.....	5
Hindquarters and stern	10
Coat	15
Colour.....	10
Size and symmetry.....	10
TOTAL	100

Negative Points: MINUS -

Whitenails, toes and feet	10 -
Much white on chest.....	10 -
Dark shadings on face.....	5 -
Mouth undershot or cankered.....	10 -
Coat shaggy, curly, or soft	10 -
Uneven in colour.....	5 -
TOTAL	50 -