

The Golden Retriever



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A breed should not stray far from its beginnings.



The litter that established the breed was born in 1868. A bitch from that litter is pictured here.

The breed was created by the landed gentry in Great Britain for use as personal Gundogs on the large estates.

Guisachan Then & Now



Guisachan House, home of Lord Tweedmouth, Sir Dudley Marjoribanks, who developed the Golden Retriever breed.

Hunting Party at Guisachan – 1870



Nous, foundation sire of the breed, was the only yellow in a litter of black wavy-coated retrievers.

Scottish Highlands



The climate and rocky, hilly slopes of the Scottish Highlands, with their harsh, dense cover, required a moderate, efficient, agile retriever with stamina.



The Golden as a Retriever



The requirements of the breed standard are dictated by function.

A retriever of upland game birds, waterfowl and occasionally small game, the Golden Retriever requires stamina, athleticism, strength and agility for a full day's work in the field.



Hunting and in the field ...



Retrieving a wounded 17 lb. Canada Goose requires strength, willingness and perseverance.



What is the breed used for today?



Modern Golden Retrievers are used in law enforcement, search and rescue, therapy, as service and assistance dogs, and as guides for the blind.

They also do well in all areas of competition – obedience, hunting, tracking, agility and conformation.

Most importantly, they make loving, trustworthy family companions.



What makes this breed so versatile?



Willingness
Intelligence
Trainability
Rapport with people
Retrieving instincts
Soft mouths
Keen nose
Strength
Endurance
Sound structure
Easy care coat

“Overall appearance, balance, gait and purpose to be given more emphasis than any of his component parts.”



With the sun shining through his correct, moderate coat, this dog's proper outline, balanced angulation and excellent proportion can be clearly seen.

Heads



Heads must exhibit the breadth, depth and strength of musculature that allow the dog the capability to easily carry. Today this breed carries not only game, but all sorts of objects of varying size and shape in their assistance to mankind.

Quality Male Heads



Quality Female Heads



Heads in profile



Skulls should be arched with no prominence of frontal bone over the eyes. Stop should be moderate, yet well-defined.

Foreface should be nearly as long as skull, and deep with well-developed underjaw.

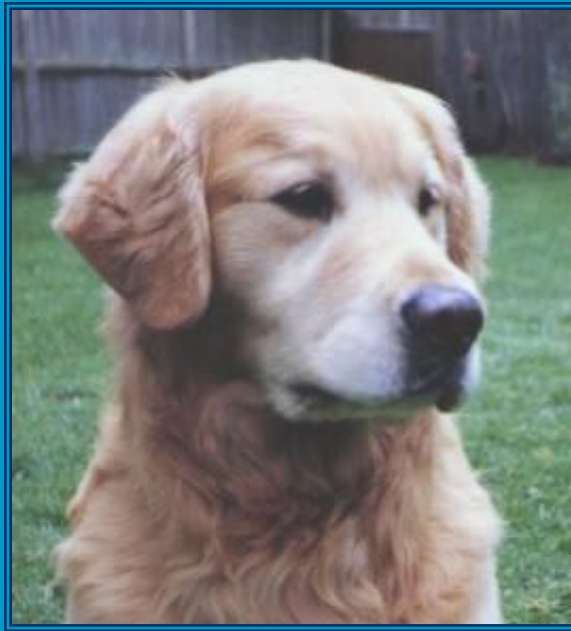


Eyes and expression



Eyes should be medium large and set well apart and fairly deeply. Dark brown color is preferred, medium brown is acceptable. Expression must convey intelligence, willingness to please, and a self-confident, noble, calm demeanor.

Ears



Ears should be rather short and attached at or above the line of the eye. Ear placement should be judged with the ears in repose, not at attention. Ears should lie close to the head, and when pulled forward the tip of the ear should just cover the eye.

Pigment



Pigment should be REAL. If noses are blue-black (or purple-black), and eye rims, lip rims, etc. are lacking in pigment – BEWARE. The practice of coloring noses in this breed is commonplace.

Snow noses (as on the right) are acceptable, they are a temporary condition.

Teeth and Bites



Teeth should meet in a scissors bite. Misalignment of incisors or a level bite are minor faults. Undershot and overshot bites are disqualifications

Please do not open mouths and count teeth, as in the Doberman.

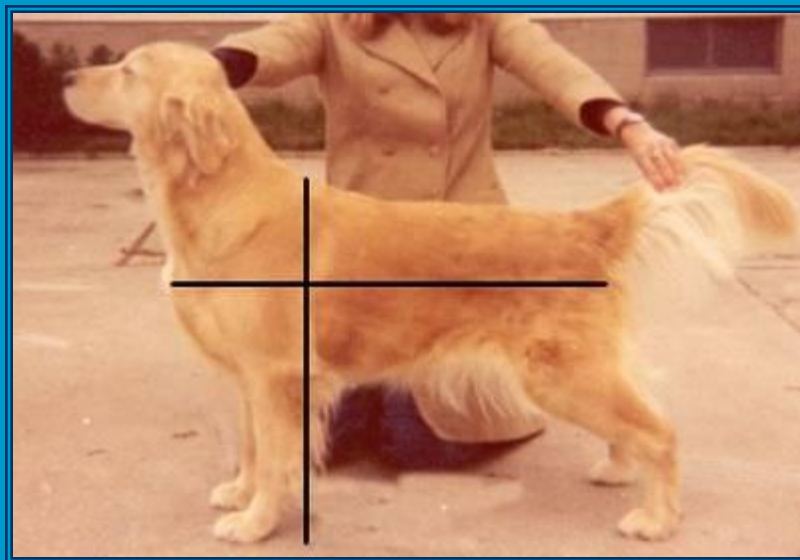
Notice this dog's excellent pigment.

Teeth and Bites



This shows an “obvious gap”, in comparison to full dentition.

Size, proportion and substance



Height: Males 23 – 24 inches, Females 21 ½ – 22 ½

PENALIZE up to one inch either over or under.

DISQUALIFY more than one inch over or under.

Breastbone to buttocks-ratio 12:11

Weight: Males 65 – 75 lbs, Females 55 – 65 lbs.

Balance, outline and body properties

Whelped 1970



Whelped 1995



Backlines strong and LEVEL

Underline is SHORT and has only SLIGHT tuck up

Body short-coupled and DEEP

Ribs LONG and WELL-SPRUNG

Forechest WELL-DEVELOPED

Loin SHORT, BROAD and very MUSCULAR

Topline and Back line

14 weeks



14 years

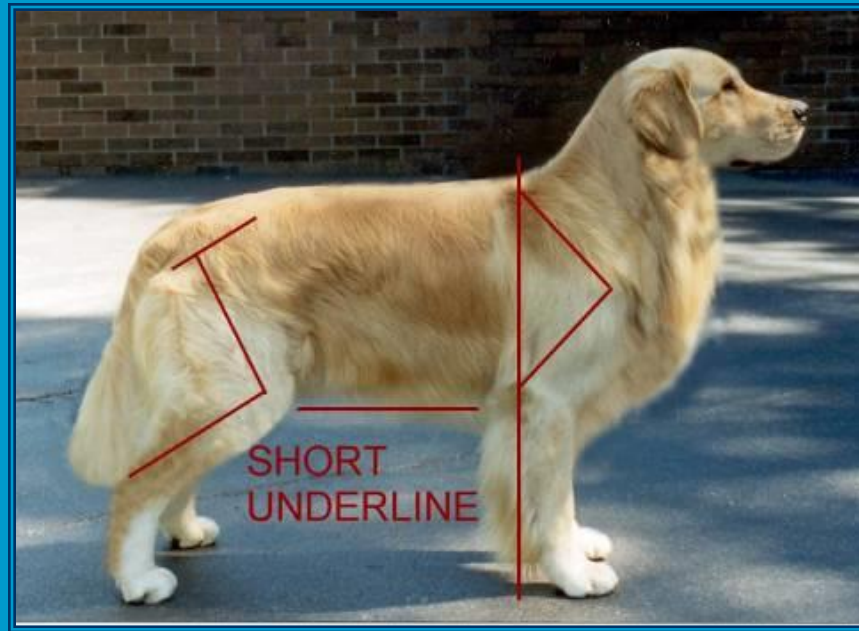


From puppyhood through advanced years, back line on a correctly built dog will remain firm and level.

Topline should be “one-piece” from arch of neck to base of tail.

Back line should NOT slope from withers to croup

Angulation



Bones of the forequarter should be long and sloping, placing the elbows back under the top of the shoulder blades, which creates the outward appearance of a 90° angle. Balanced angulation creates efficient movement and keeps the back line level.

Divide the dog into “thirds”



A properly constructed, proportioned and angulated dog will divide nearly into “thirds” – one third front assembly, one third middle-piece, one third rear assembly.

Leg length



Ground to elbow should be one half height at withers.
Current trends to select for shorter than normal leg length could lead to problems with miniaturization.
Select away from shortened bone lengths when judging.

More on fronts, necks and topline.



Properly placed, long, sloping bones of the forequarter allow a dog to have a proper length and fit of neck and a firm, level back. The dog on the left has short, vertical shoulder blades and, as a result, a very short neck and a sloping topline.

Flat ribs and “armpits”



Left – lovely shape of rib and loin, elbow lies close to rib.
Right – flat rib, long, narrow loin, elbow forward and away from rib cage. This sort of body lacks endurance, lung capacity and buoyancy.

From the Front



Legs should be straight with strong bone (not round and heavy). Chest broad and deep with elbows close to ribs. Good fill between legs.

Feet and pasterns

Good



Excellent



Feet should be compact-but beware the trend towards “tiny feet” on the end of a vertical pastern.

Pasterns should slope enough for shock absorption and nails should be long enough to aid the dog in gripping.

Coat



Dense and water-repellant

Lies close to the body – should NEVER be blown open

Good undercoat

Firm and resilient, never soft, cottony or silky

Straight or wavy WITHOUT PREFERENCE

You decide – which of these coats is most correct?

Coat



Can you imagine the dog on the left doing what the dog on the right is doing?

Coats should never **IMPEDE** the dog from being able to do his job. Soft, open, excessive coats are **VERY** undesirable.

Coat



Even this dog with his very correct coat was filled with burrs after successfully running his TD track. But because of his correct coat, it was not damaged, and three days later he earned a JAM at the National Specialty.

Trimming



Improper, excessive trimming is too commonly seen in this breed. The standard allows for neatening only. Carving, sculpting and blowing can simply be an attempt to cover up a poorly constructed and/or over-coated dog. A proper coat should be inherited, not fabricated.

Color Range in the Golden



Photo courtesy GRCC

The outer limits of the parameters



Photo courtesy GRCC

Two quality animals showing the extremes of color in the Golden, acceptable but not desirable. However, do not use color as an excuse to discard an otherwise outstanding dog from competition.

Graying-A Natural Occurrence, It Should Never Be Faulted



Some families of Goldens begin to gray as early as three years. Others don't gray until they are quite aged. Sometimes the entire body coat is flecked with gray.

Four lovely males



Four lovely females



Two that approach ideal in balance, proportion, substance and outline



Remember, the Golden is the most MODERATE of all the Retriever breeds.

Movement



Correct balanced angulation and strong musculature combine to produce proper foot timing.

In motion the Golden should appear athletic and workmanlike. The Golden should be shown at a moderate speed on a loose lead.

Natural Gait



This dog is moving easily, displaying excellent head and tail carriage.

Goldens should exhibit an endurance trot-easy, economical and effortless.



Correct



Incorrect

Feet stay close to the ground through all phases of the trot. Heads go forward for balance-they should not be carried up over the withers. Backs remain firm and level, with no roach over the loin or looseness (rolling from side to side). No high stepping or kicking up motion.

Convergence



Converging towards a center line of travel offers the dog stability and maneuverability when turning.

Short, upright shoulder blades contribute to lack of convergence and also to padding and high-stepping in front.

Tail carriage

excellent



acceptable



somewhat faulty



very faulty



Temperament



Without his breed character, the Golden is just another dog. He must have poise, instinct, intelligence and a calm, capable demeanor to excel in all the areas that he is called upon to work with his human companions.



The Golden is willing, tolerant and
always enjoys a party!

Always remember, the Golden Retriever is
“primarily a hunting dog ...”



The Golden Retriever Breed Was Created To Work.



Please make the working qualities that have been stressed in this presentation your priority when judging this breed.



<https://take1pro.net/conformationeducation>

Primarily A Hunting Dog (PhD)

- ❖ Symmetrical, Powerful, Active, Sound
- ❖ Alert, Self-Confident
- ❖ Fitness for Purpose
- ❖ Slightly Longer than Tall (12:11)
- ❖ Overall Appearance, Balance, Gait More Important than Individual Traits



Resources

GRCA Judges Education

<https://www.grca.org/about-the-breed/judges-education>

Judging The Golden Retriever (Video)

<https://take1pro.net/conformationeducation>

Books <https://www.grca.org/shop/a-study-of-the-golden-retriever/>

**Judging the Golden Retriever by Marcia Schlehr
A Discussion of the Breed Standard**

**A Study of the Golden Retriever
by Marcia Schlehr**

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