



Official Standard of the Black Russian Terrier

General Appearance: The Black Russian Terrier is a robust, large, balanced, agile and powerful dog. The Black Russian Terrier has large bone and well-developed muscles. He has great strength and endurance. The Black Russian Terrier must have a stable and reliable temperament, possessing self-assurance and courage.

Size, Proportion, Substance: *Size* - The height for males at maturity (over 18 months of age) is between 27 and 30 inches with the desired height being between 27 and 29 inches. The height for females at maturity (over 18 months of age) is between 26 and 29 inches with the desired height being between 26 and 28 inches. Any height deviation is a serious fault. Height consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement and other functional attributes. General balance is more important than absolute size. *Proportion* - The desired height to length ratio of the Black Russian Terrier is approximately 9½ to 10. Thus the dog is slightly longer than tall. Females may be slightly longer than males. The length is measured from point of shoulder to rear edge of the pelvis. *Substance* - The Black Russian Terrier must have large bones and well-developed musculature. Females are definitely to appear feminine but never lacking in substance. Light bone, lack of substance, and poor musculature are serious faults.

Head: The *head* must be in proportion to the body and give the appearance of power and strength. It is approximately equal to the length of neck and not less than 40 percent of the height of the dog at the withers. The *eyes* are oval, of medium size, dark, and set relatively wide apart. Eye rims are black without sagging or prominent haw. Light eyes are a serious fault. The *ears* are medium in size, triangularly shaped, set high, but not above the level of the skull. The ear leather is dense, rounded at the bottom, hanging with the front edge lying against the head and terminating at approximately mid-cheek. Cropped ears are not acceptable. The *skull* is moderately wide with round, but not too pronounced cheek bones. The supraorbital arches and occiput bones are moderately expressed. The back skull is flat. The stop is moderate. The back skull is slightly longer than the muzzle measured from the stop to the occiput and stop to end of nose, an approximate ratio of 5:4. The *muzzle* is broad with a slight tapering towards the nose. A moustache and beard emphasize volume and give the muzzle a square shape. Viewed in profile, the topline of the muzzle is parallel to the topline of the backskull. The nose is large and black. Nose color other than black is a disqualification. Lips are thick, fleshy, black, tight and without flews. The gums have dark pigmentation. The teeth are large and white with full dentition. Any missing tooth is a severe fault. The incisors form a straight line at the base. A correct *bite* is a scissors bite. Two or more missing teeth or bite other than a scissors bite is a disqualification.

Neck, Topline and Body: *Neck* - The neck should be thick, muscular and powerful. The nape is strong and well expressed. There should be no pendulous or excessive dewlap. The length of the neck and the length of the head should be approximately the same. The neck is set at an approximate 45 degree angle to the line of the back. *Body* - The whole structure of the body should give the impression of strength. The chest is oval shaped, deep and wide with well-sprung ribs. The bottom line of the chest extends to the elbows or below and is not less than 50 percent of the dog's height measured from the withers. The forechest is pronounced. The withers are high, well developed and more pronounced in the male than in the female. There is a slight slope from the top of the withers into a straight, firm back. The back is approximately half of the distance between the top of the withers to the base of the tail. The last half of the backline is comprised of two equal parts, the loin and the croup measured to the base of tail. (The ratio of back to loin to croup measured to base of tail is 2:1:1.) The loin is short, wide, muscular, slightly arched and elastic. The croup is wide, muscular, and slopes slightly (5 to 10 degrees). The *tail* is thick, set moderately high, and is carried at an approximate 45 degree angle from the horizontal. When the tail is docked, there are 3 to 5 vertebrae remaining. An undocked tail is not to be penalized. The preferred shape of an undocked tail resembles a sickle or saber. The abdomen is moderately tucked up and firm.



Forequarters: Shoulders are well laid-back with blades broad and sloping. There is good return of upper arm so that the angle between the shoulder blade and the upper arm is approximately 100 degrees. Upper arms are muscular. Elbows sit close to the body and turn neither in nor out while standing or moving. The forelegs are straight, thick, of medium length, and parallel when viewed from the front. Length of the foreleg to the elbow is approximately 50 percent of dog's height at the withers. Pasterns are short, thick, and almost vertical. Front dewclaws should be removed. Feet are large, compact, and round in shape. Nails are black.

Hindquarters: Viewed from the rear the legs are straight and parallel, set slightly wider than the forelegs. The hindquarters are well boned and muscular with good angulation to be in balance with the front shoulder angulation. Thighs are muscular and broad when viewed from the side. The hocks are moderately short and vertical when standing. Rear dewclaws should be removed.

Coat: The coat is a double coat. The natural untrimmed coat length varies from 1½ to 6 inches. While the outer guard hair is coarser than the softer undercoat, it is not wiry or curly. The body coat has a slight to moderate wave. The furnishings on the head form a fall over the eyes and a moustache and beard on the muzzle. The legs are covered and protected by long, dense coat. Trimming of the natural coat is needed for suitable shape and upkeep.

For presentation in the show ring, the Black Russian Terrier should be trimmed so that the dog's outline is clearly defined. The trimmed length of coat and leg furnishings may vary from 0.2 to 6 inches depending upon the location on the body. The fall and muzzle furnishings may be longer than 6 inches. In no case should grooming be given more weight than structure, movement and balance when evaluating the Black Russian Terrier.

Color: The only acceptable color for the Black Russian Terrier is solid black or black with scattered gray hairs. Any other color is considered a disqualification.

Gait: A well-balanced Black Russian Terrier should move freely in a smooth, fluid motion. In movement the normal head carriage is extended forward and the backline remains level. As movement accelerates, the feet will converge toward a centerline. The Black Russian Terrier covers a lot of ground through strong reach of the forelegs and drive of the hindquarters.

Temperament: The character and temperament of the Black Russian Terrier is of utmost importance. The Black Russian Terrier is a calm, confident, courageous and self-assured dog. He is highly intelligent and adapts well to training. The Black Russian Terrier was initially bred to guard and protect. He is alert and responsive, instinctively protective, determined, fearless, deeply loyal to family, is aloof and therefore does not relish intrusion by strangers into his personal space. Shyness or excessive excitability is a serious fault.

Faults: Any departure from the foregoing ideal should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded is in proportion to its degree.

Serious Faults: Light bone. Lack of substance. Poor musculature. Mature male under 27 inches or over 30 inches. Mature female under 26 inches or over 29 inches. Light colored eyes. One missing tooth. Shyness or excessive excitability.

Disqualifications: *Nose color other than black. Two or more missing teeth. Any bite other than a scissors bite. Any coat color other than solid black or black with scattered gray hairs.*

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