

COAT COLOR IN REVIEW

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PURPOSE: The various retriever breeds come in a variety of solid coat colors that include black, brown, red, yellow and gold. None of these colors influence health, soundness, or breed purpose.

INHERITANCE: All purebred Golden Retrievers carry the double-recessive (e/e) gene which prohibits black pigment in the hair. (Occasionally a somatic mutation allows a patch of black, or black-tipped, hair which does not affect the genes passed on to the next generation.) Some Goldens also carry pattern genes on the A locus that can affect the shading on the coat. Coat color can be changed in a generation, and produce either a rainbow of shades or uniformity of color within a litter.

AKC BREED STANDARD: *“Rich, lustrous golden of various shades. Feathering may be lighter than rest of coat. With the exception of graying or whitening of face or body due to age, any white markings, other than a few white hairs on the chest, should be penalized according to its extent. Allowable shadings are not to be confused with white markings. Predominant body color which is either extremely pale or extremely dark is undesirable. Some latitude should be given to the light puppy whose coloring shows promise of deepening with maturity. Any noticeable area of black or other off-color hair is a serious fault.”*

JUDGING: Color is essential in defining the breed as “Golden.” Pale gold through deep reddish gold are allowed, and all shades within this accepted range should be considered equally. Dogs whose body color is predominantly off-white, or dark setter-red, are not truly “golden” and should be judged accordingly – but these extremes are only “undesirable” and not a major or significant fault. A good Golden Retriever is a good Golden Retriever regardless of the shade of gold, and each dog deserves equal consideration when weighing the merits and faults of type, movement and structure.

REMINDER from the AKC breed standard: *“Overall appearance, balance, gait and purpose to be given more emphasis than any of the component parts. Any departure from the described ideal shall be considered faulty to the degree to which it interferes with the breed’s purpose or is contrary to breed character.”*



This photo illustrates the extreme limits of the ACCEPTABLE color range.



SIRE (left), DAM (right), and OFFSPRING (below)



This photo illustrates the ACCEPTABLE color range in the Golden Retriever.