

JUDGING THE PEMBROKE WELSH CORGI

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JUDGING PROCEDURE

Many breeds have developed a preferred approach to evaluation. What is the correct procedure for judging the Pembroke Welsh Corgi? First, assess the balance and outline of the dog from approximately 15 feet away. Next, always examine the Pembroke on the table; do not hesitate to re-table a specimen to reconfirm a particular virtue. Please do not examine this breed on the ground. Evaluate expression on the ground; allow the handler to show off the expression. Remember to judge both sides of the dog to check for mismarks which can occur on only one side. Evaluate gait, especially side movement.

APPLICATION OF THE STANDARD

When judging the Pembroke Welsh Corgi, it is important to keep in mind the breed's purpose, which influenced the development of the breed in Wales. The Pembroke was a clever, happy and useful, i.e., all-purpose farm dog, equally at home driving stock to market, ridding buildings of vermin and guarding the home and hearth. Thus from his very beginnings, structure and temperament were hallmarks of the breed.

The modern Pembroke has evolved from the "little leggy red dogs" of the 1930's into what the standard today describes as a "low set, sturdily built and active" dog, "giving an impression of substance and stamina in a small space." The Pembroke "should not be so low and heavy boned as to appear coarse or overdone, nor so light boned as to appear racy." This initial discussion of outline continues with a clear blueprint for the proper Pembroke picture: "Proportions-moderately long and low. The distance from the withers to the base of the tail should be approximately 40 percent greater than the distance from the withers to the ground."

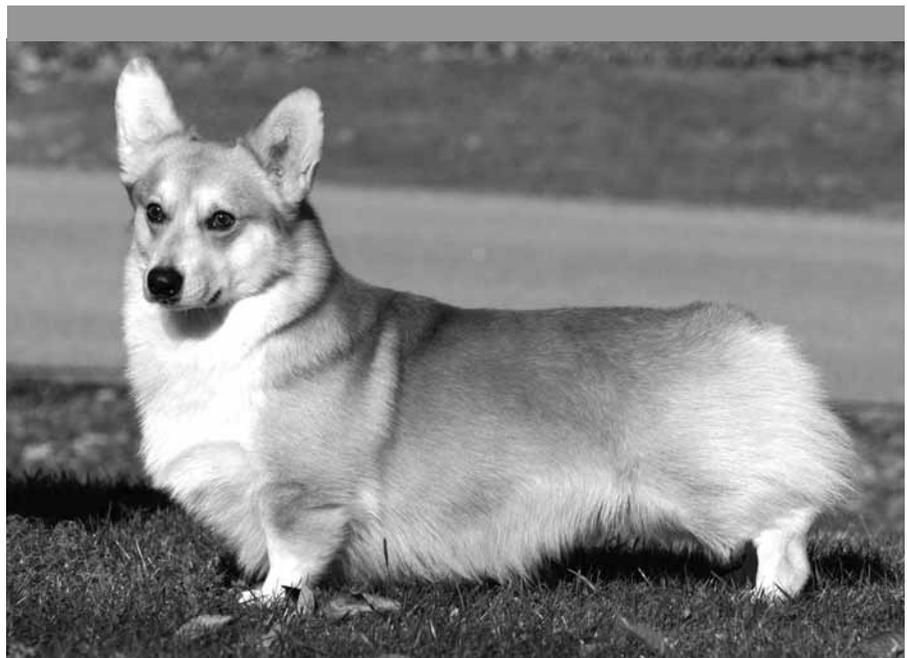
This is a long dog, especially when compared to most other herding breeds. Nothing in

your consideration of balance, proportion and outline should even remotely suggest "square" or even "off-square." For those who are mathematically inclined, this paragraph translates into approximately a 14" length for a 10" tall Pembroke and approximately a 17" length for a 12" tall Pembroke. Most importantly, the measurement is from withers to base of tail, not from point of shoulder to buttocks. You need to train your eye differently to evaluate proper length in this breed.

As we all know, a dog may be in proportion to the standard but out-of-balance, and the Pembroke is no exception. While the Pembroke outline is long, the dog must be well angled both front and rear, with a long rib cage and short loin. A long loin, readily visible, spoils the outline and functionality of the breed.

New and experienced judges alike will encounter a variety of head styles in this breed. Although the Pembroke is not a "head breed", an attractive headpiece is a hallmark of the breed. The standard defines correct type as the general balance and outline, attractiveness of headpiece, intelligent outlook and correct temperament as primary important features of the breed.

One statement in the standard concerning the head often confuses judges new to the breed. The statement that "the head should be foxy in shape and appearance" leads many a new judge on a search for a snippy (pinched) muzzle and sly, slit-like eyes. Nothing could be further from correct. The fox reference, taken from the English standard, refers to a type of fox not found in the United States-and refers to head propor-





tions, lack of fill under the eyes, and the clean-cut, smooth image of a fox head. A coarse, overdone head obviously cannot be described as “foxy in shape”.

The ideal Pembroke head is created from the correct head planes; moderate stop; dark, oval, medium sized eyes; erect, firm ears; all working together to form an expression that is alert, kindly and pleasing to the eye. Head proportions are five to three, measured from occiput to center of stop and from the center

of stop to the nose tip. Nothing about a Pembroke’s head should be heavy, coarse or overdone. Neither should the head be sharp, toy-like or diminutive.

Please evaluate proper Pembroke expression with the dog on the ground. Allow the handler to show you the wonderful equilateral triangle formed by drawing an imaginary line from the middle of the nose through the middle of the eyes to the middle of the upright ears. Understand that the Pembroke does react to sounds and noises; please do not expect a Pembroke to stand like a rock with ears absolutely still for minutes at a time. Standing and staring at this breed will only produce confusion and suggests to the exhibitors that you have forgotten that movement is also an important part of your evaluation of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi.

Because the Pembroke is an achondroplastic breed, judges may forget that angulation is just as important in this breed as in any other working dog. The properly angulated front, with a well laid back shoulder and an upper arm nearly equal in length to the shoulder blade allows a freedom of movement that is essential to the dog’s stamina in the field. Corresponding angles are required in the rear assembly if balance is to be achieved. Hocks are short. A Pembroke should never give you the impression of a leggy, high-stationed animal.

Movement in the Pembroke is clearly discussed in the standard. Please do not limit your evaluation of Pembroke movement to a simple “down and back”. You must also evaluate the side gait of this breed. “Movement is especially important, particularly when viewed from the side. A dog with a smooth and free gait has to be reasonably sound and must be highly regarded.” As noted in our illustrated standard, good movement is an indicator of correct conformation. A Pembroke with proper outline and balance will be

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able to trot in a purposeful, fluid manner while maintaining a level top line. Excessive “bounce” and/or speed are not indications of good movement. The Pembroke should give the impression of covering ground with minimum effort—the dog which could drive stock to a market many miles away without tiring.

The tail is “docked as short as possible without being indented. A tail up to two inches in length is allowed...” The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is, in the United States, a docked breed, or a natural bobtail.

The correct Pembroke coat is a double coat: a harsh, weather-resistant outer coat and a soft, insulating undercoat. The outer coat is medium in length and lies flat on the body; the hair may be slightly longer on the back of the forelegs, underline and hindquarters. Do not mistake a fully coated dog for a fluffy, which is a serious fault. A fluffy coat is extremely long and silky soft; no amount of trimming can make this coat acceptable. A word about trimming: any evidence of trimming or scissoring to sculpt this breed should be severely faulted. Handlers may tidy the feet, and, if desired, remove the whiskers. Most breeders no longer remove whiskers in this breed.

Colors are clearly defined in the standard. Red, sable, fawn, black and tan, all with or without white markings are the allowed colors. There is no color preference in this breed. Bluies and whielies are very serious faults, as are mismarks. Mismarks are defined as any area of white on the back between the withers and the tail, on sides between elbows and back of hindquarters or on ears; also, black and white markings with no tan present is a mismark. Cream colored edges on the ears and creamy facial “masks” do not constitute mismarks.



Finally, a word about temperament. The Pembroke is never shy or vicious. Expect the Pembroke to have a bold, yet kindly outlook. Never reward an excessively shy or vicious specimen of the breed.

In closing, the Pembroke should be shown on a loose lead at an easy trot. Faster is not better. You are looking for the perfect balance and outline. Head carriage in motion should be forward, not upright. The top line is level and firm with no evidence of swaying or rolling or bouncing. Balanced reach in front and drive in rear produce the required smooth side gait. Look for the correct outline, balance, movement, and attractiveness of headpiece and you will be on the right track. ■