

Official Standard of the Pyrenean Mastiff



History: The Pyrenean Mastiff derives from the region of Aragon, Spain. They were traditionally used as livestock and property guardians. Due to the inherent nomadic nature of the breed's occupation, little is known prior to that time. Dogs traveled often with their charges and farmers as they moved about the region looking for better pastures. There is evidence of large dogs of a Mastiff type in the areas that were known to have been part of migration patterns. Since we know the traditional practices of the shepherds, we can deduce that Pyrenean Mastiffs have been in that region for 3 to 4 millennia, defending their charges from wolves and bears. Unfortunately, when there was a decline in large predators by the 1940's, there was also a decreased need for the Pyrenean Mastiff. This left very few lines available and resulted in higher levels of inbreeding. After the Spanish Civil War, the struggling economy also worsened the situation and made it difficult for people to maintain such large dogs. Some continued to use the Pyrenean Mastiff as property/estate guardians, while very few had them as companions.

Rafael Malo Alcrudo, along with a group of breeders, began the difficult work of recovering the Pyrenean Mastiff in the 70's. After searching the region to find examples of the breed, 100 possible dogs were found. These were then narrowed down to the top 30 dogs to represent the foundation of the modern Pyrenean Mastiff. The Pyrenean Mastiff was formally accepted by FCI in 1954. In 1977, the Club del Mastin del Pirineo (CMPE) was founded and dedicated to the Pyrenean Mastiff within Spain. The breed began to gain popularity and spread throughout Europe, especially in Finland. Eventually, the Pyrenean Mastiff arrived in the USA in 1996 and began to gain traction in the late 2010's. Today, the Pyrenean Mastiff is known for its even-tempered demeanor and ability to be a livestock guardian, property guardian and family guardian/companion.

General Appearance: The Pyrenean Mastiff dog conveys the distinct impression of power and strength combined with a very large size, moderate proportions, and strong substance. The Pyrenean Mastiff stands well up on the pasterns, with strong, tight, cat feet, giving a proud appearance. The coat consists of a white base coat with piebald markings that include patching over the eyes and ears at minimum. Patches will be agouti, varying shades of sable with or without black tipping, badger, varying shades of gold, brown, black, with or without brindle. The coat should have a coarse texture that is not woolly and is medium to long, where ideal length at midline is between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches. The Pyrenean Mastiff possesses a perceptive intelligence and a gentle, while regal, expression that exudes a strong presence. Exhibiting a harmonious movement that is emphatically strong and muscular. Despite their size, the Pyrenean Mastiff, should not give

the impression of being heavy or sluggish. The Pyrenean Mastiff was traditionally used as a livestock guardian protecting sheep from wolves and bears in the region of Aragon, Spain. Nowadays, the Pyrenean Mastiff serves as an excellent property guardian and family companion as they are easily trained.

Size, Proportion, Substance: *Size* – Dogs – minimum of 30 in. at the withers. Bitches – minimum of 28 in. at the withers. There is no upper height limit. When the quality of the dogs is equal, the bigger dog is always preferred. *Proportion* – The Pyrenean Mastiff should have moderate proportions. The length of body, measured from sternum to ischium, is slightly longer than the height of the dog at the withers, the most desirable proportion of the height to length being 9 to 10. The depth of chest represents at least 50 percent of the height at the withers. The thorax is deep, and when viewed from the front and in profile it extends to the elbow. *Substance* – The Pyrenean Mastiff should have impressive substance for its size; both in bone, body and muscle.

Head: Large, strong, moderately long. The desired ratio of back skull to muzzle is 5 to 4.

Expression – The Pyrenean Mastiff's expression is alert, noble, sympathetic, and intelligent, but can be extraordinarily stern towards a threat. *Eyes* – The eyes are very expressive, small in size, with a hazel or brown color that range from light to dark. Darker eye colors are preferred. The eye rims should be black pigmented. Eyes are deep-set, well apart, almond-shaped and should be tightly fitting to the eye rims at maturity. In repose, a slight slackness of the lower lid may present, but should not be to the extent to cause ectropion eyelids. *Ears* - Medium size, V-shaped with rounded tips, hanging flat. The ears should be set at or above the line of the eyes. In repose, the ears hang close to the head. When the dog is alert, the ears are raised level with the top of the skull, the front edge is attached well behind and just above the eye and falling close to the cheek. The ears should not be cropped. The ear leather is thick, covered with soft short hair, and when measured should reach the inner corner of the eye. Disqualification - Cropped ears. *Skull* – Broad, large, strong, and slightly convex in profile with a strongly defined occiput. The width of the skull is equal to or slightly broader than length. Stop - Gentle, barely emphasized, but still visible. *Muzzle* – Seen from the side, bridge of nose must be straight. Seen from above, the muzzle is slightly triangular, tapering very gradually from its set on to the nose leather without becoming pointed. *Planes* – Longitudinal axes of skull and muzzle are very slightly diverging to almost parallel. Seen from above, skull and muzzle must be long and even in shape gently increasing slightly between width at set-on of muzzle and width at temple. Seen from side, head must be deep and not bulging. *Nose* – Broad, well pigmented, with open nostrils. Black pigment only. *Lips* – The upper lip should cover the lower lip without any hint of slackness. Lips should always be black. Black pigment lacking on lips should be faulted based on the extent of the deviation. *Flews* – The lower lip forms a defined labial corner producing minimal flews. *Bite* – The Pyrenean Mastiff should have a scissor bite. A pincer or level bite should be slightly faulted and a slightly overshot bite should be seriously faulted. *Teeth* – Full complement of teeth are white, strong, and healthy. Canines should be large, long, pointed, well adapted to each other, so as to be able to effortlessly latch onto an opponent. Molars should be large and strong. Incisors are rather small. All teeth should be present except P1 which may or may not be present. Disqualification - Missing pigment on the nose leather. No pigment on the lips. Split nose. Very marked overshot mouth or undershot mouth. Blue eyes.

Neck, Topline, Body: *Neck* – The neck should be the shape of a blunt cone, broad, strong, muscular and flexible. From the nape, it should gradually broaden and flow smoothly into the withers. Sufficient in length to be in balance with the body. The skin is thick and slightly loose. Distinct double dewlap, well formed, yet not exaggerated. *Topline* – Topline is level and firm between the withers and croup. It should be straight, and horizontal while standing and in movement. Height at croup is equal to the height at the withers. *Body* – The body is slightly rectangular, powerful, and robust, giving the impression of great strength, yet a supple and agile appearance. The withers are prominent and strong. The chest is broad, deep, muscular, and

powerful. The chest is well developed, with brisket reaching the elbows. Prosternum should be protruding and prominent. The depth of chest represents at least 50 percent of the height at the withers. The thorax is deep, and when viewed from the front and in profile it extends to the elbow. Ribs should be spaced widely apart with a rounded ribcage; The ribcage should be well sprung and not flat. The underline should be pronounced with a moderate tuck-up. The groin should be deep with the very broad flanks. Back – The back is muscular and level with firmly muscled loin. Loin – The loin is long, broad and strong, gradually getting narrower towards the flanks. Croup – The croup compared to the horizontal back; It is wide, strong, and gently sloping with the tail set on just below the level of the back. *Tail* – The tail is set on medium high. It is thick at the root, strong and flexible. The coat on the tail is long, and softer than the coat of the body, but still slightly coarse. The tail should form a plume. In repose it hangs low and reaches easily to the hocks. The last third is often curved. In movement and when the dog is alert, it is carried in a saber form with a hook at tip but without the entire length being bent or resting over the back. It is a serious fault if the tail is carried lying over the croup or if there is a lack of plume. Disqualification – Docked tail.

Forequarters: Angulation – Forequarters should be moderately angled to match the rear angulation. Shoulders – Well laid back, muscular, strongly boned. Shoulder blade should be equal to the length of the upper arm. Point of Shoulder – Angle of shoulder blade to upper arm approximately 100 degrees. Upper Arm – The upper arm should be very strong. Elbow – The elbows should be close fitting to ribcage. Legs – Legs seen from the front must be vertical, straight, and parallel. They should have substantial bone and muscle. They are well covered with short, coarse hair, with feathering on the back. Pasterns – The front pasterns should be strong and when seen from the side should be slightly sloping. Length of forearm three times length of pastern. Dewclaws – Front feet must have single dewclaws. Feet – Cat feet, fairly large in size, strong, and compact. Toes should be tight with strong, well arched toe bones. Nails and pads strong and robust and may be either black and/or white, regardless of coat color. May have feathering between toes. It is a serious fault to have general weakness in the feet.

Hindquarters: Powerful and muscular. Hindquarters must be able to easily and elegantly provide forceful drive. Angulation - Moderate angulations as seen from the side. Legs – Seen from behind, the hind legs and stifle are parallel and vertical. Legs are long, well-muscled with substantial bone. The stifles are well bent (approximately 120 degrees). The hocks are strong, symmetrical, straight. Feet – Oval feet, fairly large in size, strong, and compact. Toes should be tight with strong, well arched toe bones. Dewclaws are either single or double. They may be either present or missing. Their removal is permitted. In dogs of equal quality, double dewclaws are preferred. Nails and pads are strong and robust and may be either black and/or white, regardless of coat color. May have feathering between toes. It is a serious fault to have general weakness in the feet.

Coat: The coat of the Pyrenean Mastiff is dense, thick and of moderate length. The ideal medium length, measured by the middle section of the topline should be between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches. The coat is more profuse about the neck and shoulders where it forms a ruff or mane which is more pronounced in males. The coat is also longer and feathers at the under belly, the back of the legs, as well as on the tail. The coat should have a coarse texture that is not wooly. On the plume, the texture is not as coarse as other places on the body. It is a serious fault if the coat is very wavy or curly. Disqualification - Coat in the middle section of the topline shorter than 1.5 inches or longer than 5”.

Color: The Pyrenean Mastiff is always piebald. The base coat color should be white. At the roots, the coat should be as light as possible, ideally very white. White markings may appear on the head (blaze) and muzzle. The blaze may vary in length and width. It may be a very thin stripe or a wider band. The blaze may extend just barely to the stop or may extend over the top of the skull. The blaze may meet with the white patch or collar on the neck. While not preferred, it is not to be faulted if there is no blaze and head is completely marked. There may be a black mask or may not be a black mask over the muzzle. The blaze should not envelop the eyes. The ears and eyes must be

patched completely. Markings on the head should be symmetrical. On the body, there may be irregularly distributed and distinctly outlined patches that are of similar color as the markings on the head. The tip of the tail and lower parts of the legs are always white. Any white areas may have light flecking the same color as the patches, but it should not be in excess. It is an advantage if the outline of the patches are distinct against the white. The patches of the piebald can be agouti, varying shades of sable with or without black tipping, badger, varying shades of gold, brown, black, with or without brindle. The skin is elastic, thick, pink in color, with dark pigmented patches. The nose leather and lips should always be black. Black pigment lacking on lips should be faulted based on the extent of the deviation. Tan point patches, or a yellowish-white base color are a serious fault. Patches not clearly defined and with little contrast to the base color is a serious fault. Disqualification - Absence of white on the tip of the tail and on lower parts of the legs. Solid white coat color or if there is white on the ears or over the eyes.

Gait: The preferred movement of the Pyrenean Mastiff is the trot which should be harmonious, strong and elegant. There should be no tendency for legs to swing outward and no pacing. The gait should be athletic, powerful, steady and balanced, yet at the same time, light-footed and agile. When viewed from the side, reach and drive should indicate maximum use of the dog's moderate angulation. At increased speed, the dog will tend to single-track. Back should remain level and firm. Sound and powerful movement is more important than speed.

Temperament: They are calm, noble, and very intelligent, at the same time courageous and proud towards strangers from whom they should never cower. The Pyrenean Mastiff should be friendly towards humans who do not pose any threat. They should be fierce protectors when it comes to their charges and property. The Pyrenean Mastiff should be good natured and aware of his superior strength when around other dogs. When necessary, they will fight with great skill, an atavistic quality which goes back to hundreds of years of fighting wolves and bears. Very slight shyness should be faulted.

Faults: The foregoing description is that of the ideal Pyrenean Mastiff. Any deviation from the above-described dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

Disqualifications:

Missing pigment on the nose leather.

No pigment on the lips.

Split nose.

Very marked overshot mouth or undershot mouth.

Coat in the middle section of the topline shorter than 1.5 inches or longer than 5".

Absence of white on the tip of the tail and on lower parts of the legs.

Solid white coat color or if there is white on the ears or over the eyes.

Cropped ears.

Docked tail.

Blue eyes.

Approved August 7, 2023

Effective June 26, 2024