
Retriever (Labrador)

General Appearance

The general appearance of the Labrador should be that of a strongly built, short-coupled, very active dog. He should be fairly wide over the loins, and strong and muscular in the hindquarters. The coat should be close, short, dense and free from feather.

Size

Approximate weights of dogs and bitches in working condition:

Dogs: 60-75 lb. (27-34 kg);

Bitches: 55-70 lb. (25-32 kg)

Height at shoulders:

Dogs: 22-1/2 - 24-1/2 inches (57-62 cm);

Bitches: 21-1/2 - 23-1/2 inches (54-60 cm)

Coat and Colour

The coat is a very distinctive feature; it should be short, very dense and without wave, and should give a fairly hard feeling to the hand. The colours are black, yellow, or chocolate and are evaluated as follows:

(a) **Blacks**

All black, with a small white spot on chest permissible. Eyes to be of medium size, expressing intelligence and good temper, preferably brown or hazel, although black or yellow is permissible.

(b) **Yellows**

Yellow may vary in colour from fox-red to light cream with variations in the shading of the coat on ears, the underparts of the dog, or beneath the tail. A small white spot on chest is permissible. Eye colouring and expression should be the same as that of the blacks, with black or dark brown eye rims. The nose should also be black or dark brown, although "fading" to pink in the winter weather is not serious.

(c) **Chocolates**

Shades ranging from light sedge to chocolate. A small white spot on chest is permissible. Eyes to be light brown to clear yellows. Nose and eye rim pigmentation dark brown or liver coloured. "Fading" to pink in winter weather not serious.

Head

Skull should be wide, giving brain room; there should be a slight stop, i.e., the brow should be slightly pronounced, so that the skull is not absolutely in a straight line with the nose. **Head** should be clean-cut and free from fleshy cheeks. **Jaws** should be long and powerful and free from snipiness. The **nose** should be wide and the nostrils well developed. **Teeth** should be strong and regular, with a level mouth. **Eyes** should be of a medium size, expressing great intelligence and good temper, and can be brown, yellow or black, but brown or black is preferred. **Ears** should hang moderately close to the head rather far back, should be set somewhat low, and not be large and heavy.

Neck

The neck should be medium length, powerful and not throaty.

Forequarters

The shoulders should be long and sloping. The legs must be straight from the shoulder to ground, and the feet compact with toes well arched, and pads well developed.

Body

The chest must be of good width and depth, the ribs well sprung and the loins wide and strong.

Hindquarters

Stifles well turned, and the hindquarters well developed and of great power. The hocks should be well bent, and the dog must neither be cow-hocked nor be too wide behind; in fact, he must stand and move true all round on legs and feet. Legs should be of medium length, showing good bone and muscle, but not so short as to be out of balance with rest of body. In fact, a dog well balanced in all points is preferable to one with outstanding good qualities and defects.

Tail

The tail is a distinctive feature of the breed; it should be very thick towards the base, gradually tapering towards the tip, of medium length, should be free from any feathering, and should be clothed thickly all round with the Labrador's short, thick, dense coat, thus giving that peculiar "rounded" appearance which has been described as the "otter" tail. The tail may be carried gaily but should not curl over the back.

Gait

Movement should be free and effortless. The forelegs should be strong, straight and true, and correctly placed. Watching a dog move towards one, there should be no signs of elbows being out in front, but neatly held to the body with legs not too close together, but moving straight forward without pacing or weaving. Upon viewing the dog from the rear, one should get the impression that the hind legs, which should be well muscled and not cow-hocked, move as nearly parallel as possible, with hocks doing their full share of work and flexing well, thus giving the appearance of power and strength.

Faults

Dudley nose (pink without pigmentation).