SHIBA INU

RECOGNIZED: 1992

Effective: January 2025

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 & PURPOSE

The Shiba was developed in Japan, and is the smallest of the native Japanese breeds. Developed as a hunting dog for boar, rabbit, grouse and other small game in dense undergrowth, the Shiba needed strength, agility and a coarse thick coat, as well as courage and tenacity. While still retaining these hunting skills, the Shiba is now primarily an excellent companion.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Shiba is a small dog of Spitz type, just off-square, well balanced and muscular, with erect ears, dark slanted eyes, tapered muzzle, and coarse standoff coat. Dogs and bitches display both strength and elegance, neither coarse nor fine, while retaining obvious differences. The overall impression conveys a spirited boldness, good nature, alertness and agility.

TEMPERAMENT

Spirited boldness, good nature, and independence characterize the Shiba temperament. Extremely lively and fun-loving with their families. While sometimes aloof with strangers, aggression to humans or extreme shyness to be severely penalized. Shibas may not tolerate other dogs' intrusions, and will display aggression if challenged.

SIZE

Ideal Height: Dogs, 39.5 cm (15.5 in); bitches, 36.75 cm (14.5 in). For the purposes of judging, dogs under 38 cm (15 in) and over 42 cm (16.5 in); females under 34 cm (13.5 in) and over 38 cm (15 in) shall be disqualified.

COAT

Double-coated, with the outercoat harsh and straight, and undercoat soft and dense. Guard hair approximately 2.5 cm (1 in) on body, 4 to 5 cm (1.5 to 2 in) on withers. Hair short and even on face, ears and legs. Hair on tail slightly longer and forms a bristle, not a plume. **Serious fault:** Long or woolly coat.

COLOUR

Red, sesame, black and tan. These are the only acceptable colours, and are to be given equal consideration. Colour is clear and intense, with undercoat of cream, buff or grey. "Urajiro" (creamy white ventral colour) is required on all three allowed colours, in these areas: side of muzzle, cheeks, inside ears, on underjaw and upper throat, inside of legs, on abdomen, around vent, ventral side of tail. Cream does not extend over nasal bridge. Cream spots above eyes, on tip of tail and on forechest permitted but not required. White markings known as socks permitted but not desirable. Spots of colour in the urajiro are highly undesirable. "Reverse mask" (all cream/white face) is a fault.

Red: Light red to deep orange red.

Sesame: Red with black-tipped hairs scattered evenly on body and sometimes head, with no concentration in any one area. A widow's peak may be seen on the forehead, leaving the bridge and muzzle red.

Black and tan: Black has rusty cast, not blue, and extends over the entire dog. Clearly defined tan markings located over the eye, sides of muzzle, "bowtie" pattern on forechest, outside of forelegs from carpus to toes, outside of hind legs from stifle down to toes, leaving black on rear of pasterns. Black pencilling on toes permitted. Tan may be found inside of ears and underside of tail.

HEAD
Skull: Broad and flat with slight furrow, cheek muscles well developed, and stop moderate. *Muzzle:* Full and round, tapering slightly to black nose, being 40% of total head length. The nasal bridge straight, lower jaw strong. The lips tight and black. *Teeth:* Large, strong with scissors bite. Missing teeth to be faulted, but with the molars (M3) not taken into consideration. Five or more missing teeth a disqualification. *Eyes:* Small, triangular, set well apart and oblique (slanting up at outside corner). Dark brown in colour, with black eye rims. *Ears:* Small, thick, triangular, well-furred, inclining forward and firmly pricked.

NECK
Thick and muscular, blends into shoulders. No dewlap.

FOREQUARTERS
The *shoulders* moderately sloping, well developed. The *elbows* set close to body, and forearms straight. The *pasterns* slightly inclining. *Feet* are cat-like with well-arched toes fitting tightly together and thick pads. The nails hard and darker colour desirable.

BODY
Body is tight-skinned and well muscled. Height to length ratio of 10 to 11, measured from withers to ground, and point of shoulder to point of buttock. Bitches may be slightly longer. Chest depth from withers to elbow one-half or slightly less of total height. The *chest* deep, ribs moderately sprung. *Back* straight and short, the *loins* broad and muscular, the *abdomen* firm and well tucked-up.

HINDQUARTERS
The upper thighs long, and lower thighs short and well developed, with a wide natural stance. Angulation in balance with the forequarters. The hock joint strong. Feet as in front.

TAIL
Set on high, thick and carried vigorously curled or curved as a sickle over back. The tip nearly reaching hocks when let down.

GAIT
Light, quick and elastic. Forward reach and rear drive are moderate. Viewed from the front or rear, there is a tendency to single-track. Topline remains level and firm.

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.
- Light eye colour
- Level or extremely overshot bite
- One to four missing teeth
- Reverse mask
- Long or woolly coat is a serious fault.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Dogs under 38 cm (15 in) and over 42 cm (16.5 in); females under 34 cm (13.5 in) and over 38 cm (15 in)
- Coat colours other than described
- Ears not pricked
- Tail not carried over back
- Five or more missing teeth, but with the molars (M3) not taken into consideration
- Undershot bite