

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, January 1990

THE POINTER

Two of the four Pointers illustrated have done well under multi-breed and specialty judges. They serve to represent what are taken to be two different but universally acceptable Pointer types. Which one would you place first and which one second?

The remaining two illustrations represent certain departures from type. Awareness of these strengthens appreciation for Pointer ability to function in the field, as well as some of the finer points important to type.

DOG A

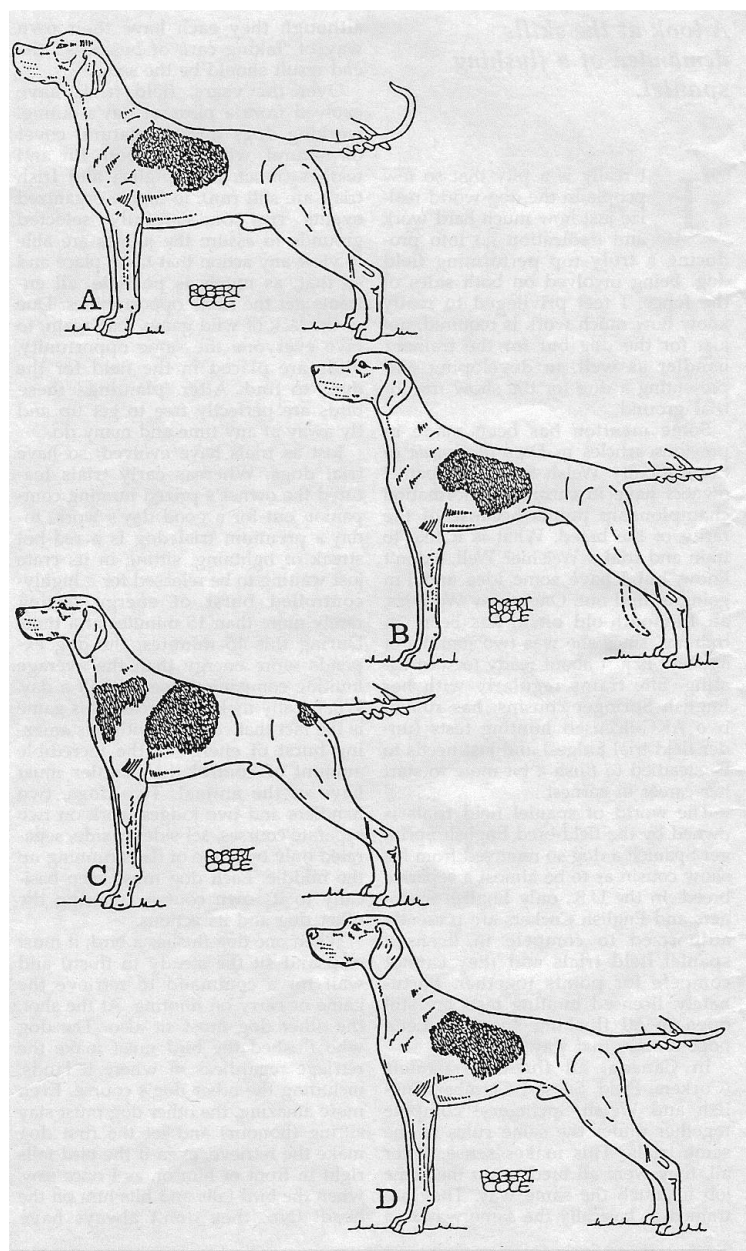
This coarse example departs in 18 different ways from what is correct: skull and muzzle (4); neck (2); body (4); front legs and feet (5); tail (2); and hindquarters, aside from feet (1).

An exaggerated scooped out muzzle has given this dog an upturned nose. Invariably, dogs with scooped out muzzles and upturned noses also have this dog's prominent cheek bones and boney skull. This dog has a faulty oblique (rather than rounded) eye. The ears are set too low, are folded, have rounded ends and are probably thick. The neck is both thick and wet (pendulous skin under throat).

The body has too much depth and to powerful. There is too much forechest and the loin has too much "slight arch". There is insufficient tuck up.

The front legs appear short and the dog has less agility because of the heavy deep body that drops below the elbow. Thick and round, rather than oval, bone also takes away from required agility. The front pasterns are wrongly short and thick. The feet are round cat feet, rather than the required oval.

The tail sets on too high and is too long. Although not present here, a long tail is often associated with an overly long back. Early breeders believed a long tail indicated outcrosses to Greyhound or Foxhound. The hindquarters are overly powerful and thick through the first and second thigh.



DOG B

This over refined example departs in eight ways: head (2); neck (1); body (2); additional tail (1); forequarters (1); and equally faulty hindquarters (1).

The muzzle is too long and this dog's skull lacks pronounced occipital bone. The standard takes for granted that you know the Pointer's occiput should be pronounced. The neck is too thin, the body shallow, and there is too much tuck up. He is still sound – the attempt here is to illustrate a degree of departure from required power.

The hand held tail is correct; the tail indicated by a broken line is not. The tail indicated by a broken line is longer than the maximum “no greater than to hock” length. This length, or a docked tail, is to be penalized. A Pointer's tail carried between the legs would be sacrilege.

The front and hind legs are muscular but lack the desired substance for the dog to excel in the field.

DOG C

Of the four, this example, like Dog D, is one of the two Pointers that has done well under both multi-breed and specialty judges. I gave him second place. He is different in a number of ways from Dog D, some obvious, others less so. The most obvious difference is his correct head. Carefully tracing from film (the markings changed), I could have added a fault or two to make this dog a definite second, but this would have taken away from the enjoyment of assessing the comparative merits of two good, very competitive but quite different Pointers.

DOG D

This well built, symmetrical example presents a strong but lissome, aristocratic appearance. Built for both endurance and speed, he is clean limbed, lithe and muscular without being coarse. His fine, short, evenly distributed coat is perfectly smooth and straight with a decided sheen. He has a kind, even disposition, never showing timidity toward man or dog.

This example's head is different from the head of Dog C in one major way. The muzzle of Dog D is concave, ending on level with nostrils, giving a slightly dish faced appearance. The muzzle of Dog C is on parallel planes with the skull. In the United States, both types of head are equally acceptable. In Britain, the standard only specifies the concave muzzle. In Canada, the standard only specifies parallel planes.

Regardless of which type of muzzle, the skull is like a Norman arch viewed from front or side. The length of skull is in proportion to its breadth, the breadth in proportion to length of foreface. The stop is well defined, the occiput bone pronounced. Nose and eye rims are dark (but they may be lighter in the case of lemon or a white coloured dog). Nostrils are wide, soft and moist. There is a slight depression under the eyes. The muzzle is deep without pendulous flews.

This dog has a scissors bite (pincer equally acceptable). His dark eyes are the same distance from occiput as from nostrils, and are bright and kindly in expression. Ears are medium length, leather thin, slightly pointed at tips, lying close to head, and fairly high.

I have drawn the neck long, muscular, dry and slightly arched. The long shoulders are well laid back and on. The brisket is level with the elbow. Forelegs are straight – the same length as depth of body – the bone oval. The pasterns are slightly sloped and perceptibly finer in bone than the leg. The breastbone is bold without being unduly prominent.

The body is approximately as long as height to the withers, measured from breast bone to buttocks. This Pointer's girth just behind the elbow measures approximately eight inches greater than height. Girth at the loin approximates height at withers.

There is a slight rise from croup to shoulders. Close coupled, the loin is slightly arched and the croup falls away only slightly to the base of the tail. Muscular, well turned stifles compliment the front. There is a good length and expanse of first and second thigh. Hocks are well let down. The feet are oval with long, well knit, arched toes, well cushioned underneath.

FIRST AND SECOND

I chose Dog D over Dog C for first place because of his better shoulders, slightly more forechest, elbow more level with the brisket, smoother and stronger topline and better balance front with rear.

The difference in the set on of ears between these two dogs makes for interesting discussion. The dog I prefer just happens to have ears set on high, higher than the corner of the eye. This conforms more closely to the country of origin wording which advises that the ears should be set on fairly high. The ears of my second place example, Dog C, are set on at eye level, the position described as correct in the CKC standard.

In the book *The Pointer* by John G. Laytham, limited edition, privately printed in 1981 and reproduced in part in the form of a folder by the American Pointer Club, the author has drawn the ears as set on level with the top of the eye for both head types, similar to Dog D.

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By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, June 2001

THE POINTER

Based on the CKC breed standard

FIGURES 1 AND 2

Once you've been introduced to a good Pointer and are aware of the breed type features that set it apart, Sporting Group winner Figure 1 will have less and less appeal. Why? Because he looks more like a German Shorthaired Pointer than a Pointer.

Figure 2 – a German Shorthaired Pointer – illustrates the similarity. Figure 2 is a better German Shorthaired Pointer than Figure 1 is a Pointer, but under a judge not familiar with Pointer type, it is very possible that sound Figure 1 could win at the group level. Acquiring a mental image of ideal is the first step in judging the Pointer.

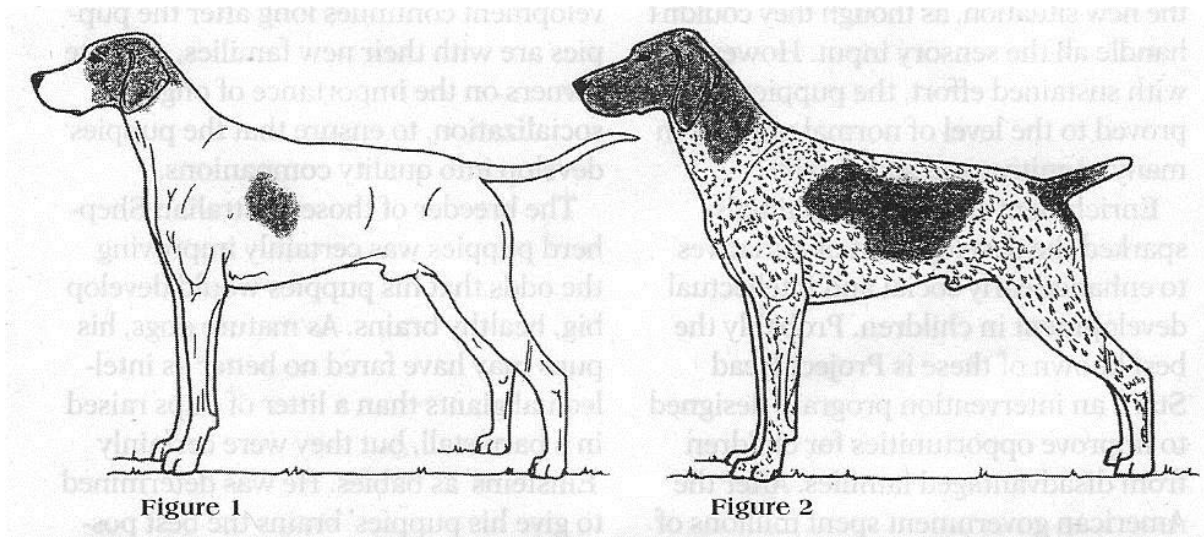


Figure 1

Figure 2

UNOFFICIAL IDEAL (FIGURE 3)

Before you assess the next two Dog classes, consider the merits of Figure 3. He doesn't exist in real life; he illustrates, in my mind's eye, the image of the ideal Pointer.

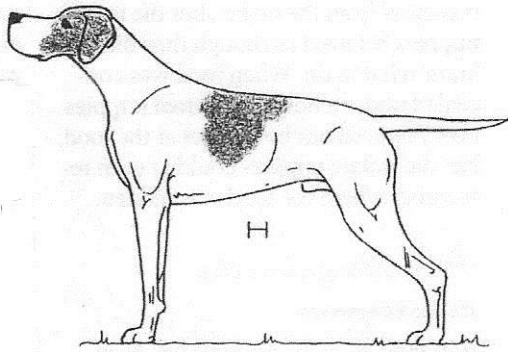


Figure 3

This unofficial representation of ideal serves to fill in some blanks in the CKC standard, but also illustrates what is clear and concise. For example: The length of this Pointer's somewhat concave muzzle is half the length of the head, the mid-point being the inner corner of the eye. The ears are set on fairly high, lie close to the head and are somewhat pointed at the tip. The neck is long, dry and slightly arched. The forechest is obvious. The withers are high, the long shoulder blades are well laid back and close together at their points, and there is good length to the sloped upper arm. The elbow is level with the brisket and situated at the midpoint between the withers and the ground, making the foreleg equal in length to the depth of the body (noted in the Italian standard). The foreleg has oval bone; the pasterns are thinner than the forearm and

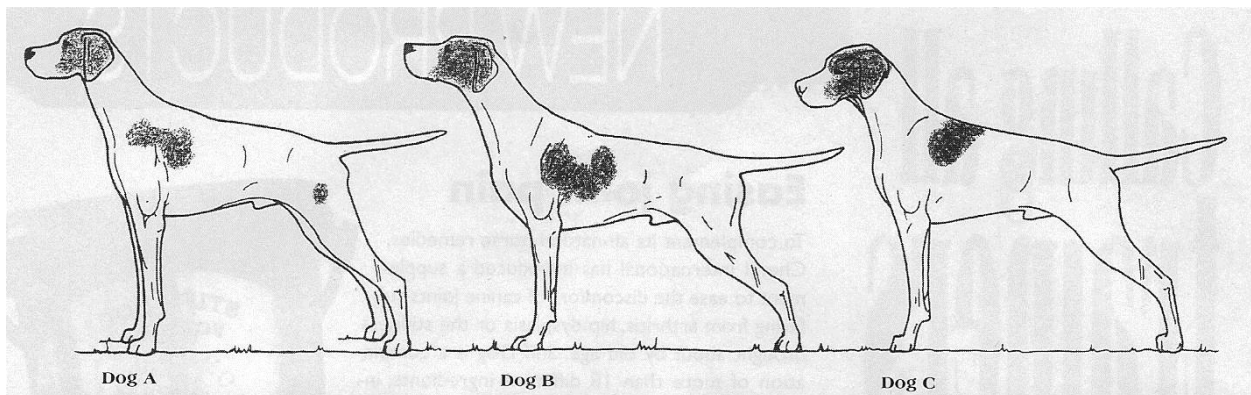
slope slightly forward. The feet are oval; the toes are arched.

The body is slightly longer than tall. On this unofficial representation of typical, the body is two inches longer than tall (the length of the horizontal bar on the 'H' placed under the body). Good hindquarter angulation is in balance with forequarter angulation. The tail is heavy at the root and set on level with the croup's slight slope. It tapers to a fine point and is not longer than the distance from root to hock.

DOG A, DOG B OR DOG C?

You're invited to judge this real life class, placing these three competitive Pointers in order of merit. I selected these particular examples because they're so different from one another. Their markings have been modified to protect the innocent.

Dog A, B and C provide an interesting study. None of their croups rounds off to the degree of my ideal's. Stretched, none positions with rear pasterns vertical. Only two have the smooth transition of slightly arched neck into withers and topline. Two appear to have cat feet. One appears shorter bodied than the other two only because his less well angulated shoulder blade and upper arm have forced his body to rise above the elbow. One has too much forechest and crouches in the rear. How did you place them?



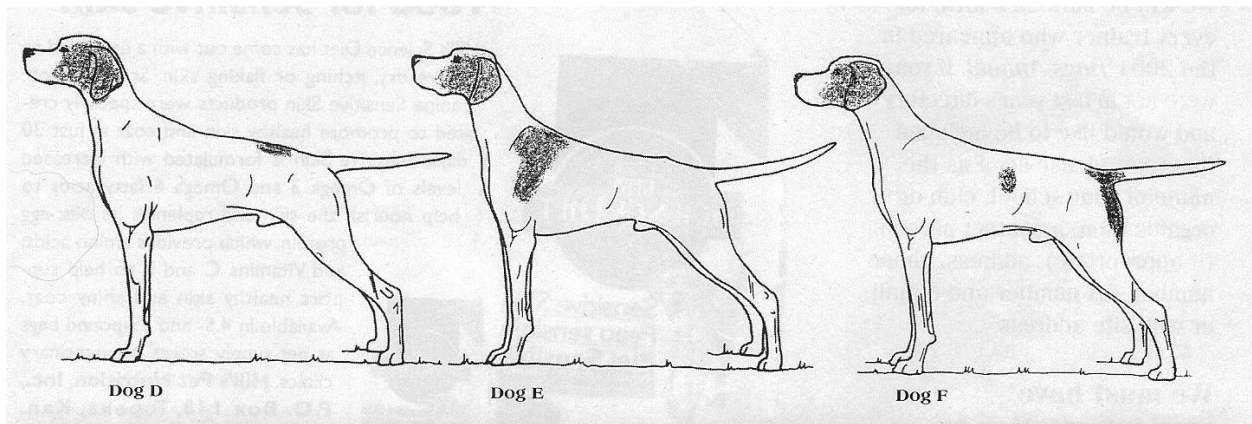
FIRST, SECOND, THIRD

I awarded first place to Dog C, being fully aware that his feet are incorrectly more round than oval and that there is a little too much slope to the front pasterns. Second place went to Dog A, and third place to Dog B, who possesses compact power but lacks graceful curves and lissome appearance.

DOG D, DOG E, OR DOG F?

All three are show champions – you have the pleasure of judging quality,. I have not changed their outlines. At this level there are not too many faults, but there are enough differences that first, second and third place can be determined.

As for the faults ... Dog D's muzzle could be longer; his shoulder blades could have slightly more slope and his topline could be improved. Dog E's brisket is a little above the elbow and his topline could be improved, especially at the beginning of the croup. The only thing that disturbs me about Dog F is that I would like to see the rear pasterns set vertical.



FIRST, SECOND, THIRD

First place went to Dog F. Even if he had a pincer bite and were missing two premolars, he would still be first. I was disturbed as much by Dog E's body lacking full depth, and that his haunch bones are visible above the level of the back, as by Dog D's short muzzle. If you compare Dog D's overall balance to Dog E's, you find that Dog D's is superior: However, as mentioned earlier, Dog D could have better shoulder layback. If Dog D had a longer muzzle (a great deal of importance is given to the Pointer head), I could forgive the shoulders in favour of balance. I gave Dog E second place and Dog D third.