

YOU BE THE JUDGE

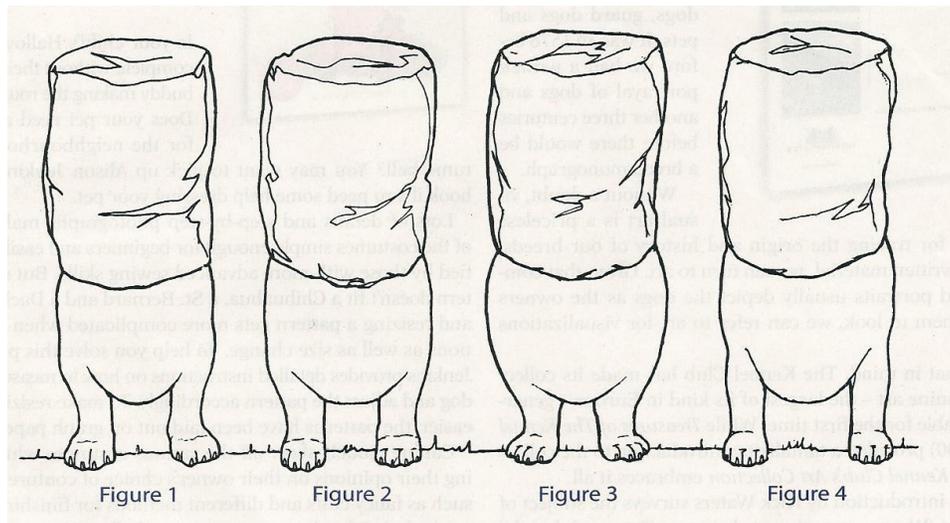
By Robert Cole

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THE CARDIGAN WELSH CORGI

WHICH FRONT IS CORRECT?

One of the most important Cardigan Welsh Corgi functional characteristics is this herding breed's unorthodox front end, which departs greatly from the norm. It takes the form of a wraparound front – an unusual forequarter assembly difficult for concerned breeders to describe and for judges to fully appreciate. Graphics are required.



I have focused first on the front end because an appreciation of the correct Cardigan front is crucial to understanding the breed. The Cardigan's front legs from elbow to wrist wrap closely around the body. This unorthodox assembly is similar to, but not quite the same as, the Basset Hound's front or those of the Dachshund, Pembroke Welsh Corgi or Dandie Dinmont Terrier – each having varying degrees of wraparound.

I have drawn four fronts, only one is correct. Which one? The dogs' heads have been bagged so as not to disclose too early the characteristic shape and position of the Cardigan's ears.

WRONG

If you decided on Figure 2 as the correct Cardigan front, you were close; you selected the straight-to-the-front and pointing feet of the Pembroke's wrap around front – right for the Pembroke, but wrong for the Cardigan.

Figure 4 departs even further, in that in addition to the feet pointing directly forward, the short forelegs are incorrectly straight from elbow to foot. This front is very incorrect for the Cardigan, being both a structural and a breed type fault.

Figure 1's front is that of the Dachshund taken from the British book *The Show Dachshund* by Dr. Sylvia Kershaw and myself.

An earth digger, the classic wraparound front of the Dachshund is similar to, but not quite the same as, either the Cardigan or the Pembroke fronts.

RIGHT

Figure 3 represents the correct wraparound Cardigan front. The feet (not the toes) point slightly outward. "This outward point is not to be more than 30 degrees from the center line when viewed from above."

If you were to stand behind and over this dog and look down at his front feet from above, pretending he was standing on the face of a clock, the centre of his left foot would point to 11 o'clock and the centre of his right foot would point to 1 o'clock. More outward angle than this produces an unsound front.

The Cardigan Corgi's front is an important breed characteristic, highlighted in CWCCA Judges' Education Committee letter by Andres Ternus from which I shall quote.

"Cardigans must have the correct front end structure and this is probably the hardest thing for judges to understand. The upper arm must curve around the correct egg shaped rib cage, with no daylight showing between the chest and leg, and with the wrists closer together than the shoulders. The front feet must turn out, even if only slightly."

There are 15 related features involved. They are 1) moderately broad chest; 2) well sprung rib; 3) deep brisket, well let down between the forelegs; 4) viewed head on, the shoulders slope downward and outward from the withers; 5) the shoulder blade is long and 6) well laid back; 7) the upper arm is nearly as long as the shoulder blade and meets at close to a right angle; 8) the elbows fit close; 9) the elbow positions well up on the body; 10) the breastbone is prominent; 11) the forearm covers the deepest part of chest; 12) a slight slope to pastern viewed in profile; 13) the pasterns (viewed head on) are straight from wrist to foot; 14) the feet turn out slightly; and 15) the wrists are somewhat closer together than the points of the shoulder.

The club advises that you examine on the table but judge the soundness of the front visually on the ground because a poor front can be greatly improved stacked on the table. Unsound fronts take many forms, such as a bowed front, fiddle front, out at the elbows, and knuckling over. Untypical fronts include straight legs and feet that point directly forward.

WHICH EARS ARE CORRECT?

Three similar heads, but only one has the ideal size and carriage. Which one? Figure 5's ears are not quite large enough and position too high. Figure 7's ears are about the right size but are carried too low (acceptable carriage for a puppy). Figure 6's ears are just right.

Correct Cardigan ear size, shape and carriage are important. They must be large and prominent in proportion to the size of the dog. They are slightly rounded at the tip and of good strong leather. They are moderately wide at the base, carried erect and sloping slightly forward when alert. When erect, the tips of the ears are slightly wide of a straight line drawn from the tip of the nose through the centre of the eye. Small and/or pointed ears are serious faults. Drop ears are a disqualification.

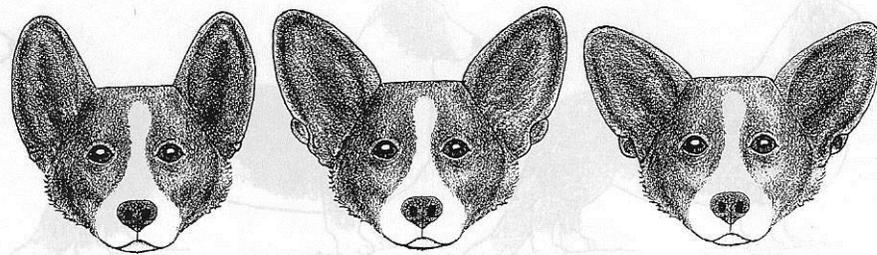


Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Judges are asked to make every attempt to see if the ears of a puppy or an adult will come up to the correct erect position and are advised not to expect the ears to be continually held erect, nor to expect them to be erect at the trot. Further on in this article you'll be invited to view a fourth head face on and in addition to finding three ear faults take unusual colour markings into consideration.

FIGURES 8 AND 9

One of these two heads in profile is correct, the other is not. Which one is correct?

I have taken license with the colour markings; however, this does not conceal the one fault. If you picked Figure 8 as correct, you appreciate that the length of muzzle from the tip of the nose to the moderate stop should be shorter than the length of the skull from the base of the stop to the occiput – the proportion being about three parts muzzle to five parts skull.

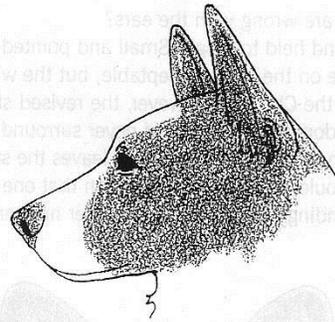


Figure 8

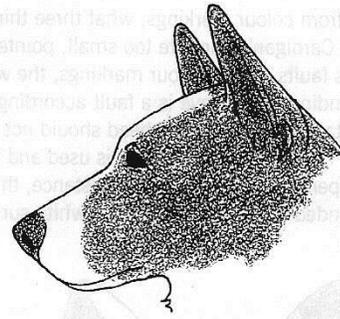


Figure 9

WHICH BODY LENGTH IS CORRECT?

Cardigans are long bodied – longer than the Pembroke Corgi. The ideal overall body length to height ratio measured from the point of the forechest to the point of buttocks is 1.8:1. All three of these sound dogs measure 12 inches at the withers. Dogs and bitches should be 10 ½ to 12 ½ inches in height. Dogs should weigh between 30 to 38 pounds; bitches 25 to 34 pounds. Oversize and undersize are serious faults. One of these dogs is the ideal length, one is acceptable and one is not. Which is which?

We are advised that the desired pants and fullness of tail will give the appearance of a dog approximately twice as long as it is high. Figure 12 is such a dog and can be considered acceptable. However, the ideal would be 1.8:1 as in Figure 13. A dog too short in body (and neck) is represented by Figure 11. A short of cobby body creates an incorrect silhouette and is a major breed type fault.

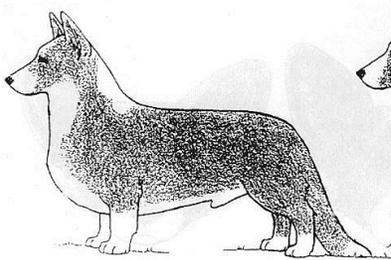


Figure 11

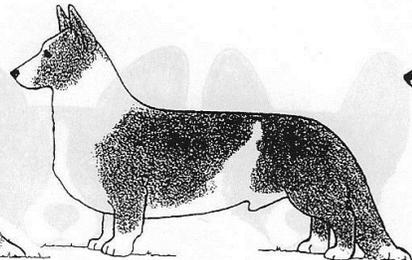


Figure 12

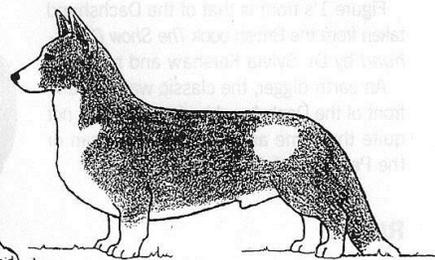


Figure 13

FIGURE 10

Aside from colour markings, what three things are wrong with the ears?

This Cardigan's ears are too small, pointed and held too high. Small and pointed are serious faults. As for colour markings, the white on the ear is acceptable, but the white surrounding the left eye is a fault according to the CWCCA. However, the revised standard states, "White on the head should not predominate and should never surround the eyes." The strong word "never" is used and both eyes are included. This leaves

the standard open to interpretation. For instance, this could be interpreted to mean that one eye surrounded by white is faulty but white surrounding both eyes should never happen.

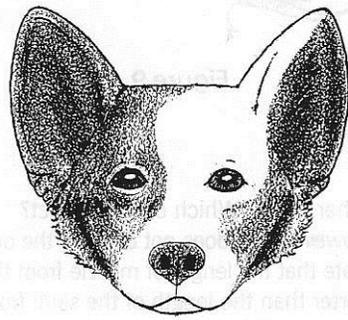


Figure 10

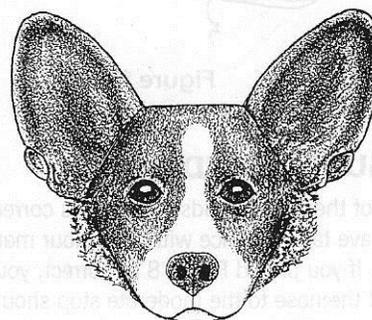


Figure 14

BODY MARKINGS

A body predominately white is disqualified; Cardigan splash and body spots are acceptable. I included both on the best two of the three different body lengths because white splashes and white islands are serious faults in certain breeds concerned about marking uniformity, and if you were not aware of acceptable Cardigan markings, you might wrongly not place Figure 11 last in this class.

FIGURE 14

Returning to the correct head viewed face on, I have attempted to provide refinement and chiselling. Coarse heads, cheeky heads and snipey narrow heads are wrong. The expression is alert, gently watchful yet friendly. The eyes are “medium to large”, not bulging, with dark rims and distinct corners, widely set and in harmony with the coat colour. Not a complete oval, the upper rim is more arched than the lower.

Blue eyes or partially blue eyes, or one blue and one dark eye, are permissible only in blue merles.