

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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THE POMERANIAN

Formulate an opinion as to the degree of type and soundness each of these four male Pomeranians possesses. The, prior to reading the disclosure of what is hidden under their profuse coats, make a preliminary selection of first, second, third and fourth place. If you are not familiar with the Pom type a read the description of "Typical" before you make your selection. Granted, a hands-on disclosure of what is under the coat is always required, but initial observations will reveal a number of type and structure virtues and faults, enough to enable you to begin sorting out this class.

MOVING

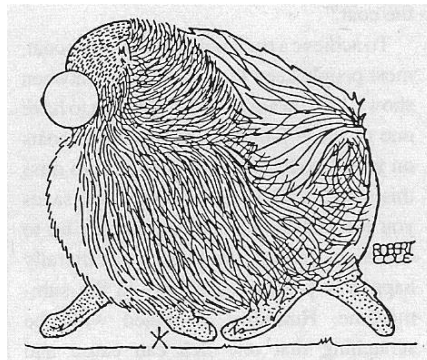
In the show ring, prior to examination, you would move these four Poms around in a circle to ensure none were lame and to gain a further (initial) appreciation of the soundness of each. Moving in profile, three of these four Poms would fail to flex their front pasterns to the degree I have illustrated. Front pastern flex is but one of many actions to be observed, the degree of ideal flexation varying from breed to breed, but it is the one action most often overlooked in the Pom ring. This neglect is one reason for the number of faulty, steep upper arms in the show ring.

Absence or near absence of Pomeranian front pastern flex is an indication that under the coat you will find an incorrectly steep, and sometimes short, upper arm. The Fox Terriers and Lakeland are correct in exhibiting very little pastern flex but, unlike the Pom, they have a specialized digging front.

When a Pom's front foot (in this instance the left front foot) relinquishes support at the trot in profile, the front leg as it lifts should flex at the wrist and be carried forward bent rearward at an angle of about 45 degrees. If it doesn't bend then in all likelihood a hands-on examination will confirm that the upper arm is steep.

TYPICAL

The typical, compact Pomeranian presents a square outline. His skull is slightly flat and large in proportion to his foxy, wedge shaped muzzle. Teeth meet in a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite. His nose is black (or self coloured). His small ears are erect. His dark, medium size, slightly oval eyes convey intelligence. (Eye rims are black in white, orange, shaded sable and cream dogs.)

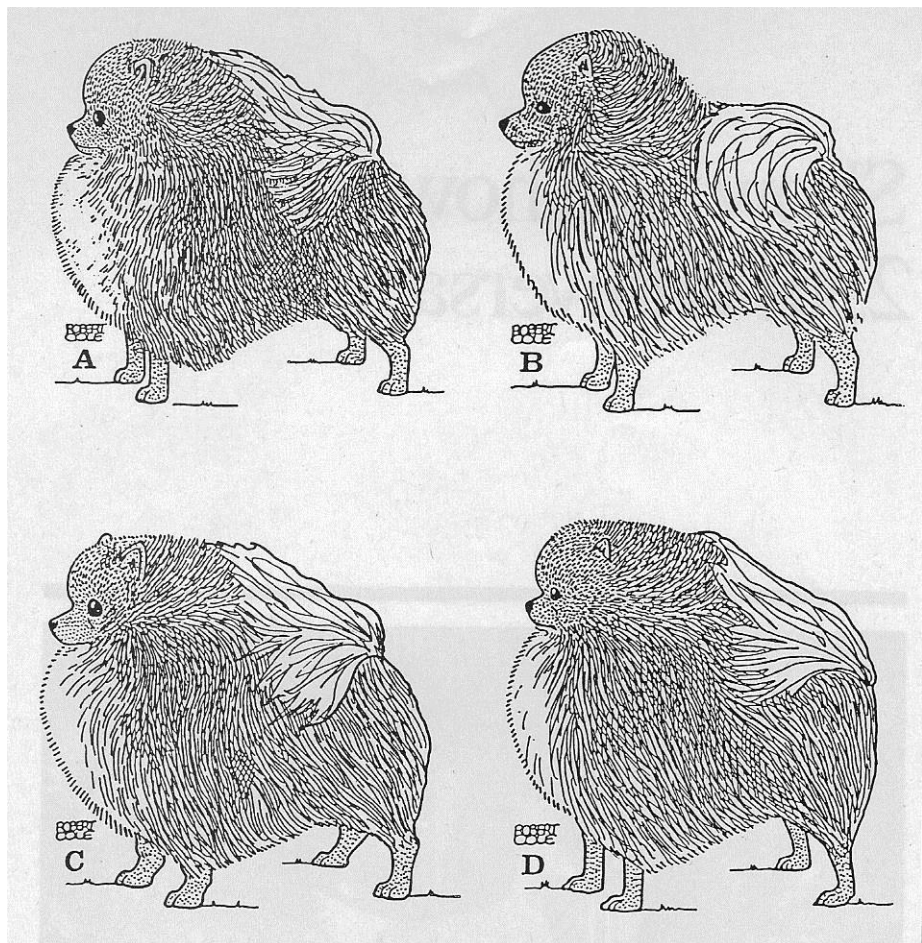


His rather short neck sets well into laid-back shoulders. His head is carried high. His back and loin are short, his rib cage is well spring, the deep chest extending to elbow. The upper arm slopes rearward and there is a degree of forechest. His forelegs are straight, the same length as the body is deep; the bone is not heavy. The front pasterns slope slightly forward, bringing the forequarters into static balance. His hindquarters have moderate angulation at stifle and hock. Tuck-up is moderate. His profusely covered, high set tail is turned over his back and carried flat and straight. His small, compact feet are cat-like.

The typical Pom's double coat has soft, fluffy undercoat and a rather long, perfectly straight, harsh in texture, outer coat. The coat covers the whole body and is very abundant 'round the neck and fore part of shoulders and chest, forming a frill extending over the shoulders. The forequarters are well feathered, the thighs and hind legs are well feathered to hocks. All colours are permissible but free from black or white shadings. A white chest, foot or leg on a whole-coloured dog is considered a major fault.

EXAMPLES

My example most clearly representing typical has faults but they are not structural faults. The other three dogs each possess a number of virtues, however it is their faults not their virtues that will be emphasized. If a particular feature hidden under the profuse coat doesn't receive mention, it is because your hands have found that feature to be correct.



DOG A

First impressions can be deceiving. A profuse coat can camouflage the forward-on-the-body position of the front legs, brought forward by faulty steep shoulder blades and short, steep upper arms. To regain some form of static balance the front pasterns have adopted an incorrect perpendicular position.

Under the coat the elbows are found to stand away from a faulty, slab-sided body. There is an absence of forechest creating a hole between the front legs. His large, round eyes, short 'bunny' muzzle and rounded skull are incorrect.

DOG B

His correctly harsh, double coat lacks abundance around the fore part of shoulders, chest, thighs, hind legs and rump. Appeal is further lessened by a correctly set tail that unfortunately curls to the side and rearward – a fault. Abundance of coat and a turned-over-the-back-and-carried-flat tail are desirable breed characteristics. Are you willing to forgive these two faults in favour of other virtues, such as his typical head, compact body and nicely angulated front and rear?

DOG C

His ears are too big and his forehead is incorrectly domed. His muzzle is the correct length but is lippy and therefore appears heavy. His overly large eyes are spaced too far apart. He is heavy boned, down at pastern in front, and cow-hocked in rear. Under his coat he is felt to have too wide a chest and is out at elbow.

DOG D

This tall example does not have long legs. His body has been raised up above his elbows by steep shoulder blades and steep upper arms, making him appear long-legged. This steep assembly has moved the forelegs forward on the body and steepened the front pasterns. He is equally steep in rear. In the rear his steep pelvis has steepened the hind leg, reducing the angulation at stifle and hock. His steep pelvis has also caused the tail to set low.

His muzzle is too short, his skull is incorrectly domed in front and round on top. His eye rims are not black – a fault in white, orange and shaded sable dogs (chocolate-tipped sable dogs are allowed brown noses and eye rims in the Kennel Club Standard 1986).

PLACEMENTS

I gave first place to Dog B, second place to Dog A, third place to Dog D, and fourth place to Dog C.

The choice in favour of Dog B over Dog A was simplified by soundness, but what if Dog A were equally sound? Then amount of coat would be a factor, but more importantly, you would be required to choose between two different current types of head, mostly in the area of muzzle and eye shape. I personally have no problem – I consider Dog B's head to be foxlike and Dog A's to depart from foxy.