

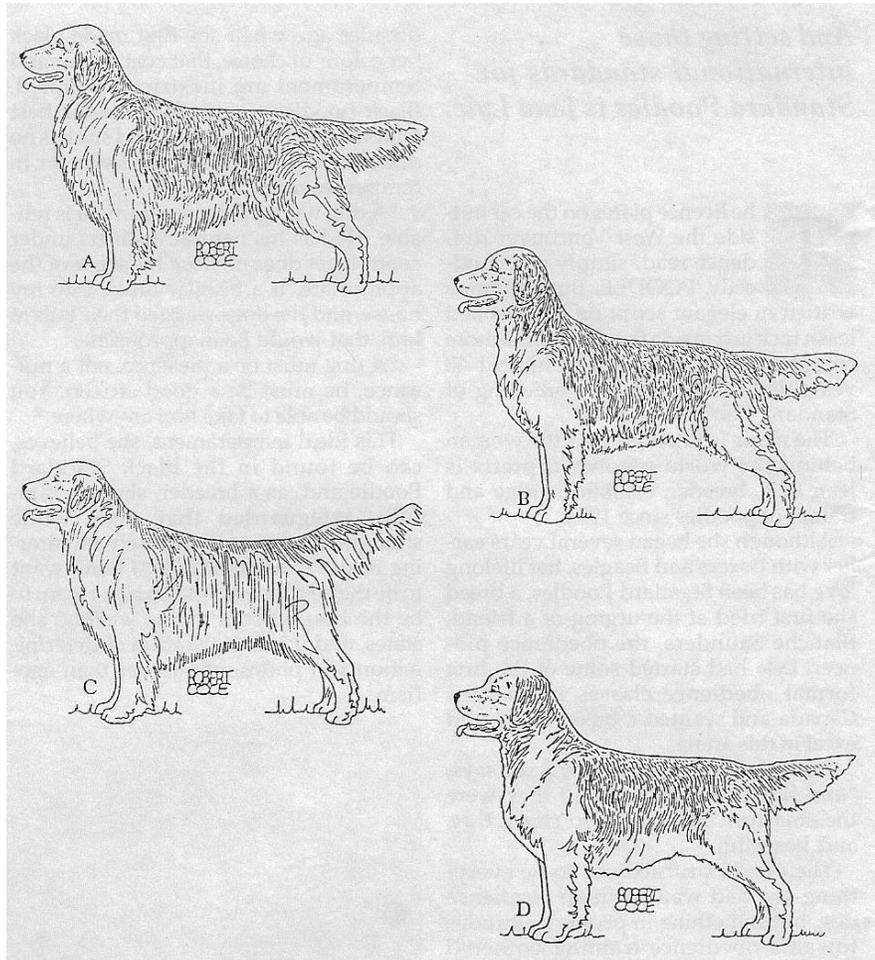
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

One male Golden in this hypothetical Open Class is a Canadian Best in Show winner, one is a British Best in show winner; the other two are Canadian group winners each possessing, in addition to virtues, certain informative faults. Find the two best Goldens, determine which dog is Canadian and which is British, decide which one you prefer, then decide on third and fourth.



All four of these Goldens measure 24 in. and weight between 70-80 lbs. All have the same depth of body as length of leg, the elbow level with bottom of chest, good gone, good feet. None has any permissible, but not desirable, white hairs on its chest. Colours are in various shades of lustrous gold. Three coats are straight or wavy, either being correct.

Decide on a first, second, third and fourth place...

DOG A

This is one of the group winners. His straight (can be wavy) coat protects from cold and wetness, having a soft, wooly undercoat from ½ in. to 1 ½ in. in length and a longer (but not of undue length) weatherproof top coat.

His brilliant yellow-orange coat has appeal. (Too dark colourings approaching setter-red or mahogany are not desired – neither is a chalky white nor a dull tan or brown.) His lighter shading (to silver cream) on underparts and featherings are quite allowable and add to this example's striking appearance.

On the debit side, this dog has three faults. He has a longer body than I like on a Golden, the official length to height ratio being 12 to 11. His neck is not the "medium-long" required in the breed standard, and his skull is flatter than I like as well as pronounced at the rear (occiput). I am giving him third place.

DOG B

This male stands 24 in. in height (one inch over or under the ideal 23-24 in. is to be disqualified, bitches 21 ½ to 22 ½) and weighs the maximum of 75 lbs. Measured from breastbone to buttocks, he measures slightly longer than tall. He is short coupled (loin) and deep through the chest, the chest level with the elbow. His chest between the forelegs is the width of a man's closed hand, including thumb, and his forechest is well developed. Consider this dog as one of a possible two for first place.

His broad skull is slightly arched in profile, and head-on without prominence of frontal or occipital bones. Stop is well defined but not abrupt. The deep, wide straight muzzle is nearly as long as the skull, deeper at stop than nose. The eyes are friendly, dark brown and with dark, close-fitting rims (trichiasis, abnormal position or direction of eyelashes – a disqualification). The nose is black, the bit is a complete scissors (undershot or overshot to be disqualified).

The ears (drawn at attention) are rather short with front edge attached well behind and set just above the eye and falling close to cheek. The neck is of good length, merging into high withers and well laid back shoulders. The topline between withers and slightly sloping croup is strong and level.

The balanced-with-rear forequarters position the close-fitting elbow beneath the tip of the shoulder blades, well under the body. The forelegs are straight with good, but not coarse, bone, the pastern short, strong and sloping slightly. The round, cat-like feet have thick pads.

The broad, strongly muscled hind legs are well bent, the rear pasterns short. The tail is thick at the base, well set-on, follows a natural line of slightly sloping croup, and is carried level with the back without a curl at the tip.

The more-flat-than-wavy coat is firm and resilient with good, dense, water resistant undercoat. The colour is rich gold. The coat on head, paws and front of legs is short and even. There is moderate feathering on back of forelegs, on underbody, front of neck, back of thighs and underside of tail. The natural appearance has not been altered by cutting or clipping.

DOG C

This group winning Golden Retriever also possesses many of the virtues possessed by Dog B. He also possesses some interesting departures. Some of his departures are obvious, other less so. One of the obvious is his topline. One of the less obvious is his slightly shorter muzzle.

By himself he has appeal but, compared to Dog B, he can be seen to have a short neck, a strange (but strong) topline, and a tail that is set on too high. The short neck probably contributes to this strange topline in combination with the virtues of well laid back shoulders and, further back, a faulty level sacrum.

The coat is profuse, but the texture silky under the body. Silkiness like that of a setter is a fault. His light shadings, however, should not be confused with white markings. This is my fourth place dog.

DOG D

During the process of gaining Challenge Certificates in England, this 80 lbs. dog, at various times, has been described by multi-breed and specialty judges as having an attractive, masculine head with correct expression, good length of neck, nice level topline, deep well ribbed body, good straight bone, strong, well angulated hindquarters, excellent double coat and as being a sound mover. Consider this dog for first place.

He differs from the Canadian dog also considered for first place (Dog B) in that he appears as a more solid, cobby dog, having a stronger, more powerful head and deeper body (Dog B appearing as more of a rangy type Golden).

FIRST PLACE

Neither of these two BIS Golden is intended to represent a national ideal – such depiction is beyond my experience. What they do represent are two different types. One is racy without being setter, the other is solid without being clumsy. The choice is yours.

YOU BE THE JUDGE. Based on CKC standard, either could win. They are equally sound, each has appeal, albeit different appeal. In Britain, there is little doubt in my mind as to which would have the greater appeal. In Canada, it could be either.