

Judging the Dachshund

A Health and Welfare Perspective



Issued by the Health and Welfare Sub-Committee of the Dachshund Breed Council

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Introduction:

The conformation of the Dachshund needs to be understood in context in order to assess any risks of exaggeration. The short-leg gene is a naturally occurring modification to the genetic make-up of the dog which appeared about ten thousand years ago. Short legs particularly suited these dogs for certain types of hunting and the Dachshund breeds evolved from them.

Those of us who live with Dachshunds know that they are generally healthy, long-lived and active dogs who, despite their conformation, will happily take as much exercise as their owner is willing to give them. As a breed community we keep the health status of the breed under constant surveillance and we are committed to taking action, on the basis of evidence, to ensure the breed's health is not compromised as a consequence of exaggeration.

The show ring should be a place where we are proud to demonstrate how fit, healthy and temperamentally sound they are and "Fit for Purpose".

This guide for judges should be read in conjunction with the Breed Standard to explain what they should expect to find when examining a healthy Dachshund in the show ring.

Neither the Breed Council, nor the Kennel Club expects judges to apply the knowledge or level of diagnosis that a vet would be capable of. We do expect judges to be knowledgeable about the anatomy and sound movement of the Dachshund and, as experienced dog owners, to be able to recognise potential health and welfare issues in the ring AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

Breed Standards:

Every Breed Standard starts with the following statement...

A Breed Standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. From time to time certain conditions or exaggerations may be considered to have the potential to affect dogs in some breeds adversely, and judges and breeders are requested to refer to the Breed Watch section of the Kennel Club website here <http://www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/services/public/breeds/watch> for details of any such current issues. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as undesirable or highly undesirable it is strongly recommended that it should not be rewarded in the show ring.

This document summarises specific elements of clauses from the Dachshund Breed Standard and particular health issues to be aware of, for each of these.

Breed Standard Clauses (parts only)	Potential health issues
<p>GENERAL APPEARANCE: Moderately long and low with no exaggeration, compact, well muscled body, with enough ground clearance to allow free movement. Height at the withers should be half the length of the body, measured from breastbone to the rear of thigh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Dogs that have exaggerated length may be more at risk of damaging their backs, particularly if they are also long in the loin
<p>TEMPERAMENT: Faithful, versatile and good tempered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Dogs that cannot be handled on the judging table as a result of nervousness, or aggression should be seriously penalised
<p>EYES: Medium size, almond-shaped, set obliquely. Dark except in chocolates, where they can be lighter. In dapples one or both 'wall' eyes permissible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Tear-staining from the eyes may be a sign of blocked tear ducts, or other abnormalities of the eyelids causing irritation
<p>MOUTH: Teeth must be strongly developed; the powerful canine teeth fitting closely. Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite; i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Complete dentition important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Dental disease (tooth or gum decay) ⤴ Crowded mouths, overshot, or undershot jaws ⤴ Narrow lower jaw with missing incisors ⤴ Incorrectly fitting lower canines which pierce the upper jaw
<p>BODY: Moderately long and full muscled. Sloping shoulders, back reasonably level, blending harmoniously between withers and slightly arched loin. Loin short and strong. Breast bone strong, and so prominent that a depression appears on either side of it in front. When viewed from front, thorax full and oval; when viewed from side or above, full volumed, so allowing by its ample capacity complete development of heart and lungs. Well ribbed up, underline gradually merging into line of abdomen. Body sufficiently clear of ground to allow free movement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ As stated above, excessive length is to be avoided and the loin should be short ⤴ Exaggerated depth of chest could predispose the dog to Gastric Torsion (Bloat) which is reported as a breed-related risk ⤴ Insufficient length of leg and ground clearance could adversely affect the dog's ability to cope with adequate amounts of exercise

Breed Standard Clauses (parts only)	Potential health issues
<p>GAIT/MOVEMENT: Should be free and flowing. Stride should be long, with the drive coming from the hindquarters when viewed from the side. Viewed from in front or behind, the legs and feet should move parallel to each other with the distance apart being the width of the shoulder and hip joints respectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Lameness may be an indication of an underlying muscle or skeletal health issue ⤴ Inability to walk without skipping or missing steps in the rear legs may be an indication of Patellar Luxation ⤴ A wobbly, or unsteady, hind gait may be an indication of a back problem or other musculo-skeletal issue ⤴ Twisting of the lower ends of the radius and ulna or tibia and fibula due to uneven growth of these pairs of bones may lead to various signs standing or on the move - protruding elbows, bandy legs or pinning - and this could lead to leg weakness and injury
<p>COAT: Long Haired: Soft and straight, or only slightly waved; longest under neck, on underparts of body, and behind legs, where it forms abundant feathering, on tail where it forms a flag. Outside of ears well feathered. Coat flat, and not obscuring outline. Too much hair on feet undesirable. Smooth Haired: Dense, short and smooth. Hair on underside of tail coarse in texture. Skin loose and supple, but fitting closely all over without dewlap and little or no wrinkle. Wire Haired: With exception of jaw, eyebrows, chin and ears, the whole body should be covered with a short, straight, harsh coat with dense undercoat, beard on the chin, eyebrows bushy, but hair on ears almost smooth. Legs and feet well but neatly furnished with harsh coat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Thin patches, or areas of baldness may indicate an underlying skin condition such as Seasonal Alopecia
<p>COLOUR: All colours permitted but no white permissible, save for a small patch on chest which is permitted but not desirable. The dapple pattern is expressed as lighter coloured areas contrasting with the darker base. Neither the light nor the dark colour should predominate. Double dapple (where varying amounts of white occurs all over the body in addition to the dapple pattern) is unacceptable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Double Dapple (Merle) is associated with congenital blindness and deafness – the Kennel Club will no longer register puppies born from two Dapple parents ⤴ The dilute colours Blue and Isabella are unlikely to be seen in the UK show ring, but are associated with Colour Dilution Alopecia

Breed Standard Clauses (parts only)	Potential health issues
<p>SIZE: Ideal weight: 9-12 kgs (20-26 lbs).</p> <p>Miniature ideal weight; 4.5kgs (10lbs). Desired maximum weight 5kgs (11lbs). Exhibits which appear thin and undernourished should be severely penalised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Miniatures which are “up to weight” i.e. 11 pounds, but appear thin are unacceptable, whether dogs or bitches ⤴ A dog is too thin if, when running your fingertips against the direction of the coat without applying any pressure, you can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Easily feel the ribcage <u>and</u> ⤴ Easily feel the spine <u>and</u> ⤴ Easily feel the shoulder-blades and hip-bones ⤴ Dogs that are overweight, or in “soft” condition, may be getting insufficient exercise and are at increased risk of heart disease or musculo-skeletal conditions ⤴ A dog is overweight if you cannot feel his ribs and can see fat over his back and the base of his tail. He will also have rolls of fat on his neck and over his shoulders. He will have no discernible waist behind the ribs, when viewed from above, and you will be able to see excessive abdominal fat or a distended underline, in profile ⤴ Remember, the Breed Standard describes the ideal sizes of Standard and Miniature Dachshunds; these ARE NOT "target weights" for individual dogs
<p>NOTE: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Monorchidism is an inherited condition and affected animals should not be bred from

Dismissing a dog on the grounds of health or welfare:

Regulation F(1)21n. Judges and Judging

Judges may exclude any dog from the ring if it is considered not in a fit state for exhibition owing to savage disposition or suffering from any visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare and the exclusion must be reported immediately by the judge/steward to the Show Secretary. The judge's decision is final and the dog shall be excluded from all subsequent competition at the Show. The judge must make a report to the Show Secretary at the first opportunity after the Show.

**As a judge, you will have the full support of the Dachshund Breed
Council and Kennel Club when you act to protect the health and welfare
of the Dachshund.**