

Dalmatian Breed Standard

Last updated January 2025

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.

From time to time certain conditions or exaggerations may be considered to have the potential to affect dogs in some breeds adversely, and judges and breeders are requested to refer to the [Breed Watch information related to this breed](#) for details of any such current issues. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

General appearance

A distinctively spotted dog, balanced, strong, muscular and active. Symmetrical in outline, elegant, free from coarseness and lumber.

Characteristics

A carriage dog of good demeanour, capable of great endurance and a fair turn of speed.

Temperament

Outgoing and friendly, not shy or hesitant, free from nervousness and aggression.

Head and skull

Of fair length, skull flat, reasonably broad between ears, moderately well defined in front of ears. Entirely free from wrinkle. Moderate amount of stop. Muzzle powerful, never snipy. Distance from nose to stop equals that from stop to occiput. Lips clean, fitting jaws moderately closely. Nose in black-spotted variety always black, in liver variety always brown.

Eyes

Set moderately well apart, medium size, oval in shape, bright and sparkling, with intelligent expression. Colour dark brown in black spotted, amber in liver spotted, with uniformly pigmented irises. Fully pigmented eye rims, black in black spotted and liver brown in liver spotted.

Ears

Set on rather high, moderate size, rather wide at base, gradually tapering to rounded point. Fine in texture, carried close to head. Marking well broken up, preferably spotted.

Mouth

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Neck

Fairly long, nicely arched, light and tapering. Entirely free from throatiness.

Forequarters

Shoulders well laid back, clean, muscular with length of shoulder and upper arm approximately equal. Elbows set close to body. Forelegs perfectly straight with strong round bone down to feet, with slight spring at pastern joint.

Body

Length from point of shoulder to point of buttock slightly greater than height from withers to ground. Chest not too wide, but deep and capacious with plenty of lung and heart room. Ribs well sprung and carried well back. Well-defined withers, powerful level back. Loin strong, clean, muscular and slightly arched.

Hindquarters

Rounded, muscles clean with well-developed second thigh, good turn of stifle, hocks well defined.

Feet

Round, compact, with well-arched toes, cat-like, round, tough, elastic pads. Nails black or white in black spotted variety, in liver spotted, brown or white.

Tail

Length reaching approximately to hock. Strong at insertion gradually tapering towards end, never inserted too low or too high, free from coarseness and carried with a slight upward curve, never curled. Preferably spotted.

Gait/movement

Great freedom of movement. Smooth, powerful, rhythmic action with long stride. Viewed from fore and aft, the legs should appear straight with a degree of convergence towards the centre line at the trot. The feet should move along straight lines with the rear feet tracking the fore. A short stride and paddling action is incorrect.

Coat

Short, hard, dense; sleek and glossy in appearance.

Colour

Ground colour pure white. Black spotted having dense black spots, liver spotted, liver brown spots; not running together but round and well defined. In size 2cm-3cm in diameter as well distributed as possible. Spots on extremities smaller than those on the body. Tricolours and spotting other than black or liver unacceptable. Bronzing on spots undesirable in adults. Some patching on ears or head not to be penalised.

Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

Size

Overall balance of prime importance. Ideal height: dogs: 58-61 cms (23-24 ins); bitches: 56-58 cms (22-23 ins).

Faults

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

Note

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.