

Karelian Bear Dog

Origin and Purpose:

As a breed, the Karelian Bear Dog is fairly new. His origins include the now-extinct Komi Dog, as well as hunting stock from the areas of Lake Ladoga and the former Finnish Karelia, which were used to hunt everything from small furred game and birds, to moose and large predators such as wolves. Organised breeding began in 1936, with the goal of creating a tough, hardy and courageous dog which could locate and bark big game. WW2 nearly destroyed these fledgling efforts, but determined fanciers re-established the breed with a base of 60 dogs, of which 43 were used to form the Karelian Bear Dog of today. The first standard was written in 1945; the first dogs were registered the following year. Today the breed is common in Finland, where it is used primarily on moose and bear. The Karelian Bear Dog is an eager solo hunter which works closely with a single owner, and marks its quarry by barking. Its senses, especially that of smell and direction, are very keen.

General Appearance:

Medium sized, with robust conformation, strong without being heavy, only slightly longer than the height at the withers, with dense double coat and strongly pricked ears. Important proportions are as follows: length of body to height at withers to measure in a ratio of 10:9. The depth of body is half of the height at the withers. The Karelian Bear Dog should always be presented in a manner that befits his profession, and exhibited in hard, working condition. The Karelian Bear Dog is at all times to be shown in a natural state. Feet may be neatened, but whiskers must be left untouched. All other attempts to artificially alter the appearance or structure of the dog by virtue of sculpting, trimming, colouring or any other means, must be considered a most grievous fault.

Temperament

Balanced, slightly reserved, courageous and persistent. Very selfconfident. May be aggressive to other dogs, but never towards people. Highly developed fighting spirit.

Size

HEIGHT AT WITHERS: Ideal height - males 22.4" (57cm) and females 20.5" (52cm) with a tolerance of +/- 3 cms.

WEIGHT: Males 55.1 lbs (25kg) – 61.7 lbs (28kg) and bitches 37.5 lbs (17kg) – 44.1 lbs (20kg).

Coat and Colour

The OUTER COAT is harsh and straight; it is longer on the neck, back and rear of upper thighs. The UNDERCOAT is soft and dense. The SKIN is tight overall, and without wrinkle.

In COLOUR, the Karelian Bear Dog is black, which may be dull or preferably shaded with brown. Most individuals have clearly defined white markings on the head, neck, chest, belly and legs. (Preferred percentages of black/white - 70/30; 80/20; 90/10; 60/40. White to be as clear as possible; light speckling permitted but not desirable.

Head

Viewed from the front, triangular in shape. A roughly equilateral, yet blunt triangle when seen from directly above. From the front, lines of equal length shall be drawn from ear tip to ear tip, from ear tip to bottom of cheek, and from cheek to cheek under the chin, forming a square. The SKULL is broad when both seen from the front, and in profile is only slightly convex. Broadest between the ears. The ratio between muzzle and skull is approximately 2:3. The length of the skull is the same as its breadth and depth. The frontal furrow is barely visible. The STOP is not very pronounced, is rather long and arches gradually towards the skull. The NOSE is large, and black in colour. The MUZZLE is deep, and tapers only slightly. The bridge of the nose is straight. The LIPS are thin and tight. The JAWS are very strong. The TEETH are well developed, and symmetrical; normal and full dentition. Tight scissor bite. Level bite permitted but not desired. The zygomatic arches of the CHEEKS are strong. EYES are rather small, and slightly oval. Brown of all different shades, but never bright yellow. The expression is alert and fiery even challenging. EARS are erect, set rather high, and are medium-sized with slightly rounded tips. Outside edges vertical.

Neck

Muscular, of medium length, arched and covered with profuse hair. No dewlap.

Forequarters

In general appearance, strong with strong bones. When viewed from the front, the legs are straight and parallel. The SHOULDERS are relatively oblique and muscular. The UPPER ARMS are slightly oblique and strong. The ELBOWS point straight backwards, placed on the vertical line drawn from the top of the withers. The FOREARMS are

strong and vertical. The METACARPUS/PASTERNS are of medium length, and slightly oblique. The FOREFEET are tight, well arched, roundish and pointing forwards. Pads springy, the sides covered with dense hair.

Body

The WITHERS are clearly defined, especially in males. Less defined in bitches. The BACK is straight and muscular; the LOIN is short and muscular. The CROUP is broad, strong and slightly sloping. The CHEST is spacious, but not very broad; it is rather long, and reaches to the elbows. Ribs are slightly arched; the forechest is visible, but not overly broad. The UNDERLINE is slightly tucked up.

Hindquarters

In general appearance, strong and muscular. When viewed from behind, legs are straight and parallel. The UPPER THIGH is broad and long, with strong muscles. The STIFLE points forward, with medium angulation. The front line of the hind leg is evenly arched. The SECOND THIGH is long and muscular. The HOCK is low, with angulation clearly visible. The METATARSUS is short, strong and vertical. The HIND FEET are tight, slightly longer and less arched than the front feet. Pads are springy and the sides are covered in dense hair.

Tail

High set, of medium length. When curved over the back the tip of the tail will touch the body on either side, or on the back. A natural bobtail is equally correct.

Gait

Light, ground covering and effortless. Changes easily from trot to gallop, which is the most natural style of movement. The legs move parallel.

Faults

- light in bone
- narrow skull
- snipey muzzle
- soft or bat ears
- strongly bulging forehead
- yellow eyes

- dewlap
- too deep or barrel-shaped ribcage
- straight shoulders
- dewclaws on hind legs
- wavy coat
- straight or insufficiently curved tail
- missing teeth, honourable scarring not to be penalised

Severe Faults:

- predominantly white colour
- wolf grey colour or spots
- pinto-type body markings
- 'clown' or 'open' facial markings
- straight hocks
- flat feet
- thin pads
- any animal more than 1 cm. over/under stated height limits.

Disqualifications

- over-or-undershot
- wall, blue or bi-eyes
- ears hanging or drooping tips, unless caused through field injury
- any other colour or combinations other than aforementioned
- aggressiveness towards people
- extreme shyness or timidity