

# American Cocker Spaniel

**ORIGIN:** U.S.A.

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**UTILIZATION:** Flushing dog, companion.

**CLASSIFICATION:** Group 8 Retrievers, Flushing Dogs, Water Dogs.  
Section 2 Flushing Dogs.  
Without working trial.

**GENERAL APPEARANCE:** The American Cocker Spaniel is the smallest member of the Sporting Group. He has a sturdy, compact body and a cleanly chiselled and refined head, with the overall dog in complete balance and of ideal size. He stands well up at the shoulder on straight forelegs with a topline sloping slightly toward strong, moderately bent, muscular quarters. He is a dog capable of considerable speed, combined with great endurance. Above all, he must be free and merry, sound, well balanced throughout and in action show a keen inclination to work. A dog well balanced in all parts is more desirable than a dog with strongly contrasting good points and faults.

**IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:** The measurement from the breastbone to back of thigh is slightly longer than the measurement from the highest point of withers to the ground. The body must be of sufficient length to permit a straight and free stride; the dog never appears long and low.

**BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT:** Equable in temperament with no suggestion of timidity.

**HEAD:** To attain a well proportioned head, which must be in balance with the rest of the dog, it embodies an intelligent, alert, soft and appealing expression.

**CRANIAL REGION:**

**Skull:** Rounded but not exaggerated with no tendency toward flatness; the eyebrows are clearly defined. The bony structure beneath the eyes is well chiselled.

**Stop:** Pronounced.

**FACIAL REGION:**

**Nose:** Of sufficient size to balance the muzzle and foreface, with well developed nostrils typical of a sporting dog. It is black in colour in the blacks, black and tans and black and whites; in other colours it may be brown, liver or black, the darker the better. The colour of the nose harmonizes with the colour of the eye rim.

**Muzzle:** Broad and deep. To be in correct balance, the distance from the stop to the tip of nose is one half the distance from the stop up over the crown to the base of the skull.

**Lips:** The upper lip is full and of sufficient depth to cover the lower jaw.

**Jaws/Teeth:** Jaws square and even. Teeth strong and sound, not too small and meet in a scissor bite.

**Cheeks:** Not prominent.

**EYES:** Eyeballs are round and full and look directly forward. The shape of the eye rims gives a slightly almond-shaped appearance; the eye is not weak or goggled. The colour of the iris is dark brown and in general the darker the better.

**EARS:** Lobular, long, of fine leather, well feathered, and placed no higher than a line to the lower part of the eye.

**NECK:** The neck is sufficiently long to allow the nose to reach the ground easily, muscular and free from pendulous « throatiness ». It rises strongly from the shoulders and arches slightly as it tapers to join the head.

**BODY:**

**Topline:** Sloping slightly toward muscular quarters.

**Back:** Strong and sloping evenly and slightly downward from the shoulders to the set-on of the docked tail.

**Chest:** Deep, its lowest point no higher than the elbows, its front sufficiently wide for adequate heart and lung space, yet not so wide as to interfere with the straight forward movement of the forelegs. Ribs are deep and well sprung.

**TAIL:** The docked tail is set on and carried on a line with the topline of the back, or slightly higher; never straight up like a terrier and never so low as to indicate timidity. When the dog is in motion the tail action is merry.

## **LIMBS**

### **FOREQUARTERS:**

General appearance: Forelegs are parallel, straight, strongly boned, muscular and set close to the body well under the scapulae.

Shoulder: Well laid back forming an angle with the upper arm of approximately 90° which permits the dog to move his forelegs in an easy manner with forward reach. Shoulders are clean-cut and sloping without protrusion and so set that the upper points of the withers are at an angle which permits a wide spring of rib.

Elbow: When viewed from the side with the forelegs vertical, the elbow is directly below the highest point of the shoulder blade.

Pastern: Short and strong. Dewclaws on forelegs may be removed.

Forefeet: Compact, large, round and firm with horny pads; they turn neither in nor out.

### **HINDQUARTERS:**

General appearance: When viewed from behind, the hind legs are parallel when in motion and at rest. They are strongly boned and muscled.

Hips: Wide and quarters well rounded and muscular.

Upper thighs: Powerful and clearly defined.

Stifle: Moderate angulation of the stifle. Strong and there is no slippage of it in motion or when standing.

Hocks: Strong and well let down. Dewclaws on hind legs may be removed.

**Hind feet:** Compact, large, round and firm with horny pads; they turn neither in nor out.

**GAIT / MOVEMENT:** The American Cocker Spaniel, though the smallest of the sporting dogs, possesses a typical sporting dog gait. Prerequisite to good movement is balance between the front and the rear assemblies. He drives with strong, powerful rear quarters and is properly constructed in the shoulders and forelegs so that he can reach forward without constriction in a full stride to counterbalance the driving force from the rear. Above all, his gait is coordinated, smooth and effortless. The dog must cover ground with his action; excessive animation should not be mistaken for proper gait.

### **COAT**

**Hair:** On the head, short and fine; on body, medium length, with enough undercoating to give protection. The ears, chest, abdomen and legs are well feathered, but not so excessively as to hide the Cocker Spaniel's true lines and movement or affect his appearance and function as a moderately coated sporting dog. The texture is most important. The coat is silky, flat or slightly wavy and of a texture which permits easy care. Excessive coat or curly or cottony textured coat shall be severely penalized. Use of electric clippers on the back coat is not desirable. Trimming to enhance the dog's true lines should be done to appear as natural as possible.

### **Colour and markings:**

- **Black variety:** Solid colour black, to include black with tan points. The black should be jet; shadings of brown or liver in the coat are not desirable. A small amount of white on the chest and/or throat is allowed; white in any other location shall disqualify.
- **Any Solid Colour Other Than Black (ASCOB):** Any solid colour other than black, ranging from the lightest cream to darkest red, including brown and brown with tan points. The colour shall be of a uniform shade, but lighter colour of the feathering is permissible. A small amount of white on the chest and/or throat is allowed; white in any other location shall disqualify.

**SIZE:**

The ideal height at the withers for an adult dog is 15 inches and for an adult bitch, 14 inches. Height may vary one half inch above or below this ideal. A dog whose height exceeds 15 1/2 inches or a bitch whose height exceeds 14 1/2 inches shall be disqualified. An adult dog whose height is less than 14 1/2 inches and an adult bitch whose height is less than 13 1/2 inches shall be penalized. Height is determined by a line perpendicular to the ground from the top of the shoulder blades, the dog standing naturally with its forelegs and lower hind legs parallel to the line of measurement.

- Parti-Colour variety: Two or more solid, well broken colours, one of which must be white; black and white, red and white (the red may range from lightest cream to darkest red), brown and white, and roans, to include any such colour combination with tan points. It is preferable that the tan markings be located in the same pattern as for the tan points in the Black and ASCOB varieties. Roans are classified as Parti-Colours and may be of any of the usual roaning patterns. Primary colour which is ninety percent (90%) or more shall disqualify.
- Tan points: The colour of the tan may be from the lightest cream to the darkest red and is restricted to ten percent (10%) or less of the colour of the specimen; tan markings in excess of that amount shall disqualify. In the case of tan points in the Black or ASCOB variety, the markings shall be located as follows:
  - 1) A clear tan spot over each eye;
  - 2) On the sides of the muzzle and on the cheeks;
  - 3) On the underside of the ears;
  - 4) On all feet and/or legs;
  - 5) Under the tail;
  - 6) On the chest, optional: presence or absence shall not be penalized.

Tan markings which are not readily visible, or which amount only to traces, shall be penalized. Tan on the muzzle which extends upward, over and joins shall also be penalized. The absence of tan markings in the Black or ASCOB variety in any of the specified locations in any otherwise tan-pointed dog shall disqualify.

**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.

**DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:**

- Aggresive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Colour and markings: The aforementioned colours are the only acceptable colours or combination of colours. Any other colours or combination of colours to disqualify.
- Black variety: White markings except on chest and throat.
- Any Solid Colour Other Than Black variety: White markings except on chest and throat.
- Parti-Colour variety: Primary colour ninety percent (90%) or more.
- Tan points: (1) Tan markings in excess of ten percent (10%);  
 (2) Absence of tan markings in Black or ASCOB variety in any of the specified locations in an otherwise tan-pointed dog.
- Height: Males over 15 1/2 inches.  
 Females over 14 1/2 inches.
- **Eyes:** **blue, blue marbled, blue flecked.**

**N.B.:**

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

**The latest amendments are in bold characters.**

## SURFACE ANATOMY

