

UPPER ARM IN REVIEW

© GRCA 2018

PURPOSE: The front assembly is responsible for major weight bearing in all retriever breeds, and the forequarters of a Golden Retriever carry 65% or more of its weight. Correct front assembly is critical for carrying an additional load when retrieving birds like pheasant, ducks, and geese with average weights from 2 to 10 pounds respectively.

AKC BREED STANDARD: *“Upper arms appear about the same length as the blades, setting the elbows back beneath the upper tips of the blades, close to the ribs without looseness.”*

ANATOMY: When we “eyeball” the standing dog, the distance from the tip of the shoulder blade to the point of shoulder should approximately equal the distance from point of shoulder to point of elbow. (This is a visual effect and does not mean the length of the scapula and humerus are equal – they are not, and the humerus should be slightly longer.) This visual approximation helps assure that there is sufficient length of upper arm for correct front angulation. However it is often the case that the humerus appears too short in relation to the scapula. A lack of length, and the resulting upright positioning, contribute to the forward placement of elbow and prevent the proper return required to place it under the tip of the shoulder blade close to the ribs.

JUDGING: The appearance of angulation is affected by coat pattern, feathering, and grooming. The judge **MUST** put hands on beneath the coat. The judge should also observe the dog carefully moving, as well as standing naturally. The AKC breed standard is clear in requiring an upper arm with good length and return so that the elbow is placed directly beneath the upper tip of the shoulder blade. **NOTE:** Short upright upper arms, which place the leg too far forward, are a problem in the breed.

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.”*

