

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG**

Produced by
German Shepherd Dog Council Australia
in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council

Standard translated by the
German Shepherd Dog Council Australia
Breed Standard Extension adopted by ANKC 2012

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Country of Origin ~ Germany

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A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

According to the official records of Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) (The Breed Club for the German Shepherd Dog, in Germany) with its headquarters in Augsburg, the standard was originally developed at the first meeting of members in Frankfurt am Main on 20th September 1899, based on the proposals of A Meyer and M von Stephanitz. The next step was to have the breed standard accepted by the VDH (German Kennel Club).

Amendments were made to the standard during the 6th meeting of the association on the 28th July 1901, during the 23rd Meeting in Cologne in September 1909, the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee in Wiesbaden on 5th September, 1930, and at the Board of Directors and Breed Committee meeting on 25th March 1961. Within the framework of the World Union of German Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV), it was revised and confirmed at the WUSV meeting on 30th August 1976, and reviewed, catalogued by authorisation and resolution of the Executive and Advisory Committee on 23rd March 1991. Further amendments were made at the meeting of the federation on 25th May 1997, 31st May 2001 and 1st June 2001 and 6th and 7th June 2009.

The German Shepherd Dog, whose planned breeding commenced in the year 1899, after the founding of the GSD Verein, was bred from the central German and south German strains of the existing herding dogs of those times, with the final goal of creating a working dog, predisposed to high working aptitude. In order to reach this goal, the Breed Standard was laid down, which relates to the physical attributes, as well as to those of temperament and character.

World Wide Spread

The breed quickly spread to other European countries, and the Swiss Breed Club was formed in 1902. Others followed suit throughout the world, and ultimately, they banded together to form the World Union of German Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV), of which the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia (GSDCA) is a member. It would seem that the first German Shepherd Dogs to reach the United States arrived in 1906. A few went to Great Britain prior to the 1914-1918 War, but it was not until soldiers returning from that war, impressed with the breed, brought them home with them and they became popular.

Development of the German Shepherd Dog in Australia

The first German Shepherd Dogs to arrive in Australia are believed to have landed in Western Australia in 1904, but the first official import was in 1923 and importations continued until the infamous ban was imposed in 1929. It is a remarkable testimony to the breed and its breeders that it survived so well on such a small base until the ban was relaxed for a trial period in 1972 and was finally lifted in 1974, except in WA, which was in late 1976.

Since then, the breed has evolved significantly towards the highest of international standards, with the introduction of breed improvement schemes, specialist shows, National Show and Trial and the Main Breed Exhibition, under the auspices of the GSDCA.

On 1st January 2012, two separate breed varieties of the German Shepherd Dog based on coat type were recognised. As well as the established Stock Coat, the Long Stock Coat also became eligible for registration as a variety. Inter-breeding of the varieties is not permitted.

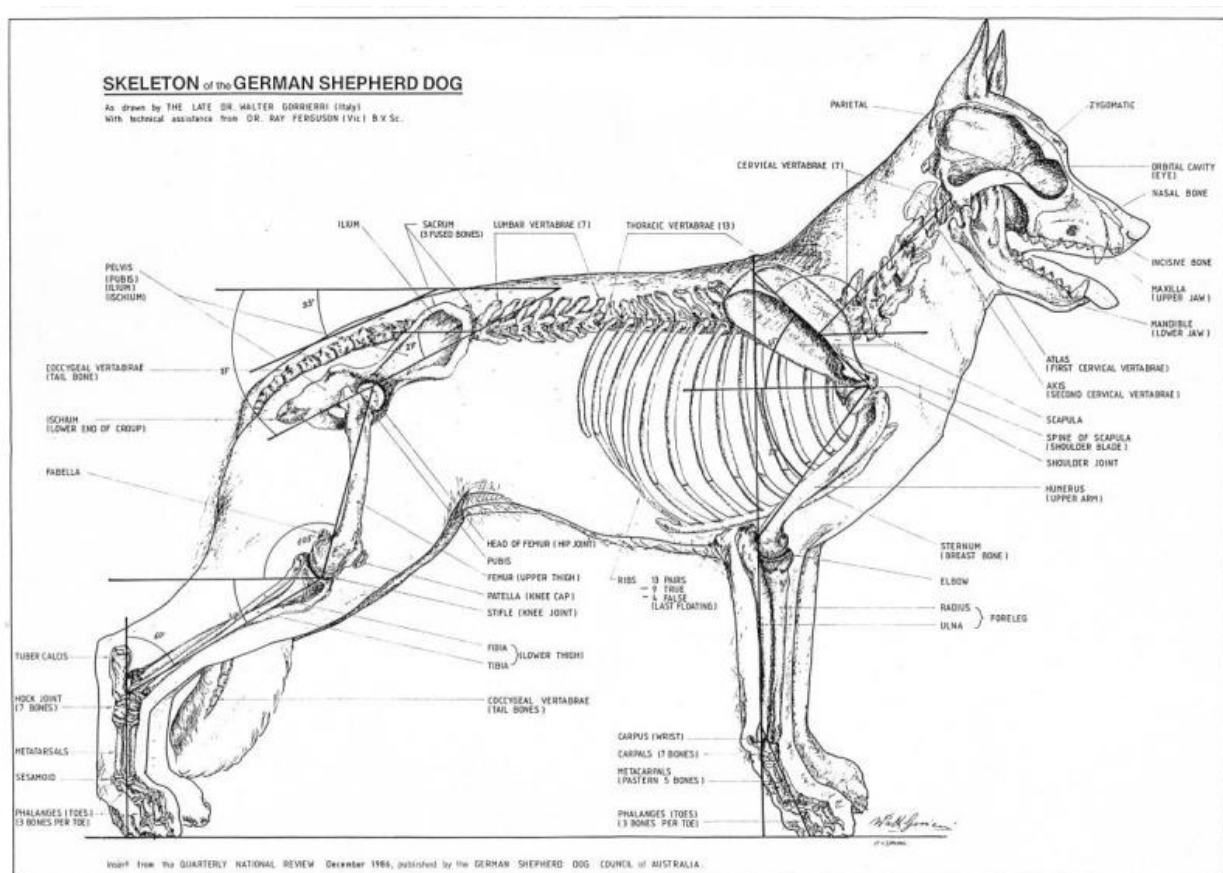


Fig. 1. Skeletal Construction: Shows ideal proportions, relative length of bones and angulations.

● GENERAL APPEARANCE

The German Shepherd Dog is medium size, slightly elongated, strong and well muscled, the bones are dry and the overall construction firm.

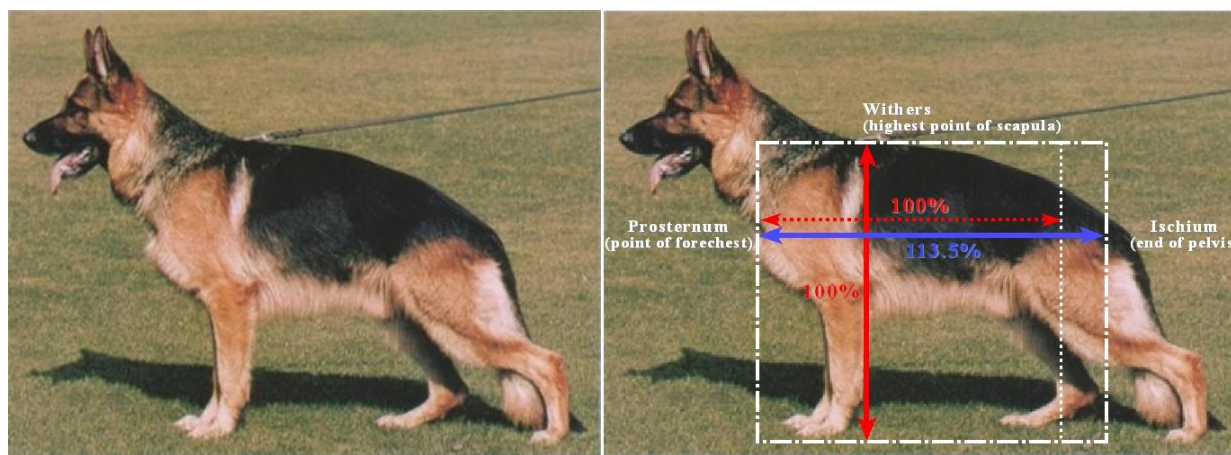
The length of the body is greater than the height at the withers by about 10 to 17%.

The immediate impression of the appearance of the GSD is of a dog slightly long in comparison to its height, with a powerful and well muscled body. The relation between height and length and the position and symmetry of the limbs (the angulations) is inter-related in such a way as to enable a far reaching and enduring gait. The coat should be weatherproof for both varieties. A beautiful appearance is desirable, but this is secondary to the dog's and variety's usefulness as a working dog. Excessive looseness of overall ligamentation is a major fault. Sexual characteristics must be well defined, i.e. the masculinity of the male and the femininity of the female must be unmistakable.

A true to type GSD gives an impression of innate strength, intelligence and suppleness with harmonious proportions and nothing either overdone or lacking. His whole manner should make it perfectly clear that he is sound in mind and body and has the physical and mental attributes to make him always ready for tireless action as a working dog.

Type is created by the fusion of the dog's constitution, sex characteristics, size, expression, temperament and conformation, which altogether, go to make up its ability to serve as a working dog. These points are all laid down in the Standard and should be adhered to. The term "type" is not used with the same meaning or context as that of the term "variety" when used to describe or attribute the GSD.

The GSD is the ultimate trotting breed, where a tireless and preferably economical trotting action is called for. Many of the working breeds fit into this category, with differences mostly in the forequarter where added nimbleness is asked for, e.g. the Collie breeds, which are lighter boned and more open in angulation than the German Shepherd Dog. The German Shepherd Dog is not being asked to be especially nimble, rather a tireless worker at its natural gait, the trot. The ideal German Shepherd Dog is one that covers the maximum amount of ground with the minimum amount of effort, i.e. fewer steps, resulting from far forequarter reach and strong hindquarter drive.



Anatomical points determining height and length of a GSD (length is 10 - 17% > height) **100%** **113.5%**

Fig. 2, 3. General Appearance: Embodies desired type, important proportions and suitability as a working dog.

• CHARACTERISTICS

Purpose and Usage: Versatile Utility, Herding, Guard and Service Dog

The main characteristics of the German Shepherd Dog are: steadiness of nerves, attentiveness, loyalty, calm self-assurance, alertness and tractability, as well as courage with physical resilience and scenting ability. These characteristics are necessary for a versatile working dog.

• TEMPERAMENT

The German Shepherd Dog must be of well balanced temperament, steady of nerve, self assured, absolutely at ease (except when provoked), and good natured as well as attentive and easy to train. He must possess instinctive drive, resilience and self confidence in order to be suitable as a companion, watch dog, protection, service and herding dog.

It is most important not to place dogs that are shy or aggressive as these are disqualifying features; any weakness of character should be penalised. Character can easily be assessed by walking towards the dog from the front in a somewhat slow way and observing the dog's eyes. Whilst he is in stance, observe whether the dog is alert or deadpan or disinterested. He should be alert, calm and self-assured.

With an abundance of vitality he must be tractable enough to adapt himself to each situation and to carry out his work willingly and with enthusiasm. He must possess the courage and determination to defend himself, his master or his master's possessions should the need arise. He must be observant, obedient and a pleasant member of the household, quiet in his own environment, especially with children and other animals, and at ease with adults. Overall, he should present a harmonious picture of nobility, alertness and self confidence.

- **HEAD AND SKULL**

The head is wedge-shaped, proportionate in size to the body, (length of head about 40% of the height of withers) without being coarse or too elongate, in overall appearance dry and moderately broad between the ears. The forehead is only slightly domed when viewed from the front and the side and without any or only slightly indicated central furrow.

The proportion of the skull to muzzle is 50%:50%. The breadth of the skull corresponds approximately to its length. The skull (viewed from above) tapers evenly from the ears to the nose with a sloping, not sharply defined stop, into the wedge shaped foreface (muzzle). Upper and lower jaws are strongly developed. The top of the muzzle is straight, a dish faced or convex curve is not desired. The lips are tight, well fitting and of a dark colour. The nose must be black.

The overall appearance of the head should be clean cut and fairly broad between the ears. The cheeks should form a very softly rounded curve and should not protrude. The skull extends from the ears to the bridge of the nose; tapering gradually and evenly and blending without too pronounced a stop into a wedge-shaped, powerful muzzle. In males, the width could be slightly greater; and in females slightly less than the length. The top of the muzzle is straight, almost parallel to the forehead. A muzzle which is too short, blunt, weak pointed, overlong or lacking in strength is undesirable.

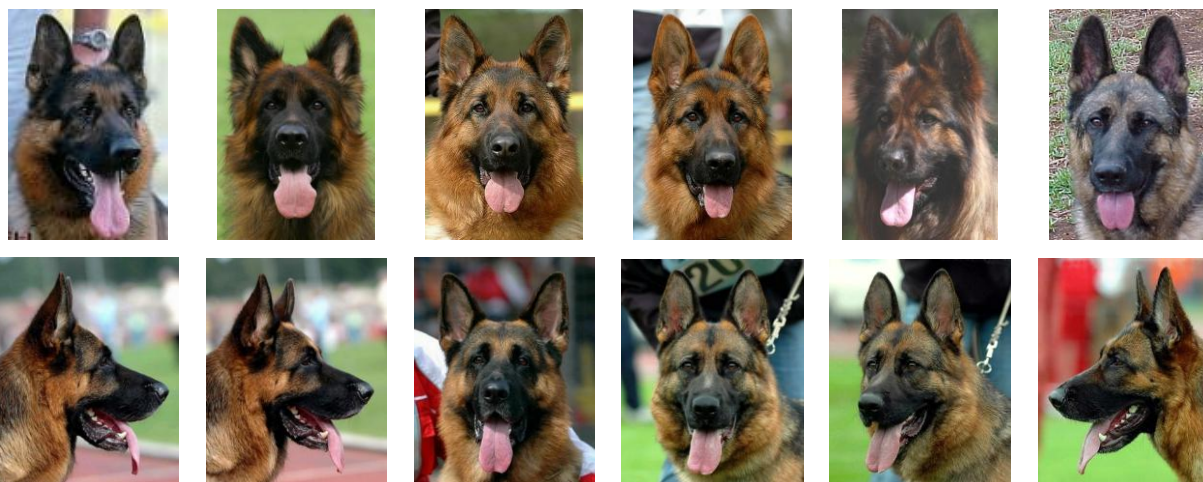


Fig. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12. Male Heads above show:
 Male heads should be strong and masculine.
 Very good ears, eyes, mask and expression.
 Strong jaws and very good planes of skull/foreface.

Fig. 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15. Female Heads above show:
 Female heads should be strong and feminine.
 Very good ears, eyes, mask and expression.
 Strong jaws and very good planes of skull/foreface.

- **EYES**

The eyes are of medium size, almond shaped, slightly oblique and not protruding. The colour of the eyes should be as dark as possible. Light piercing eyes are not desirable as they detract from the expression of the dog.

Light, round and/or protruding eyes detract from the general expression of the dog, and this is undesirable.



Fig. 16, 17, 18. Eyes: Very good size, shape, slightly oblique, dark, and complementary expression.

• EARS

The German Shepherd Dog has erect ears of medium size that are carried upright and almost parallel (not tilted inwards). They taper to a point and are set with the orifice to the front. Tipped ears and drop ears are faulty. Ears carried laid back, during gaiting or when at rest are not faulty.

Ears contribute greatly to the characteristic “Shepherd Dog” expression. When the dog is at rest or moving, he usually lays them back. It is not natural for a dog to keep his ears up continually; a requirement for continuously erect ears is wrong. Nevertheless, in stance a GSD with correctly shaped, erect ears is obviously desirable in order that the desired tip of ear to tip of tail topline is achieved.

Major ear faults are too wide or low set at the sides, tipped ears, inward tilted ears, ears not firm. Disfiguring ear faults are a disqualification, but this does not include mechanical ear damage, (e.g. missing a section of ear, due to an accident).

If during movement, the ears are held upright, they should remain fairly firm. Ears that cannot remain firm are weak in cartilage or texture (referred to as “leather”) and are often penalised.



Fig.19. Ears: Correct set



Fig. 20. Ears: Wide set.



Fig. 21. Ears: Low set.



Fig. 22. Ears: Inward-tilting.

• MOUTH

The dentition must be strong, healthy and complete (42 teeth conforming to the dentition formula) the German Shepherd Dog has a scissor bite that is, the incisors must fit scissor-like to each other so that the incisors of the upper jaw overlap those of the lower jaw in a scissor fashion. Level, over or undershot bites are faulty, as well as large gaps between the teeth. It is a fault, when the incisors are placed in a straight line in the gums. The jawbones must be strongly developed so that the teeth are embedded deeply in the gum line.

From four to seven months, puppies will be teething and only the bite should be checked, care being taken not to upset a young puppy with a sore mouth. Puppies may not have complete dentition before seven to nine months of age and are usually not penalised for missing teeth less than nine months of age.

It is important that the adult dog should have a full complement of forty-two (42) teeth; missing teeth are taken seriously as they are the early signs of a genetic fault and, if left un-penalised, lead to a weakening of the whole jaw structure.

Note, under Disqualifying Faults, all those features that are listed must lead to disqualification.

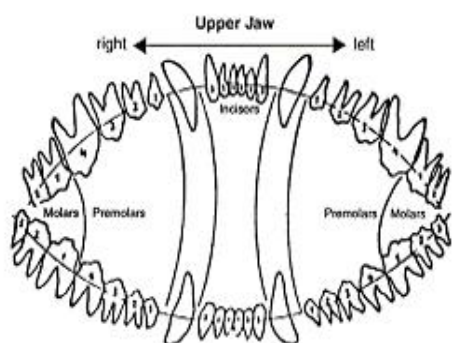


Fig. 23. Mouth: Teeth / Dentition.

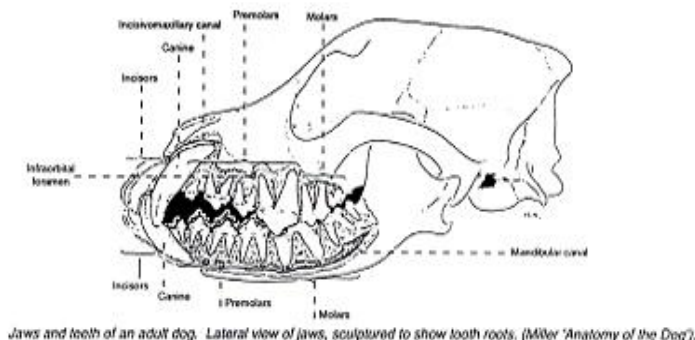


Fig. 24. Mouth: Jaws / Teeth / Dentition.

• NECK

The neck should be strong, and well muscled and free from throatiness (dewlap) the angle to the body (horizontal) is approximately 45 degrees.

The GSD does not have the relatively long and lean neck of, say, a Dobermann, or the shorter, thicker neck of a Rottweiler. It must be long enough for the dog to track at any pace, yet be strong enough to carry the head anywhere between a level and 45 degree position, when working. The neck should be carried at approximately 45 degrees when the dog is in stance and alert, but it will tend to be level and stretched out in movement, to facilitate maximum reach and balance. If the neck appears short, this may be due to the incorrect or steep placement of the shoulder blade.



Fig. 25, 26, 27, 28. Neck: Strong, well muscled, no throatiness and normally carried at about 45°.

• FOREQUARTERS

The forelegs are straight viewed from all sides, and when viewed from front must be absolutely parallel.

The shoulder blade and upper arm are of equal length and firmly attached to the body with strong musculature. The angulation of the upper arm and shoulder blade ideally should be at 90 degrees but generally up to 110 degrees.

The elbows should be neither turned in nor turned out while in stance or in movement. The forearms when viewed from all sides are straight and absolutely parallel, dry and firmly muscled. The pastern is approximately one third of the length of the forearm, and has an angle of approximately 20 degrees to 22 degrees to the forearm. Both inform (more than 22 degrees) as well as steep pasterns (less than 20 degrees) restrict the working ability of the dog and in particular its endurance.

The Standard describes the forequarter accurately and the requirements of length and angle of the upper arm and shoulder and the length of foreleg should always be kept in mind. It is only when all these angles and length of bones are correct that the German Shepherd Dog has the correct proportions of depth to height and the long forward reach required when gaiting.

The shoulder blade should be approximately 45 degrees above the horizontal, with the upper arm at approximately 45 degrees below the horizontal, although, as the Standard states these combined angles are usually slightly greater. As a rule, the shoulder blade angle is likely to be close to 45 degrees, whilst that of the upper arm is likely to be greater making the upper arm more upright; this being one of the problem areas in the breed, a well angulated upper arm should be promoted. The upper arm should be the same length as the shoulder blade; a short upper arm is another fault that contributes to incorrect forequarter construction.

Of particular note, the height at withers consists of about 45% depth of chest to about 55% length of foreleg (i.e. the depth of chest should be just under half the total height). In an older dog this depth of chest may reach 48% of overall height at wither, but should never exceed 50%. When assessing the depth of chest, consideration needs to be given to the length of coat feathering on the underline. Too deep a chest restricts forequarter reach and movement and the dog will tire quickly.

A correctly constructed forequarter will have the prosternum prominent just in front of the point of the shoulder.

The pasterns should be flexible, to absorb shock and give lateral spring to the overall forequarter. If the pasterns are too short and steep, the movement is stiff and stilted; if the pasterns are too long and loose in ligaments, then considerable forward momentum is lost (i.e. paddling).

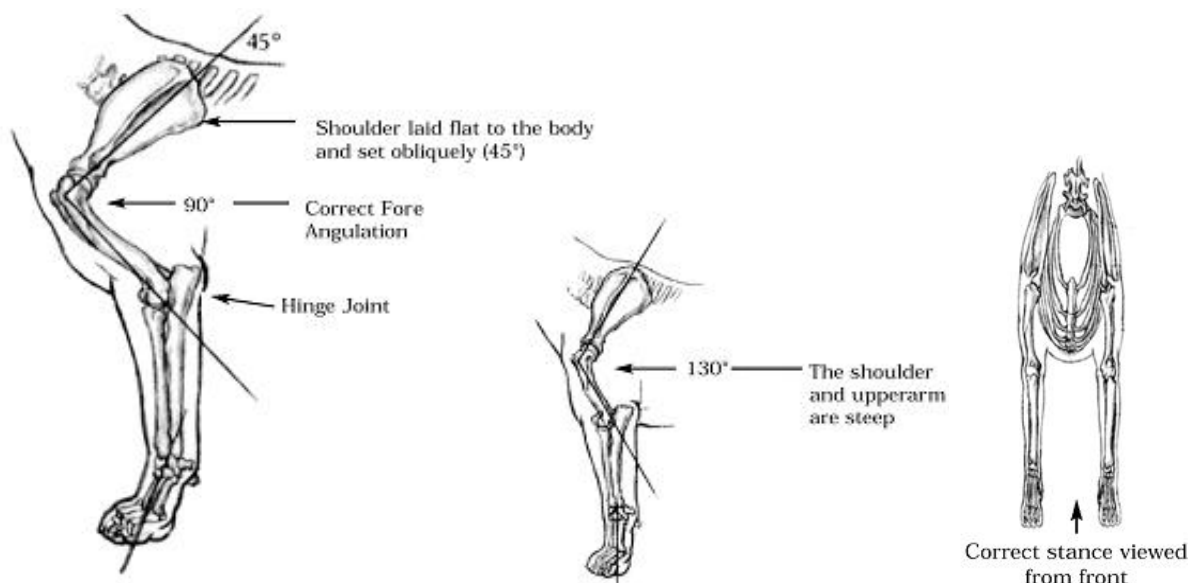


Fig. 29, 30. Forequarters: Correct length and angulation enables desired reach and body support in movement.
 Fig. 31. Front: Forelegs are straight and absolutely parallel viewed from the front.

- **BODY**

The topline flows from the set on of neck, over the high long withers and over the straight back to the slightly sloping croup without a noticeable break. The back is moderately long, firm, strong and well muscled. The loin is broad, short, strongly developed and well muscled. The croup should be long and slightly sloping (approximately 23 degrees to the horizontal) into the set on of the tail, without disruption to the topline.

The chest should be moderately broad; the underchest is as long as possible and well developed. The depth of chest should be approximately 45% to 48% of the height at the withers.

The ribs should be moderately sprung, barrel-chested is equally faulty as slab sided.

The length of the body should exceed the height at the withers by 10-17% (10 is to 9 or 8.5). The length is measured from the point of the breastbone to the rear end of the pelvis.

Over or under sized dogs, stunted growth, high-legged dogs and overloaded fronts, too short overall appearance, too light or too heavy in build, steep set limbs or any other feature which detracts from the reach or endurance of the gait are faulty.

The brisket should be long and well developed. The ribs should be well formed and long, neither barrel shaped nor too flat; a correct rib cage allows free movement of the elbows when the dog is trotting. A too rounded rib cage will interfere and cause the elbows to be turned out. A too flat rib cage will lead to the drawing in of the elbows. The desired long ribbing gives a proportionately (relatively) short loin. The belly is firm and only slightly drawn up.

While the Standard accurately describes the body of the GSD, some clarification of the German meaning and use of terms for “withers, back and croup”, is necessary to provide context and fully understand their use.

The interpretations of “the withers” are wide and varied. In the context of the GSD Standard, it is considered that the withers are formed by the first 4 to 5 dorsal spines of the thoracic vertebrae, which are longer than the remainder, and the top of the shoulder blades. The description of the withers in relation to the top of the back is “high” when the top of the shoulder blades and dorsal vertebrae are clearly above the midline of the back, “level” when they are level with it, and “low” when they are below. The withers should maintain the flowing, slightly sloping topline, with no dip between the withers and the back.

The back should be straight, tight, firm and strong. It should be understood that it is the body and not the lumbar area (the coupling) that is moderately long. The back, which in GSD interpretation consists of the last 8-9 thoracic vertebrae and the lumbar vertebrae, not the entire topline, should be straight.

Straight also does not mean level, straight can be at a gentle slope towards the croup. A curvature of the spine clearly diminishes reach, drive and the GSD’s most important characteristic, outside temperament, its power of endurance. A slight rise is preferable to a soft back.

The croup, which goes from the front of the pelvis to the root of the tail, should be long. The 23 degrees referred to in the Standard means the angle of the visible outline, the angle of the pelvic girdle is about 27 degrees.



Fig. 32. Body: Topographic View

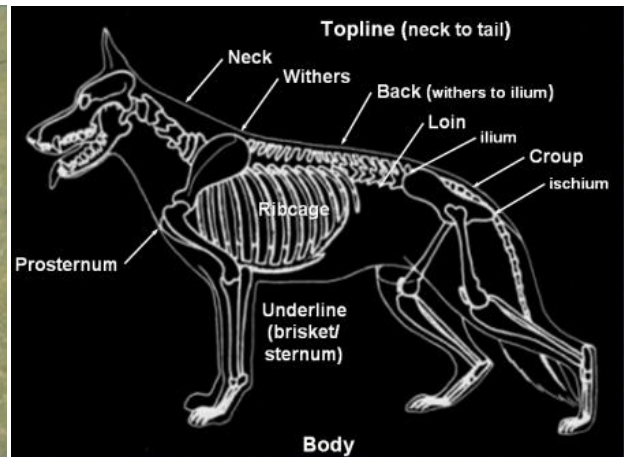


Fig. 33. Body: Skeletal View

Figures 32 and 33 above display several important points of note :

Length to height - a GSD is approximately 10% - 17% longer than it is high (10 is to 9 or 8.5). A GSD should not be square, as it is then unable to extend its limbs properly to produce the far reaching movement desired. A GSD should not be too long, particularly in the coupling (loin), as during movement, much of the forward drive from the hindquarter will be lost.

Topline - should be a smooth flowing line from the withers to the tail, gently sloping from front to rear. Many young GSD's may display a rise over the back in stance; most of this should however disappear during movement. This effect should settle by 12-18 months of age. A roach back is one where the middle of the back arches up higher than the withers during movement and is incorrect.

Underline - should be as long as possible, with a moderate tuck up. If the underchest (sternum) is too short, then there will be an exaggerated tuck up in the loin area. This can impact on the endurance of the GSD with decreased room for the heart and lungs, and is common in dogs with near square length to height proportions.

The depth of chest is 45% to 48% of the height of withers.

● HINDQUARTERS

The position of the hind legs is slightly set back, when viewed from rear the hind legs are parallel to each other. Upper and lower thighs are of almost equal length and form an angle of approximately 120 degrees, the thighs are strong and well muscled.

The hocks are well developed and firm, the rear pastern stands perpendicular under the hock joint.

To be correctly angulated, the upper and lower thigh bones should be of approximately equal length. Whilst in stance, with hock and rear pastern plumb, the ideally angulated dog should exhibit a make-believe plumbline dropped from the root of the tail to strike approximately 30mm in front of the toes. Where the line strikes considerably further in front whilst the hock and rear pastern are plumb, the dog is over-angulated. The standard calls for well muscled, broad thighs capable of powerful drive.

Two aspects of the GSD hindquarters have important points of note :

Over-angulation: This occurs when the bones of the lower thigh (tibia/fibula) are too long in the relation to the length of femur (upper thigh). This results in the hock and rear pastern (when perpendicular) being placed considerably further behind a line dropped behind the pelvis than when the lengths are equal. The longer the rear pastern in combination with a longer lower thigh, the more unstable the rear pastern during movement. Short rear pasterns will give greater stability, particularly where there is a longer lower thigh.

Hock Joints: Tightness and firmness of the hock joint (tarsus) during movement is highly desirable. The stability of the hocks is related to the relative lengths of all three sections - the upper thigh (femur), lower thigh (tibia/fibula), and the rear pastern (metatarsals). Too long a rear pastern, particularly when accompanied by a long lower thigh, allows for considerable instability of the hindquarter drive. GSD's (especially puppies) may stand cow hocked due to more angulation of the hindquarter, but during their natural gait (the trot), the hocks should be firm and the rear pastern remain upright. Puppies can be slightly loose in hocks, but these should firm by 12-15 months of age.

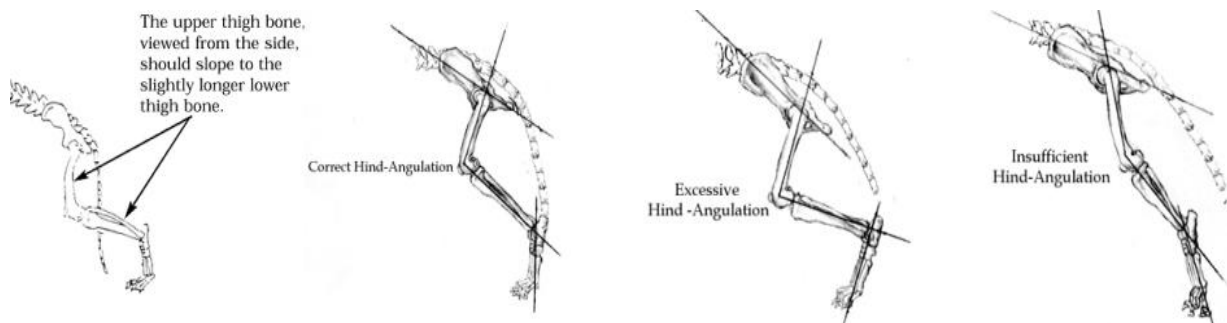


Fig. 34. Hindquarters: Correct musculature, bone length and angulation enables powerful drive.

- **FEET**

The front feet are rounded, well closed and arched. The pads are hard but not inflexible. The nails are strong and dark in colour.

The hind feet are closed slightly arched; the pads are hard, and dark in colour. The nails are strong, arched and also dark in colour.

The front feet, whilst being rounded, well closed and arched, are not cat feet. The hind feet, being only slightly arched are slightly longer than the front feet.

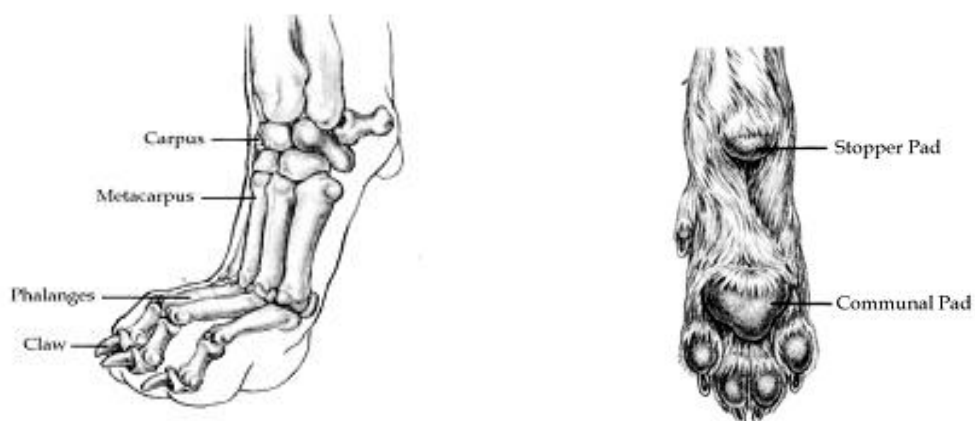


Fig. 35, 36. Front Feet: Rounded, well closed and arched. Hard, dark pads. Strong, dark nails.

- **TAIL**

The tail reaches at least to the hock joint, however, not beyond the middle of the rear pastern. It has slightly longer hair on the underside and is carried in a gently hanging curve when relaxed. It can be carried higher when excited or during movement but not above the horizontal. Corrective surgery is forbidden.

The ideal length is almost to the middle of the rear pastern. It is moderately bushy-haired in the Stock Coat variety and considerably bushy-haired in the Long Stock Coat variety. The end is sometimes turned sideways with a slight hook; this is not desirable. When at rest, the tail should hang in a slight curve, like a sabre. When moving, it is raised and the curve is increased, but ideally it should not be higher than the level of the back. A tail that is too short, rolled or curled, or generally carried badly to the extent of being severely disfiguring is a disqualification.

The “set on” and “carriage” of tail is very important to the flowing lines and balance during stance and movement of the GSD, contributing “rudder-like” to the relaxed and very expansive gait that is desired.

- **GAIT / MOVEMENT**

The German Shepherd Dog is a trotter. The limbs must be of such length and angulation that the hindquarter may be thrust well forward under the body and the forequarter reaches equally far forward without noticeable change in the backline.

Any tendency towards over-angulation of the hindquarter decreases the firmness and endurance and therefore the dog's utmost working ability. Correct structural proportions and angulations result in a ground covering, low to the ground movement that gives the impression of effortless forward propulsion. With the head pushed forward and a slightly raised tail, an even, balanced and smooth trot, results in a gently curving and unbroken topline, running from the tip of the ears and over the neck and back through to the end of the tail.

As the GSD is a trotting dog, his sequence of steps follows a diagonal pattern, in that he always moves the foreleg and opposite hindleg forward at the same time. To achieve this, his limbs must be in such balance, one to another that he can thrust the hindfoot well forward to the mid point of the body without any noticeable change in the back line.

The correct proportion of height to length and corresponding length of limbs will produce a ground covering stride that travels flat over the ground, giving the impression of effortless movement. With his head thrust forward and a slightly raised tail, a balanced and even trotter displays a flowing line, running from the tips of his ears, over the neck and back, down to the tip of the tail.

The gait should be supple, smooth and long reaching, carrying the body with the minimum of up and down movement, entirely free from stiltedness.

The gait should be far-reaching, smooth and effortless, covering the maximum amount of ground with the minimum amount of steps. In order to achieve this there should be balanced fore and hindquarter angulations, well developed muscles and firm ligamentation. Transmission is the force generated from the hindquarter thrust (drive), which transmits along the back pushing the forequarter forward. The forequarter movement is more of a reaching, grabbing movement; and the hindquarter thrust allows maximum use of the forequarter construction. If the back and the croup are correct, then the transmission of the drive from the hindquarter through the back into the forequarter will be transmitted smoothly and without a loss of power.

Whilst in a fast gait, the powerful drive of the hindquarter usually necessitates one hind foot passing outside and the other hind foot passing inside the tracks of the forelegs, and such action is not faulty, unless the locomotion is laterally biased (crabbing).

To assess correct movement, observe the dog going and coming, checking both hocks and elbows for firmness and note whether the dog steps correctly, too close or wide or crosses etc. Next move the dog around the ring and observe from the side, paying particular attention to the forequarter assembly and the effectiveness of its reach, drive and the firmness of the hindquarters and the reach of the hindquarter under the body.



Fig. 37, 38, 39. Gait/Movement: Far-reaching, smooth, effortless and powerful, provides maximum efficiency.

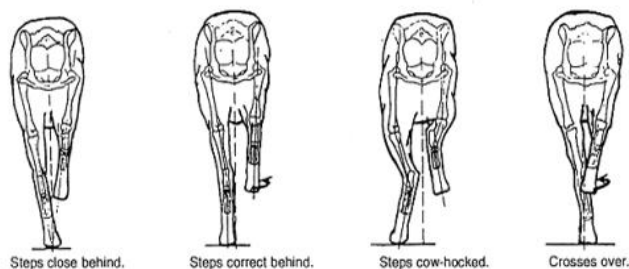


Fig. 40. Gait/Movement: Going away - check for correct sequence of steps and firmness of hocks.

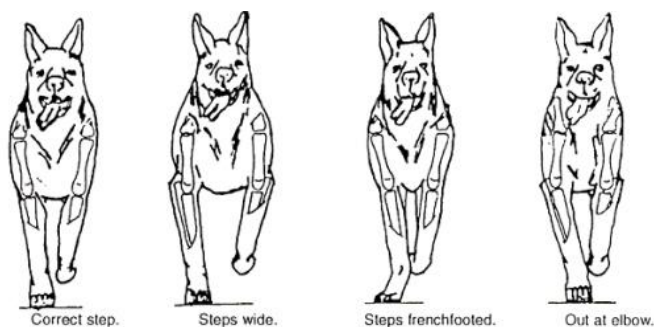


Fig. 41. Gait/Movement: Coming back - check for correct sequence of steps and firmness of elbows.

- **COAT**

The German Shepherd Dog is bred in the coat varieties: stock coat (normal) and long stock coat, both with undercoat.

Stock Coat (normal):

The top coat should be as dense as possible, straight, harsh and close lying. It should be short on the head, including the inside of the ears, the front of the legs, and on the feet and toes; it is a little longer and heavily coated on the neck. The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms moderate breeching.

Long Stock Coat (Long Coat):

The top coat should be long, soft and not close fitting, with feathering on the ears and legs, bushy breeches and bushy tail forming flags below. It should be short on the head including the inside of the ears, the front side of the legs, on the feet and toes, it is longer and heavily coated on the neck, almost forming a mane. The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms distinct breeching.

The reason why the term “stock” is used to identify the coat-types, is to indicate that only such a coat-type with undercoat was considered suitable for use as “breeding stock”, in Germany. There are three main varieties of coat found in the GSD. The SV describes them as follows:

- (a) The ideal normal coated GSD Stock Coat variety should carry a thick undercoat and the outercoat should be as dense as possible, made up of straight, hard, close lying hairs. There is no hard and fast rule for the length of the hair; apart from being longer or shorter in specified areas, but short, mole-type coats are faulty.
- (b) The ideal long-haired GSD Long Stock Coat variety should carry a thick undercoat and the outercoat hairs are longer; not always straight, definitely not lying as close and flat to the body. The guard hairs may be a little longer inside the ears (on rims), and are distinctly longer behind the ears and on the back of all the legs. The trousers (breeches) are long and thick. The tail is very bushy with downward formation of tufts and tight feathering underneath. This form of coat may not be quite as weatherproof as the Stock Coat.
- (c) In the long, open-coated GSD, the hair is appreciably longer than in the case of varieties (a) and (b), and tends to form a parting along the back, the texture being somewhat silky. If present at all, undercoat is found only at the loins. Dogs with this form of coat are usually narrow-chested, with narrow, over-long muzzles. As the weather protection of the dog and his working ability are seriously diminished with this form of coat (without undercoat), it is a disqualification.



Fig. 42. Coat: Stock Coat



Fig. 43. Coat: Long Stock Coat

It is contrary to the ethics of the GSDCA to breed with dogs carrying coats of variety (c). Obviously only varieties (a) and (b) are correct. The relevant sections in the standard state that the Stock Coat has a top coat where “The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms moderate breeching”, and the Long Stock Coat has a top coat where “The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms distinct breeching”. Clearly different outercoat lengths distinguish between the two varieties, where it is essential that both varieties have the required undercoat.

- **COLOUR**

Black with reddish tan, black/tan, black/gold to light grey markings. All black, grey (commonly known as sables) with dark shadings; black saddle and mask. Unobtrusive small white markings on chest as well as very light colour on insides of legs permissible, but not desirable. The nose must be black in all colour types. Lacking mask, light to piercing eyes, as well as whitish markings on chest and inner sides of legs, light nails and red tip of tail are to be rated as lacking in pigment. The undercoat is of a light grey toning. The colour white is not permitted.

Blues, livers, albinos and whites (i.e. almost pure white dogs with black noses and near white noses) are to be rejected. The undercoat is, except in all-black dogs, usually grey or fawn in colour.

Colour does not affect the character of the dog or its fitness for work and should be a secondary consideration for that reason. The final colour of a young dog can only be ascertained when the outer coat has developed. In Germany, the term "grau" (grey) refers to what is generally known as "sable" in English speaking countries.

Considerable pigment deficiencies are major faults.

Pigment: Generally refers to the degree of black on a dog, including the nose, the mask and the colour of the nails. A well pigmented GSD has a good "mask", or black around the muzzle. This is highly desirable. Lack of mask detracts from the characteristic expression of the German Shepherd Dog.

Colour: Generally refers to the tan or gold of a GSD and can range from a darkish tan (brown) through a rich red to gold, then the paler shades of gold - all are acceptable. However, whitish to silver shades of the gold areas are undesirable.

Markings: Generally refers to the patterning or configuration of pigment and colour on the coat of a GSD, which is genetically inherited.

Black and tan saddle (black saddle and tan/gold) dogs are by far the most common marking/colour seen. The black can be very dark through to almost washed out. Those that are washed out have a very small area of "saddle" and invariably very little mask and whitish nails - this is referred to as lacking pigmentation and would in a class be penalised according to the degree of paling.

Black and gold (saddle) dogs can have a "salt and pepper" effect down the back, which is quite permissible. This is quite common in bitches, less so in dogs. Undercoat on the saddle (black) areas are grey, lighter colours (in the saddle area) often accompanies paler pigment.

Sable dogs (black tipping of the outer coat - also known as "greys") can come in a variety of shades from gun-metal (very dark grey, sometimes this can extend nearly all over the dog), tan sable (where the gold is very reddish) through to a pale sable (where pigment may be lacking on the mask, nails). The undercoat on sables is varying shades of grey to fawn and light gold, most readily seen where the hair parts over the ribs.

Sable puppies' final coat colour and pigment can be difficult to estimate, and less than 6 months can look a little lacking in pigment while developing and changing coat. On very young puppies (3-4 months of age), sables can appear tan/gold all over, apart from a small black patch of newer top coat on the mid tail section and/or a thin black stripe of newer top coat down the back (above the spine). Masking is usually strong on the foreface.

Bi-colour dogs are very dark dogs, having black over most of their body and extending down the legs. This is permissible and is a sign of very good (if a somewhat heavy dose) of pigment. Undercoat is dark to light grey in black areas.

Black dogs have some tan hairs between the toes. Optically, the black dogs appear to look smaller and finer, and it is uncommon to see one in the ring at this time. Undercoat black to dark grey through to a lighter grey in the trousers.

- **SIZES**

Dogs: *Height at withers* **60-65 cm**
 Weight **30-40 kg**

Bitches: *Height at withers* **56-60 cm**
 Weight **20-30 kg**

The length of the body is greater than the height at withers by approximately 10-17%.

Refer back to GENERAL APPEARANCE, where size is considered essential to Important Proportions and consequently vital to the embodiment of “breed type”.

It is important that the measuring is done correctly; using an official measuring stick. Height at withers shall be taken by measuring vertically and plumb from the ground to top of withers directly behind the ulna joint.

In Australia, the following scale is used to determine and describe the German Shepherd Dog’s height when critiquing at specialist shows :

<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Bitches</u>	<u>Description</u>
60-61cm	55-56cm	Small
61-62cm	56-57cm	Under medium size
62-63cm	57-58cm	Medium size (Ideal)
63-64cm	58-59cm	Above medium size
64-65cm	59-60cm	Large

All the above sizes are correct and acceptable according to the Standard and should not be faulted.

Note: One centimetre above and below the range is permitted (Refer to FAULTS below).

<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Bitches</u>	<u>Description</u>
65-66cm	60-61cm	Very Large

The dogs and bitches in this size range are not to be penalised, as it is allowed for in the standard. Generally, in the GSD breed, animals are generally within the larger parameters of size. Animals over 66cm and 61cm, for dogs and bitches respectively, are to be penalised as oversize.

- **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.

MAJOR FAULTS

- ***Any deviations from the above described breed characteristics that impair the working ability of the dog.***

- **Ear Faults: Laterally too low set ears, tipped ears, inward tilted ears, ears that are not firm.**
- **Severe lack of pigment.**
- **Severe lack in overall firmness.**

DENTITION FAULTS

- **All deviations from a scissor bite and the dentition formula, as far as it does not concern disqualifying faults (see below).**

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS

- Weak character, aggression without provocation or nervousness.**
- Dogs with proven severe Hip Dysplasia.**
- Monorchids and cryptorchids, as well as dogs with clearly uneven or atrophied (stunted) testicles.**
- Disfiguring ear or tail defects.**
- Dogs with deformities.**
- Dogs with missing teeth as follows:-**
 - 1 Pre-Molar 3, and one further tooth, or**
 - 1 Canine, or**
 - 1 Pre-Molar 4, or**
 - 1 Molar 1, or**
 - 1 Molar 2, or**
 - 3 or more teeth altogether.**
- Dogs with jaw defects: Overshot 2mm or more. Undershot. Level bite in the whole of the incisor area.**
- Dogs that are more than 1cm over or under size.**
- Albinism**
- White coat colour (even with dark eyes and nails).**
- Long Stock Coat without undercoat.**
- Longcoat: Long, soft top coat, without undercoat, usually with a parting down the middle of the back, flags on ears and legs and tail.**

Different faults become cause for concern from time to time and they need to be addressed, but it is very wrong to fault judge. It is far better to understand the breed, be aware of the current problems or weaknesses and look for the desired or complementary virtues and acknowledge them in your placings.

However, it is most important to be fully familiar with those features which are disqualifications; these faults are considered to be so serious that any dog displaying one or more should receive no award in the Show ring, should not receive a Grading or Breed Survey classification and should not be bred from.

The disqualifying fault of "Dogs with proven severe Hip Dysplasia" is used in the context of meaning "Verified 'severe Hip Dysplasia (HD)' "as a result of x-ray and radiographic evaluation in a recognised Breed Scheme. Similarly, Elbow Dysplasia (ED) schemes are now in place throughout the world, and in many countries, those afflicted dogs are unable to be registered into breeding programmes under their relevant Kennel Controls.

NOTES

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

Not only monorchids and cryptorchids should be disqualified, but also dogs with clearly uneven or stunted testicles.

SUMMARY

When seen in outline, the GSD, with noble head carriage, should present a clean flowing, descending topline from the ears to the set of the tail. Equally, a clean underline should show good forechest with moderate chest development (to the elbows), good length of underchest, and rounding to a modest tuck up of stomach. The well angulated and constructed forequarter should be in balance with a well angulated and powerful hindquarter.



Fig. 44. Male Stock Coat in stance.



Fig. 45. Male Stock Coat in movement.

The desired German Shepherd Dog will exude well defined sexual characteristics, much self assurance and abundant temperament. With the desired mental attributes to work, very good fore and hindquarter construction, near ideal proportions and firm ligaments, the well constructed dog should approach the ideal movement described in the German Shepherd Dog Breed Standard.



Fig. 46. Female Long Stock Coat in stance.



Fig. 47. Female Long Stock Coat in movement.

A well constructed, self assured and enthusiastic dog that has balanced movement is a joy to watch. The reach and drive are equally effective, and the dog seems to flow effortlessly around the ring with minimal endeavour and maximum ground cover.

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Updated in 2012 by GSD Specialist Judge and Breed Surveyor John Fenner and the GSDCA National Breed Commission Executive.

Country of origin for the Breed Standard is Germany. GSDCA comments and descriptions are in accord with the beliefs held in the country of origin. In particular, those expressed in the descriptive comments on the Stock Coat and Long Stock Coat varieties, plus the long, open-coated GSD (without undercoat) have been sourced directly from the SV.

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