

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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THE ENGLISH FOXHOUND

Based on the CKC Standard

HISTORY

Near the end of the 1600s, fox hunting became popular as a sport with upper-class landowners, replacing stag hunting. Foxes were plentiful, whereas stags had become sparse. Selective breeding of existing hounds was used to produce the needed foxhound, one with a keen nose, sound feet, lots of speed, a loud voice and enough stamina to run all day. The first kennel specializing in these early English Foxhounds dates to 1696.

TYPICAL

The English Foxhound is an elegant, clean-cut, athletic hound, with a long muzzle and wide skull. The neck is long and the hindquarters very strong. Its large eyes have a sweet expression. The ears lay flat to the head. Proven hunting hounds often have the bottom edge of their ears rounded (shortened) to avoid nicks and tears during the hunt. The legs are absolutely straight, with round, catlike feet. The short, hard, easy-care coat is usually black, white-and-tan, or bi-colour with a white background; however, colour is not an important feature. The brown eyes are large with a gentle expression, and the ears are pendant. The tail is held up gaily.

They are friendly with people and excellent with children, but prefer to be in the company of other dogs and do quite well with other animals. The English Foxhound likes to bay. They are untiring, able to run for hours at a constant speed, trotting along through brambles, marshes and sunny countryside for five or six hours without stopping.

NINE BREEDER CONCERNS

Each breed has had its problems – with some it was heads and with others it was tails. With the English Foxhound it was knuckling-over. The desire for straight legs taken too far tended to produce knuckling-over, which at one time was countenanced. In recent years, the defect has been essentially eradicated. In addition to knuckling-over, I have handicapped Figure 2 with a number of visible breeder concerns, nine in all. They are: 1) loose skin at the throat; 2) no forechest; 3) no withers; 4) too noticeable an arch over the loin; 5) tail curved over the back “like a squirrel’s tail”; 6) lack of angulation at the stifle; 7) lack of angulation at the hock; 8) vertical front pasterns; and 9) a form of knuckling-over.

JUDGING SIX FOXHOUNDS

The six dogs you are invited to judge are all real-life dogs of the not too distant past. To reduce distraction and focus on the many features that combine to make the complete whole, each dog has been given the same head.

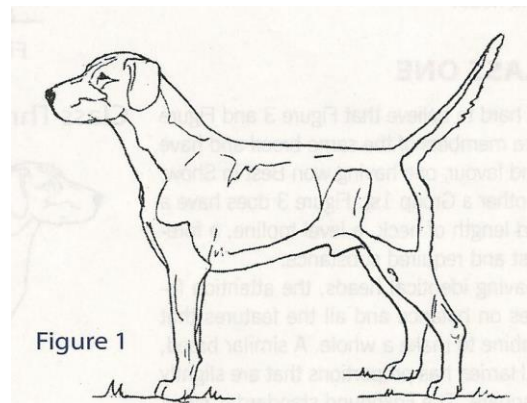


Figure 1

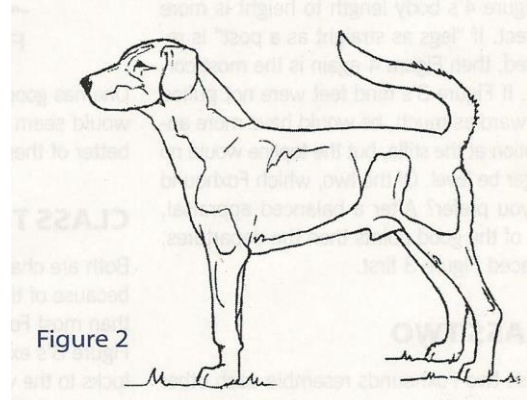


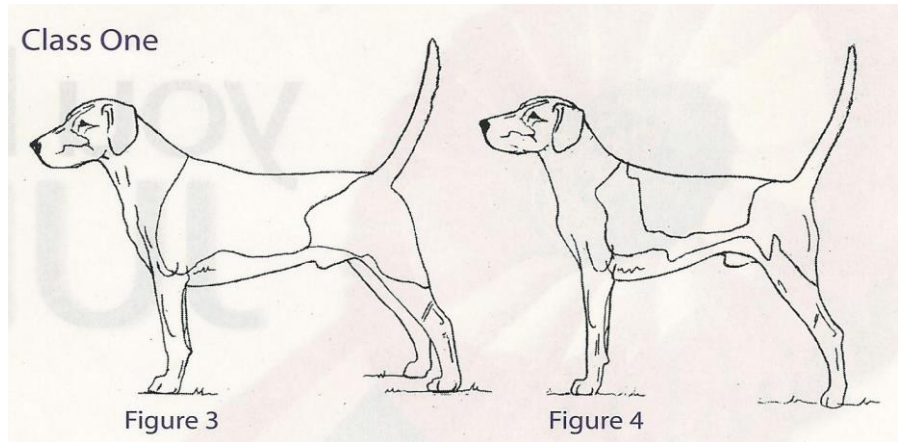
Figure 2

CLASS ONE

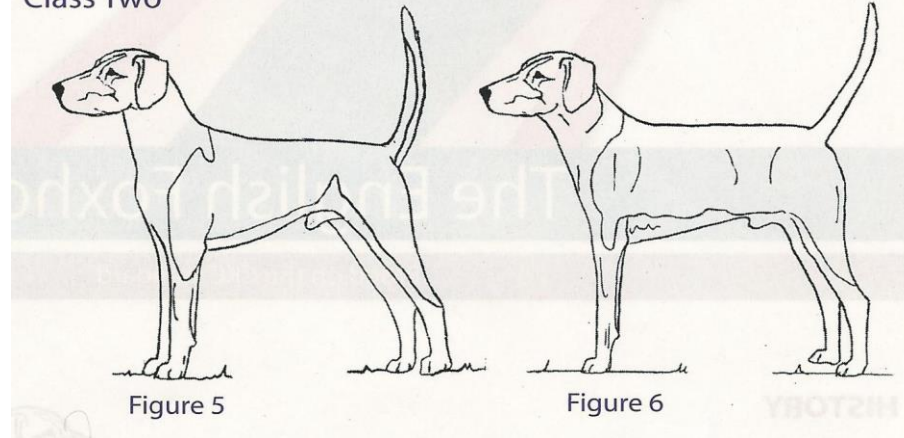
It is hard to believe that Figure 3 and Figure 4 are members of the same breed and have found favour, one having won Best in Show, the other a Group 1st. Figure 3 does have a good length of neck, a level topline, a forechest and required substance.

Having identical heads, the attention focuses on balance and all the features that combine to make a whole. A similar breed, the Harrier, has proportions that are slightly off square. The Foxhound standard is silent regarding the ratio of height to body length.

Figure 4's body length to height is more correct. If "legs as straight as a post" is required, then Figure 4 again is the most correct. If Figure 3's hind feet were not pulled rearward as much, he would have more angulation at the stifle, but the topline would no longer be level. Of the two, which Foxhound do you prefer? After a balanced appraisal, first of the good points then the departures, I placed Figure 3 first.



Class Two

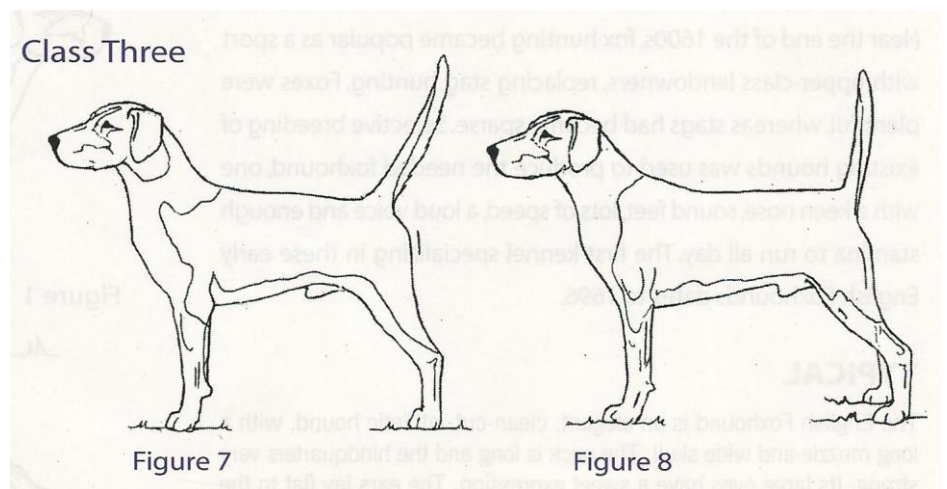


CLASS TWO

These two Foxhounds resemble each other more than those in the previous class did. One has good bone weight and the other one seems to have less than is required. Figure 5 would seem to have the better angulation. There is no curve to Figure 6's tuck-up. The better of these two went BIS ... I went with Figure 5 for first.

CLASS THREE

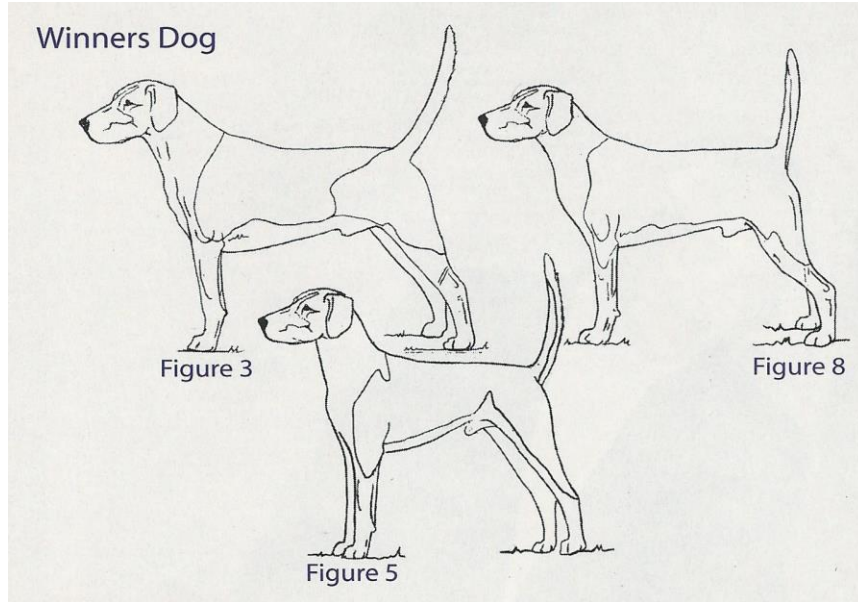
Both are champions, and both have taken Group 1sts. If Figure 7's neck looks strange, it's because of the way the dog is being handled. Figure 8's front pastern slopes a little more than most Foxhounds. Figure 8 is slightly longer than Figure 7. How much? The amount of Figure 8's extra body length is equivalent to the distance from the end of Figure 7's buttocks to the vertical line drawn immediately behind the his buttocks. Not much, but enough



to produce a difference in balance. Figure 7's "topline of the back" is absolutely level, but if "back" includes the loin and the croup, the topline is not level. I'm in favour of the "back" being the region between the withers and the last rib – i.e., withers, back, loin and croup. Of the two I prefer Figure 8.

WINNERS DOG

Figure 8, Figure 5 and Figure 3 are my three class winners. No matter, from these three a best male must be found, then a Reserve winner. I gave Figure 8 Winners Dog.



RESERVE WINNERS DOG

Two of these three Foxhounds placed first in their respective class; Figure 7 placed second, having been defeated by Figure 8. The two I will choose from (Figure 3 and Figure 7) are as different as any two dogs within a breed might be. My choice for Reserve was Figure 3.

