



Australian Cattle Dog

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.

Origin and Purpose

The Australian Cattle Dog was developed to assist with the development of the cattle industry in early Australian conditions. The principal requirement was a strong biting dog capable of mustering and moving wild cattle. The long distances to be travelled made it essential that such a dog possess great stamina. Although there is still some disagreement as to the actual breeds used, it is generally thought that the Cattle Dog developed chiefly from cross breeding a Dingo and the Blue Merle Collie.

General Appearance

The general appearance is that of a sturdy, compact, symmetrically-built working dog. With the ability and willingness to carry out any task, however strenuous, its combination of substance, power, balance, and hard muscular condition to be such that it must convey the impression of great agility, strength, and endurance.

Temperament

The utility purpose is assistance in the control of cattle, in both wide open and confined areas. Ever alert, extremely intelligent, watchful, courageous, and trustworthy. With an implicit devotion to duty, making it an ideal dog, its loyalty and protective instincts make self-appointed guardians to the stockman, his herd, his property, whilst suspicious of strangers, must be amenable to handling in the show ring.

Size

The desirable height at the withers to be within the following:

- a) Dogs, 46-51 cm (18-20 in).
- b) Bitches, 43-48 cm (17-19 in).

Dogs or bitches over or under these specified sizes are undesirable. Dogs over 52 cm (20 ½ in) or under 44 cm (17 in) and bitches over 50 cm (19 ½ in) or under 42 cm (16 ½ in) are disqualified. Desirable weight: 15-23 kg (33-50,5 lb).

Coat and Colour

The weather-resisting outer coat is moderately short, straight, and of medium texture, with short, dense undercoat. Behind the quarter, the coat is longer, forming a mild feathering. The tail is furnished sufficiently to form a good brush. The head, forelegs, and hind legs, from hock to ground, are coated with short hair. The Australian Cattle Dog should be shown in natural state. The coat is not clipped or trimmed.

There are two recognized colours in the breed:

Blue

The colour should be blue or blue mottled with or without other markings. The permissible markings are black, blue, or tan markings on the head, evenly distributed for preference, the forelegs tan midway up the legs, the hindquarters tan on the inside of the hind legs and inside of the thighs, showing down the front of stifles and broadening out to the outside of the hind legs from hock to toes. Tan undercoat is permissible on the body providing it does not show through the blue outer coat.

**Red**

The colour should be of good even red speckle all over, including the undercoat (not white or cream), with or without darker red markings on the head. Even head markings are desirable. Solid red or solid black markings on the body are not desirable.

Head

A blunt wedge-shaped head, in balance with other proportions of the dog, and in keeping with its general conformation, is broad of skull, and only slightly curved between the ears, flattening to a slight but definite stop. The cheeks are muscular, but not coarse or prominent. The underjaw is strong, deep and well developed. The foreface is broad and well filled in under the eye, tapering gradually to a medium length; a deep powerful muzzle. The nose is black irrespective of the colour of the dog. The lips are tight and clean. The teeth should be sound, strong and regularly spaced, gripping with a scissorlike action, the lower incisors close behind and just touching the upper. Undershot or overshot jaw should be disqualified. The eyes to be oval shaped and of medium size, neither prominent nor sunken, and must express alertness and intelligence. A warning or suspicious glint characteristic. Eye colour is brown with a very dark pupil. Yellow eye is disqualified. The ears should be of moderate size, preferably small rather than large, broad at the base, muscular, pricked, and moderately pointed (not spoon or bat ears). Ears are set wide apart on the skull, inclined outwards, sensitive in their use and firmly erect. The inside of the ear should be fairly well furnished with hair.

Neck

The neck is of exceptional strength, muscular and of medium length, about 1/3 the length of the body, broadening to blend into the body and free from throatiness.

Forequarters

The shoulders are broad of blade, sloping, muscular and at the point of the withers should be well laid back. The upper arm is well angulated to the shoulders. The lower arm should have strong round bone, extending to the feet. They should be perfectly straight viewed from the front. The pasterns should have no weakness between the feet and lower arm and should show a slight angle with the lower arm when regarded from the side. The feet should be round, toes short, strong, well arched and held close together. The pads are hard and deep and the nails must be short and strong (cat paws). Dewclaws are found on the front feet only and may be removed.

Body

The length of the body from point of the breastbone in a straight line to the buttocks is greater than the height of the withers as 10 is to 9. The topline is level, back strong, with ribs well sprung and ribbed back, (not barrel chested). The chest is deep and muscular and moderately broad. The loins are broad, deep and muscular with deep flanks and showing strength joining the fore and hindquarters. The croup is slightly sloping, broad, strong and muscular. The abdomen does not cut up into the flank.

Hindquarters

The line from the point of the hip to the point of buttock is rather long and sloping. The upper thigh is long, broad and well developed. The lower thigh is long and well muscled. The hocks are strong and well let down and when viewed from behind the hind legs from hocks to the feet are straight and placed neither close nor too wide apart. They should have a moderate bend of stifle.



Tail

The set of the tail is low. Following the slope of the croup, and at rest, the tail should hang in a slight curve of a length to reach approximately to the hock. During normal movement it may be raised, but a gay tail should be severely penalized. The tail is never docked.

Gait

Soundness is of paramount importance. The action is true, free, supple and tireless. The movement of the shoulders and forelegs, with the powerful thrust of the hindquarters, should be in unison. Capability of quick, sudden movement is essential.

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 purpose.

- Any tendency to grossness or weediness is a serious fault.
- Ears: ears other than pricked.
- Colour: solid red or black markings on the body.
- Tail: gay tail is a fault.
- Other: stiltiness, loaded or slack shoulders, straight shoulders, weakness of elbows, pasterns or feet, straight stifles, cow or bow hocks must be regarded as serious faults.

Disqualifications

- a) Mouth: overshot or undershot jaw.
- b) Eye: yellow eye.
- c) Size: bitches over 50 cm (19 ½ in) or under 42 cm (16 ½ in) and dogs over 52 cm (20 ½ in) or under 44 cm (17 in)

Breed Name: Australian Cattle Dog
Year of Recognition: 1979
Effective Date: January 2004