

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

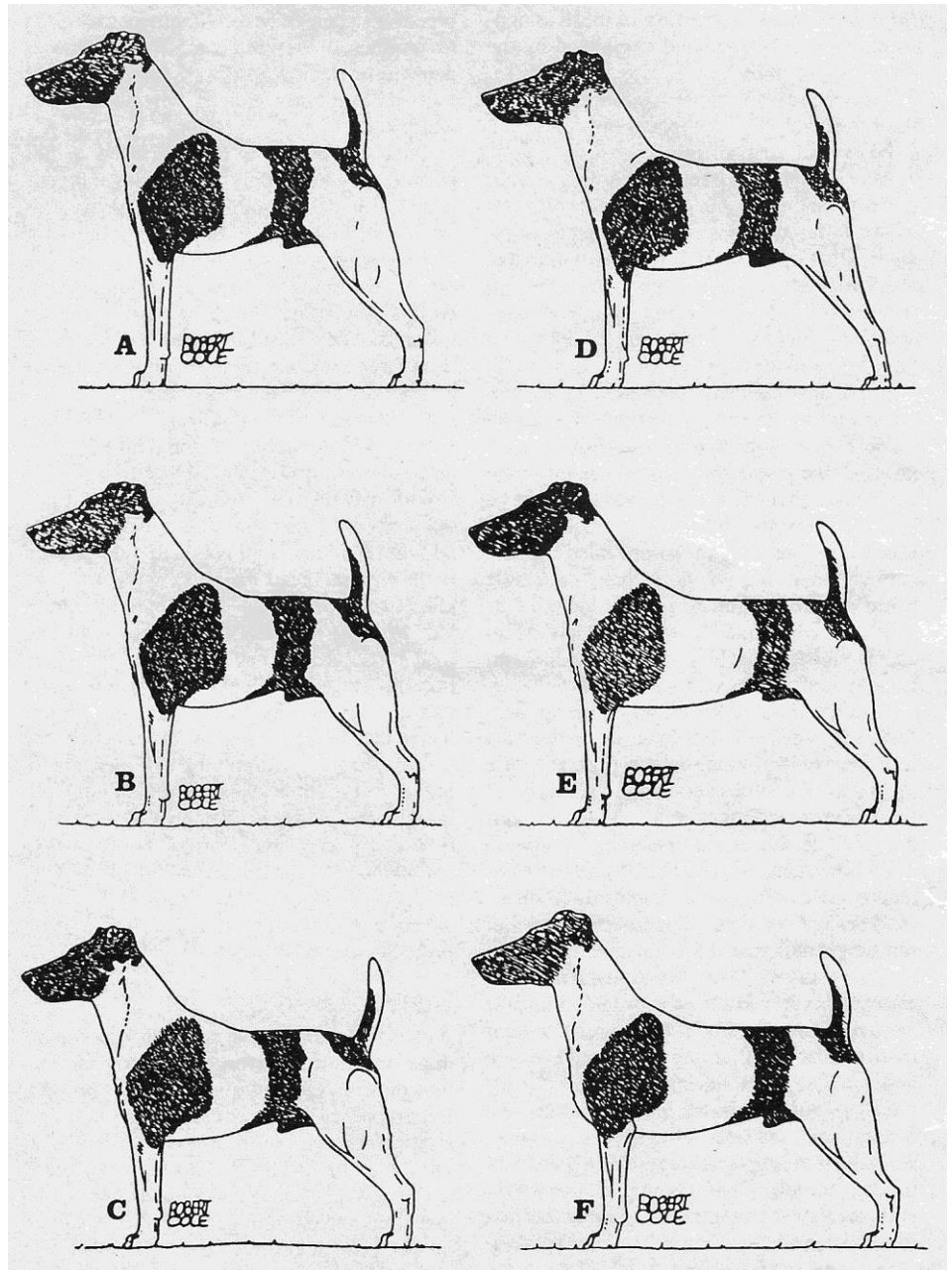
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THE SMOOTH FOX TERRIER

The Smooth Fox Terrier CKC Standard advises that balance – the relationship of one point to another – is the keystone of the Fox Terrier’s anatomy. With this advice in mind, I have drawn six identically marked Smooth Fox Terrier examples to highlight some of these balance relationships.

Having all six examples possess identical markings assists in focusing on certain aspects. As to markings themselves, the Standard only advises that white should predominate. Brindle, red or liver markings are objectionable. The colour markings on most Smooths of today are black and white, or tan and white. Occasionally, a dog with a black head will have tan penciling or markings. The majority of Wire specimens combine all three colours. Aside from the three objectionable colours, colour is of little or not importance.

One of the chief ratios receiving official mention is the ratio between height at the withers and body length. Fox Terrier length of body is measured from the point of shoulder to buttocks, the ideal



proportion being reached when this measurement equals height. The result is an almost square ideal. Almost, because very little of the Fox Terrier's specialized straight front projects forward of the point of shoulder.

An important ratio is length of head to body, another is an equal balance between skull and foreface. It is not stated, but I see the length of neck being equal to length of head and the level proportion of topline rearward to the tail the same length as head. We are advised the head should not exceed 7 ¼ inches.

Having the 7 ¼ inch head serve as a basis for depicting measurement has assisted greatly in illustrating a representative of typical and, if you are in accord with my opinion as to the length of neck and head, this only leaves depth of body and length of leg to consider.

Before I give my opinion as to leg length, compare Dog A to Dog B. Both are identical in all respects, except for leg length. Which one of these two examples do you think represents typical?

DOG B

The Standard advises that the Fox Terrier "must on no account be leggy, nor must he be too short in the leg". I have interpreted the desired length to be average, or medium length if you prefer. Medium for dogs is a foreleg length that measures the same from elbow to ground as the body measure from withers to brisket.

This representative of typical has a neck "of fair length", the brisket is "deep, yet not exaggerated." The forelegs are straight right down to the feet, the pasterns short and perpendicular. This produces a particular kind of terrier front.

This typical Fox Terrier's front resembles that of the equally square Airedale, Lakeland and Welsh. It is straight almost from the point of shoulder down to the feet. The angle between the well laid back shoulder blade and short upper arm is more open than less specialized breeds. This brings the elbow forward on the body and reduces the amount of forechest exposed.

DOG A

This example is extremely short, its back appearing ultra short. Actually, this Fox Terrier's body is the same length as that of the typical example. What is different about his balance is length of leg. This example departs from type in being "too leggy".

The foreleg between elbow and ground is one inch longer than that of the equal to body depth length of the typical example. The extra elegance this long leg produces has appeal in certain quarters despite the fact that this length of leg would be a handicap for an earth-dog.

DOG C

This example's head lacks balance. Length of muzzle should be equal to length of skull. Dog C's muzzle is short. Ironically, because other parts of this example also depart from over-all balance, the shortness of this head is less immediately obvious.

The other parts that depart from typical balance are a neck that is too short and bulky, a forearm that is too short and heavy, and a sacrum (three fused vertebrae attached to top of pelvis greatly influencing set on of the tail) that on a Fox Terrier should be horizontal but in this case follows the angle of the pelvis. This sloping sacrum positions the set on of the tail too low – a fault – but not so serious a fault as the same effect caused by a pelvis that is steep.

Warning that the Fox Terrier "must not be short in the leg" is strengthened by the additional words that "he should not be cloddy, or in any way coarse – speed and endurance must be looked to, as well as power."

DOG D

The Fox Terrier is required to have a short back. This unsound example's back (area between withers and last rib), in fact, its whole body appears long. In actual fact, Dog D's body is the same length as the preceding three examples. What makes this back and the body appear long is steep shoulder blades and low withers.

High withers is a desirable characteristic for the Fox Terrier. It enhances the appearance of squareness and makes a short back look even shorter. Steepen the shoulder blades and lower the withers and a short back is made to look long.

The temptation here was to steepen the pelvis which, in turn, would lower the tail set and make this dog's body appear even longer. I didn't. Instead, I made the pelvis flat, a fault that can occur in this breed. Left to its own devices, Dog D would be high in the rear, however, it behooves the exhibitor to present his or her exhibit to the dog's advantage and this kind of faulty rear end is, as here, often lowered by spreading the legs wide and stretching them rearward. As judge, you have the option of stacking the rear pasterns vertical yourself or waiting to see the dog stand naturally.

DOG E

The Fox Terrier Standard is quite detailed in a number of ways that influence balance. We are informed that head length should not exceed $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches or be less than seven inches. This information serves to provide the basis for illustrating a second measurement, that of "length of back" (actually, length of back, loin and croup).

Under the symmetry heading, we are advised that "length of back from withers to root of tail should not exceed 12 inches." Not many breed Standards advise as to the limits of departure from ideal. To my knowledge this advice as to a 12 inch limit has never before been visualized. Measured from the highest point immediately behind the neck to the centre of the base of the tail a 12 inch limit makes for a very long (still acceptable body).

DOG F

This final drawing is intended to serve two purposes. This drawing is intended to illustrate that a body measuring 12 inches from withers to root of tail is less optically long when the upper arm slopes more rearward (in fact, it is just a little longer than the balanced height to length ratio desired of many endurance trotting breeds), and ...

And, I can't think of a better way to convey appreciation for "Fox Terrier straight" than this drastic change to the front. Notice the degree of forechest that is exposed when the elbow sets back. Notice that to bring this front into static balance, the front pastern slopes. This brings the foot forward directly under the centre of support. This norm for most breeds is wrong for the Fox Terrier.