



GROUP I: SPORTING DOGS

SPANIEL (IRISH WATER)

RECOGNIZED: 1889

Effective: January 2004

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

That of a smart, upstanding, strongly built but not leggy dog, combining great intelligence and rugged endurance with a bold dashing eagerness of temperament.

SIZE

Height: Dogs, 56 to 61 cm (22 to 24 in); bitches, 53.25 to 58.5 cm (21 to 23 in)

Weight: Dogs, 25 to 29 kg (55 to 64 lb); bitches, 20.5 to 26.25 kg (45 to 58 lb)

COAT

Proper coat is of vital importance. The neck, back, and sides should be densely covered with tight crisp ringlets entirely free from woolliness. Underneath the ribs the hair should be longer. The hair on lower throat should be short. The forelegs should be covered all around with abundant hair falling in curls or waves, but shorter in front than behind. The hind legs should also be abundantly covered by hair falling in curls or waves, but the hair should be short on the front of the legs below the hocks.

COLOUR

Colour solid liver; white on chest objectionable.

HEAD

Skull: Rather large and high in dome with prominent occiput. **Muzzle:** Square and rather long with deep mouth opening and lips fine in texture. The head should be cleanly chiselled, not cheeky, and should not present a short wedge-shaped appearance. Hair on face should be short and smooth. **Topknot**, a characteristic of the true breed, should consist of long loose curls growing down into a well-defined peak between the eyes and should not be in the form of a wig – i.e., growing straight across. The **nose** should be large with open nostrils and liver in colour. **Teeth:** Strong and level. **Eyes:** Medium in size and set almost flush, without eyebrows. Colour of eyes hazel, preferably a dark shade. Expression of the eyes should be keenly alert, intelligent, direct, and quizzical. **Ears:** Long, lobular, set low with leathers reaching to about the end of the nose when extended forward. The ears should be abundantly covered with curls becoming longer towards the tips and extending 5 cm (2 in) or more below the ends of the leathers.

NECK

The neck should be long, arching, strong, and muscular, smoothly set into sloping shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS

The entire front should give the impression of strength without heaviness. **Shoulders** should be sloping and clean. **Forelegs:** Medium in length, well boned, straight, and muscular with elbows close set. Both fore and hind feet

should be large, thick, and somewhat spreading, well clothed with hair both over and between the toes, but free from superfluous feather.

BODY

Body should be of medium length, with ribs well sprung, pear-shaped at the brisket, and rounder towards the hindquarters. **Chest:** Deep but not too wide between the legs. **Ribs** should be carried well back. **Loins** should be short, wide and muscular. The body should not present a tucked-up appearance.

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarters should be as high as or a trifle higher than the shoulders and should be very powerful and muscular with well-developed upper and second thighs. **Hips** should be wide; **stifles** should not be too straight; and **hocks** low set and moderately bent. Tail should be set low enough to give a rather rounded appearance to the hindquarters and should be carried nearly level with the back. Sound hindquarters are of great importance to provide swimming power and drive.

TAIL

The so-called “rat tail” is a striking characteristic of the breed. At the root it is thick and covered for 5 to 7.5 cm (2 to 3 in) with short curls. It tapers to a fine point at the end, and from the root-curls is covered with short, smooth hair so as to look as if the tail had been clipped. The tail should not be long enough to reach the hock joint.

GAIT

Should be square, true, precise and not slurring.

FAULTS

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed’s traditional purpose.

SCALE OF POINTS

Head

Skull and topknot.....	6	
Ears.....	4	
Eyes.....	4	
Muzzle and nose.....	6	20

Body

Neck.....	5	
Chest, shoulders, back, loin and ribs.....	12	17

Driving Gear

Feet, hips, thighs, stifles and continuity of hindquarter muscles.....	14	
Feet, legs, elbows, and muscles of forequarters.....	9	23

Coat

Tightness, denseness of curl and texture.....	16	
Colour.....	4	20

Tail

General appearance and “set on”, length and carriage.....	5	5
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General Conformation and Action

Symmetry, style, gait, weight, and size.....	15	15
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TOTAL	100	100
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