
Black Russian Terrier

Origin & Purpose

The Black Russian Terrier (BRT) was created in the former Soviet Union's State Military Kennel "Red Star" through selective cross-breeding. The principal ancestors are the Giant Schnauzer, the Rottweiler, the now extinct Moscow Water Dog (Newfoundland, Caucasian Shepherd and East European Shepherd) and the Airedale Terrier. The breed was first recognized by the FCI in 1983. The Black Russian Terrier was created to fill a variety of military needs including sentry and protection duty. The Black Russian Terrier is a reliable guardian breed and a versatile worker, adaptable to various climatic conditions and lifestyles.

General Appearance

The Black Russian Terrier is a large, robust, proportional and well-balanced dog, who is slightly longer than tall, with pronounced sexual dimorphism. The BRT is densely boned, with a large head and well-developed muscles giving it an athletic build. The body is covered by a black double coat with ample furnishings on its head and legs. The BRT possesses great strength and has a stable temperament. It is highly intelligent, courageous, hardworking, reliable and very trainable. The BRT is a slow-developing breed, maturing fully at approximately 3 years of age.

Temperament

The Black Russian Terrier temperament is of utmost importance. The BRT is a courageous, calm and confident guard breed, well-controlled in all circumstances. He is somewhat reserved and aloof toward strangers and therefore does not form indiscriminate friendships and does not relish intrusion into its personal space. The BRT forms a very strong bond with their owners, is fiercely devoted to them and very protective of them. The BRT's highest nervous activity type (according to a Pavlov's classification) is strong, balanced and flexible with an active defense reaction and a reliable on and off switch. This breed requires frequent and regular socialization and training, as well as consistency in daily living.

Size

Dogs at maturity should measure 28" – 30" (71 - 77 cm) at the withers.
Bitches at maturity should measure 25.6" – 28" (65 - 71 cm) at the

withers. However, additional 1" to 1 1/2" (2.5 cm to 4 cm) can be acceptable if overall proportions, type and unimpaired sound movement are preserved.

Coat

Dense double coat with coarser guard hairs and a softer undercoat. The coat on the body is 0.2"-6" (0.5-15 cm) in length and has a slight to moderate wave. On the muzzle, the coat forms an ample moustache and beard. The eyebrows, or the fall, is long, coming to or extending past the nose. The legs are covered by an ample and long coat. The undercoat is dense and well-developed. Breed appropriate grooming is mandatory, but should not be given priority over structure, movement and overall balance.

Colour

Solid black or black with up to 30% of grey hairs, dispersed throughout the coat. Solid patches, ticking or striping in any colour on the mandatory black coat is not acceptable for breeding or exhibition. Dogs with bi-colour and tri-colour coats are not recognized as "Black Russian Terriers".

Head

Head is large, equal to at least 40% of the dog's height at withers. Skull is moderately broad, with flat top. Back of the skull and brow ridge slightly perceptible. Stop is marked but not too pronounced. The topline of the muzzle is parallel with the topline of the skull. The muzzle is well-filled under eyes, slightly tapering toward the nose. Cheekbones are rounded but not too pronounced. The length of the muzzle is 4:5 to the length of the skull. The moustache and the beard give the muzzle a truncated and rectangular appearance. Drop ears attached high on the head (but not above the level of the skull), hanging straight down from the base, medium-small and triangular in shape, rounded at a tip and dense. The front rim of the ear hangs down against the cheekbones. The length of the ear should not reach farther than the outer corner of a same side eye (aka canthus). Eyes are of medium size, oval shaped and set wide apart and, dark brown in colour. Eye rims are black and dry, without sagging. The nose is large and black. Lips are thick, tight and well-pigmented (black), without flews. The inside of a mouth is well-pigmented, dark. Teeth. Full dentition, with scissor bite and incisors in one straight line at the base. Broad lower jaw.

Neck

Muscular, powerful, slightly arching, of a medium length, approximately equal to the length of the head; well set-on at a 40°- 45° angle to horizon; without dewlap. The nape is well developed.

Forequarters

Well-muscled. Shoulder blades are wide and long; shoulders are well-muscled and sloping. The angle of the shoulder-blade with the upper arm is not more than 100° and the angle of the shoulder-blade with horizon is 45°. Elbows are set close to the body and must point backwards. Seen from the front or from the side, the legs are straight and parallel and not set close together. Front legs are thick and strongly developed, with muscular upper arms that are equal to or longer than shoulder blades and forearms of a medium length. The distance from the withers to the elbow approximately equals the distance from the elbow to the ground. The pasterns are short and almost vertical. Feet are large, compact, round in shape, with well-arched toes. Nails and pads are black. Front dewclaw removal is optional.

Body

Slightly longer than tall. The length of the body (measured from point of shoulder to point of rump): for dogs 101-105% of height at the withers; for bitches 101-108% of height at the withers. Top line is firm, well-muscled, straight but slightly sloping by 1-3 cm. Withers are high and long, more pronounced in dogs than in bitches. Thorax is wide and muscular; equals to 1/2 of the length from the start of withers to the base of a tail. Loin is short, equals to 1/2 of the thorax length, wide, muscular and slightly arching. Croup is wide, muscular, with a 5°-10° slope towards the tail, equals to 1/2 of the thorax length (The ratio of thorax : lumbar : croup is 2:1:1). Chest is deep, minimum 50% of height at the withers, long, wide, reaching to the level of the elbows or slightly below; with moderately sprung, long ribs and a long sternum. Thorax in cross-section should be oval in shape. The forechest extends some beyond the shoulder joints and is well-developed and well-muscled. Moderate tuck-up.

Hindquarters

Hindquarters are well-muscled with moderately angulated hips that match the front shoulders angulation. Seen from behind, the legs are straight and parallel, but set slightly wider apart than the front legs and

set slightly back when viewed from the side. Thighs are broad, medium long, well-developed with salient muscles and set slightly inclined. Seen from behind, the muscled thighs are wider than croup. Thigh and lower leg form 125° - 130° angle. Lower legs are approximately equal in length to the thighs, well-muscled and set at 45° to horizon. Hock joints are wide, lean and well-developed. They form 125° - 130° angle between lower legs and rear pasterns. Rear pasterns are strong, moderately short and vertical. Feet are large, more oval and slightly smaller than front feet, with well-arched tight toes. Nails and pads are black. Rear dewclaw removal is desirable but not required.

Tail

The tail is thick, set moderately high, and is carried at an approximate 45° angle from horizontal. The base of the tail does not incline over the back (squirrel tail). When the tail is docked, there are 3 to 5 vertebrae remaining. An undocked tail is not to be penalized. The preferred shape of an undocked tail resembles a sickle or saber.

Gait

Long, low, covering a lot of ground, with good reach of the forequarters and good driving power of the hindquarters, but not overreaching trot is the typical gait of a Black Russian Terrier. The gait is effortless, enduring and efficient; conveys power and strength. When trotting, the legs must move in a straight line, with the front legs converging slightly towards a median line. At maturity, topline remains level while topline of young BRTs might exhibit elastic springy movements. Moving slowly, the Black Russian Terrier can carry its head at a 45° angle to horizon. As speed increases, neck stretches almost parallel to the ground.

Faults

Soundness (both temperament and conformation) and type are of prime importance. The foregoing description is that of the ideal Black Russian Terrier. Any deviation from the standard must be penalized to the extent of the deviation. The BRT should always be considered and judged as a working dog.

Faults include, but not limited to:

- lack of proportion, lightly built or over-done specimen, poorly developed muscle tone
- pink mouth; one missing premolar, first premolar only (#105, 205, 305 or 405)

- brown or grey shadings of undercoat at maturity
- light brown eye
- malocclusion (incisors not in one line at the base)
- ewe neck
- straight shoulders
- straight croup
- sickle hocks
- gay tail
- flying (suspension) trot
- any height deviation from the description under size.

Disqualification

- Strong deviation from the described type
- bitchy dog
- any number of missing teeth other than first premolar (as described under Faults above), any deviation from scissor bite
- amber eye, bird eye; nose colour other than black
- coat colour other than black or black with scattered grey hairs
- dogs having one or both testicles undescended
- shyness at maturity
- unprovoked aggression towards people.

