

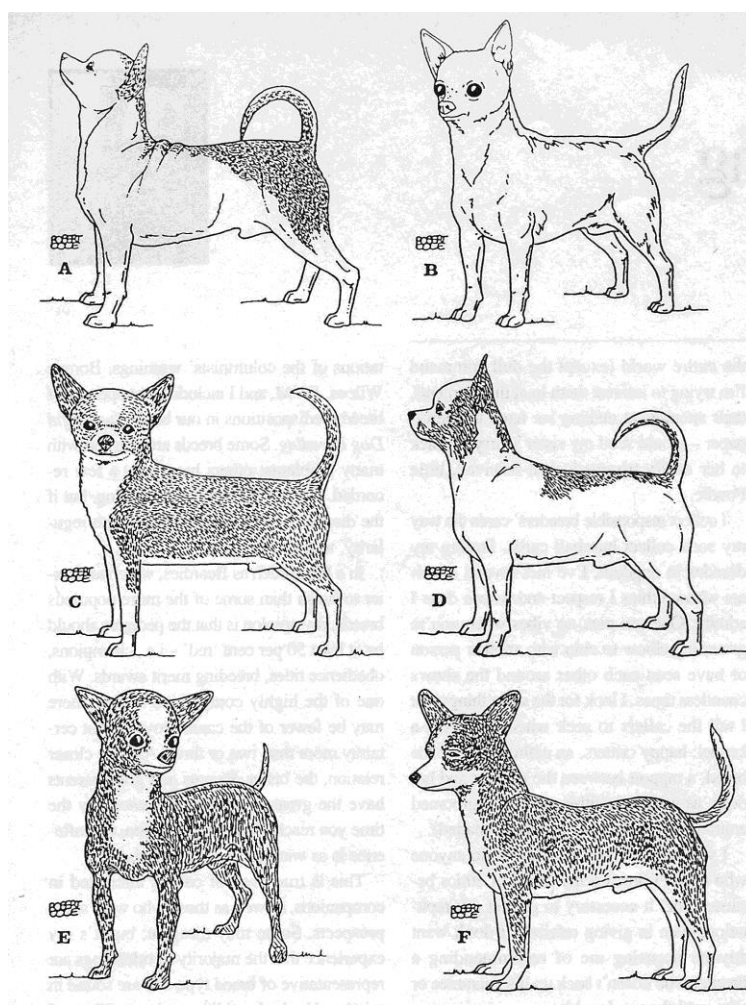
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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THE CHIHUAHUA

Place four of these six Short Coat Chihuahuas in order of preference. None of the six have disqualifying faults – none have broken down ears, cropped ears or a cropped tail (the American standard also disqualifies a bobtail). The two examples you are not likely to place have a number of serious faults.



TYPICAL

The skull of the typical Chihuahua resembles that of a cooking apple, which is not quite as round as a ball. Forget the 'molera', a deficiency in bone formation of the skull; don't go prodding around the head of a Chihuahua in the hope of finding one. Some puppies will have a molera, although it will generally close up by the time the dog reaches adulthood.

The stop is definite, one that you could almost put a set-square to, the line of the skull vertical and the line of the top of the muzzle horizontal. The cheeks and jaws are lean, the muzzle is moderately short and

slightly pointed. The mouth has a regular and complete scissors or pincer bite. The dark or ruby eyes are large, round, set well apart, with the centre of the eye on a plane with the base of stop. The large, erect, flaring ears are set on at an angle of approximately 45 degrees.

The nose is neglected in some national Chihuahua standards. The nose is self-colored in blonde types, or black. In moles, blues and chocolates they are self-colored. In blonde types, a pink nose is permissible.

Of medium length, the neck is slightly arched, gracefully sloping into lean shoulders; the head is held high. Shoulders are well laid above forelegs set well under the chest. The back is level, the body is slightly longer than high, the brisket is level with the elbow. Forelegs are straight, and the oval feet point forward. Hindquarters are muscular, with a good turn of stifle, and the hocks are well let down. Moderately long, the tail is carried sickle, either up or out, or in a loop over the back with the tip just touching the back.

DOG A

Much is right about this little six pound male; very little is wrong. Do not let his markings disturb. In addition to any colour or combination of colours, he can be solid, marked or splashed. Unlike some toy standards, there is no requirement for colour symmetry.

The only things wrong with him are his overly long second thighs and long loin.

DOG B

You have probably observed that his eyes protrude and that his nose is pink. Protruding eyes are faulty; however, the pink nose on this particular example is permissible because his colour is blonde.

If you were using this example in a breeding program, you would determine if it was his short legs and/or his overly deep body that produced his faulty, cobby appearance. In this case, it is both.

His alert ears, held more erect than the 45 degree angle when in repose, are correct. His high set tail is not carried up and over his back but is carried "sickle up or out". In this, it is "out".

DOG C

This example's correct head demonstrates, face on, the requirement for large, flaring ears set on at an angle of approximately 45 degrees, which produces breadth between ears. This example's ears are set on at approximately 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock.

His typical expression is saucy. His full, but not protruding eyes are luminous dark (or luminous ruby). They are set well apart; the centre of eye is on a plane with the lowest point of the ear and the base of the stop. (this effect would be better seen if the dog's head were tilted up just a little more).

Structurally, this dog has fair shoulders but steep and somewhat short upper arms. His steep upper arms have moved the front legs forward on the body (compare with Dog A) and forced the front pasterns to adopt a vertical position. The topline has remained level; the tail set and carriage are correct, but the body is tube like, lacking desirable tuck up. His rear pasterns are incorrectly long.

DOG D

This example represents my description of typical. According to the CKC standard, the tip of his high set tail could touch his back. A typical tail is furry, flattish in appearance, broadening slightly in centre and tapering to a point.

The body is slightly longer, when measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks, than its height at the withers. Standards do not refer to leg length. I have drawn his foreleg (the elbow level with the deepest part of the brisket) almost the same length as the body is deep. I have given his tummy a slight tuck up, and given his front pasterns a slight slope.

DOG E

The standard asks for a well-rounded "apple dome" – not this dog's ball shaped skull. The ears, in turn, are set too low. His eyes are correctly dark. (Light eyes are permissible in blonde or white coloured dogs).

Although the Chihuahua should be dainty, he should possess good bone. This example's bone is too light. He is also steep in front, lacks body depth and breadth, has elbows that turn out, has cow hocks that also sickly, has a dip in his back, and has a short tail.

If the tail were cropped, you would disqualify him. (A bobtail is a serious fault but not a disqualification in Canada). As it is, his short tail is unable to form an arc and should thus be faulted.

DOG F

This dog has incorrect bat ears, small eyes and a long, 'sharky' muzzle. He is steep in shoulder, lacks neck arch, has a dip in his back and a steep pelvis. His weak front pasterns are down. His hind legs lack angulation at stifle and hock. His feet are incorrectly more hare than oval.

The set on of the tail does not receive mention in the Canadian or the newly revised American standard, but it does in the British, Australian and New Zealand standards. These standards advise that the tail should be set high. This dog's tail sickles, but it is incorrectly set on low.

1,2,3 and 4

Dog D represent typical. I gave second place to Dog a, the dog with the long second thighs and loin. Third place went to steep upper arm Dog C. Fourth place is short legged, deep bodied Dog B.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Chihuahua may have either a pincers or scissors bite in Canada and the U.S.A. In the rest of the English speaking world, bite is limited to scissors. The CKC advises that an undershot or overshot bite is a serious fault. I would add that any distortion of the bite or jaw should also be penalized as a serious fault.

What, then, if Dog D had an overshot bite? Would you change your placements? What if Dog A possessed a double row of lower incisors? How much would that disturb you? Would the fact that this breed is in the Toy Group, not the gundog group, influence your decisions?