

Russell Terrier

Origin & Purpose

The Russell Terrier originated in England and was developed for use in the sport of foxhunting, using parallel breeding strains from Reverend John Russell's original fox working terriers in the early nineteenth century. The Russell Terrier is still utilized today as a working terrier. Two distinct breeds evolved from similar backgrounds. The Russell Terrier is short in stature, with distinctly rectangular shape, yet not so long as to be prone to back injury; and the Parson Russell Terrier is a taller dog, with a body silhouette appearing squarer.

General Appearance

The Russell Terrier is a strong, active, lithe, predominately white bodied working Terrier of character with a flexible body of moderate length and rectangular profile. The overall dog must present a balanced image with no one part exaggerated over another. The Russell Terrier is full of life, and moves with confidence that matches his keen expression. Coat may be smooth, broken or rough and may have tan and/or black markings with no preference for coat type or markings. Tail docking is optional.

Temperament

An alert, lively, active, keen terrier with a very intelligent expression. The sporting character of the Russell Terrier is that of a spirited and game hunter. Their intensity for life is one of their most endearing traits. They are playful, curious, loyal and affectionate. Sparring is not acceptable.

Size

In size the Russell Terrier measures from 10 inches to 12 inches. Substance and weight should be proportionate to height, being neither too coarse nor too refined. The body is proportioned marginally longer than tall, the silhouette representing a distinct rectangle when measured from the point of shoulder to point of buttocks than from the withers to the ground. The height and weight descriptions indicate a sturdily built yet balanced dog with smooth muscle transitions, able to traverse narrow tunnels. There may be slight differences between males and females. Males should look masculine while females should look feminine. However both sexes must adhere to the breed standard.

When viewed in profile the midline of the dog is at the elbow and the bottom of the brisket. Severe Fault - Any hint of achondroplasia.

Coat & Colour

May be smooth, broken or rough. Must be weatherproof: all coat types have an undercoat and a harsh outer coat. Coats are preferably natural and unaltered. The conformation underneath is the same with no preference being given to any particular coat type. The belly and underside should be well covered. The terrier is shown in its natural coat with minimal grooming. Sculpted furnishings are to be severely penalized.

Smooth - A dense short, coarse smooth hair with an undercoat. Broken - Intermediate length hair, between smooth and rough, usually with facial furnishings and possibly a slight ridge down the back. Rough - Harsh and dense hair with an undercoat. Not thin, woolly, curly or silky. Color: White is predominate with black and/or tan markings. There is no preference to markings so long as the dog remains 51 percent white. Tan can vary from lemon to mahogany. Ticking is acceptable.

Head

The **skull** is flat and of moderate width gradually decreasing in width to the eyes and then tapering to a wide muzzle, that narrows slightly to the end maintaining very strong jaws. The **stop** is well defined with minimal falling away under the eyes. The length of **muzzle** is slightly shorter than the length of the skull from the occiput to the stop. The cheek muscles are well developed. **Nose** - Black and fully pigmented. **Ears** - Small V-shaped button or dropped ears carried close to the head of good texture and great mobility. The points of the ears are even with corner of the eye and pointed downward. The fold is level with the top of the skull or slightly above and forms a straight line when alert. **Eyes** - Dark, almond shaped with a keen expression of alertness. Eyes must not be prominent. Eyelid rims are to be fully pigmented black. **Bite/Teeth** - The bite is a scissor bite with comparatively large teeth. A level bite is acceptable. Missing and broken teeth due to terrier work should not be penalized. The lips are black and are tight fitting.

Neck

A clean, strong neck tapering gradually into the withers is required for terrier work. The neck is of sufficient length to allow the terrier's mouth to extend beyond its forepaws when working.

Forequarters

Shoulders are well laid back and not heavily loaded with muscle. The upper arm should be equal or nearly equal to the length of the scapula forming an approximate 90-degree angle. This assembly allows for sufficient length of upper arm to ensure the elbows are set under the body, with the sternum clearly in front of the point of shoulder. Proper reach matched with equal drive allows for efficiency of movement. Page 2 of 3 Forelegs: Forelegs are straight in bone from the elbows to the toes whether viewed from the front or the side with a slight angle to the pastern from the side. Legs are moderately well boned. The depth of the body from the withers to the brisket should equal the length of foreleg from elbows to the ground. Severe Faults: Benched or bent legs, leg length either less/more than the depth of body.

Body

The **body** of the Russell Terrier is proportioned marginally longer than tall, measuring slightly longer from the withers to the root of the tail than from the withers to the ground. The overall presentation is a compact, harmonious rectangular silhouette, in sound athletic condition. From the withers to the bottom of the brisket should represent 50 percent of the distance from the withers to the ground. The brisket should never fall below the elbow. The loins are short, strong and well muscled. The tuck up may be described as moderate. Scars incurred while hunting are not to be penalized. **Topline** - Level while in motion. There is a slight arch of loin, from muscling that is felt rather than seen. **Chest** - The small oval shaped, compressible chest is the hallmark of the breed and is the single most important attribute the Russell Terrier must have allowing it to work efficiently below ground. It must be compressible and small enough to be spanned by an average size man's hands, approximately 14 to 15 inches at the top set. Ribs are to be well sprung from the spine, tapering on the sides forming an oval shape so that average-size hands of an adult can span the girth behind the elbows. The chest must never fall below the elbow. Severe Faults - Incorrectly shaped, unspannable, uncompressible chest falling below the elbow.

Hindquarters

Muscular and strong; when looking down on the dog, the width of the hindquarters is equal to the width of the shoulders. Angles are equal and balanced front to rear. The hind legs, when viewed from a rear standing position, are parallel. The stifles and low-set hocks are well angulated, allowing for good driving action. Feet: Both front and hind

are moderate in size, oval shaped, hard padded with toes moderately arched, turning neither in nor out.

Tail

The tail is set high enough so that the spine does not slope down to the base of the tail. Customarily, if docked, the tip of the tail should be level with the top of the ears. When moving or alert, the tail may be straight or with a slight curve forward and is carried erect or gaily. When the dog is at rest, the tail may drop.

Gait

Movement must be unrestricted and effortless, while exhibiting an attitude of confidence. The dog must always be exhibited and gaited on a “loose” lead. On the lateral, the dog must exhibit equal reach and equal drive. When moving down and back at slower speeds the dog must parallel track. As speed increases, feet tend to converge toward a centerline of balance.

Fault

The foregoing description is that of the ideal Russell Terrier. Any deviation from the above described dog must be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

Disqualification

- Height under 10 inches or over 12 inches.
- Prick or semi-prick ears.
- Blue eye or eyes.
- Overshot, undershot, wry mouth.
- Nose: Any color other than black, not fully pigmented.
- Less than 51 percent white, brindle coloring, any other color than listed above.

