



American Pit Bull Terrier

Standard Provided by ABIDS

Appearance: Look first at the overall profile of the dog. Ideally, he should be "Square" when viewed from the side. That is, about as long from the point of the shoulder to the point of his hip as he is tall from the top of the shoulder, to the ground. Such a dog will stand high and have maximum leverage for his weight. This means that standing normally with the hock slightly back of the hip, the dog's base, (where his feet are) will be slightly longer than his height. Using the hip and shoulder as guides will keep the viewer from being fooled by the way the dog is standing.

Size: Height to weight ratio is critical. Since dogs were fought at nearly identical weights, the bigger the dog you have at the weight, the better your chances. Hence, stocky dogs with long bodies, heavy shoulders and thick legs usually lose to taller, rangier opponents. Nature usually blesses a tall rangy dog with a fairly long neck which is a tremendous advantage in that, it enables him to reach a stifle when his opponent may have his front leg, take an ear to hold off a shorter necked opponent, or to reach the chest himself when the other dog is trying to hold him off. The neck should be heavily muscled right up to the base of the skull.

Hindquarters: That's the drive train of any four legged animal. A Bulldog does 80% of his work off his hips and back legs. A long sloping hip is most important. By its very length, it gives leverage to the femur or thigh bone. A long hip will give the dog a slightly roached backed appearance. Hence the "low set" tail so often spoke of. The hip should be broad. A broad hip will carry with it a broad loin and permits a large surface for the attachments of the gluteal and the biceps femoris muscles, the biggest drivers in the power train

Hindleg: The femur or thigh bone should be shorter than the tibia, or lower leg bone. This means that the stifle joint will be in the upper one third of the hind leg. It is not uncommon to see dogs with a low stifle. They are usually impressively muscled because of the bigger biceps femoris, but are surprisingly weak and slow on the back legs because of leverage lost by the long thigh. A short femur and long tibia usually means a well bent stifle, which in turn leads to a well bent hock. This last is a really critical aspect of wrestling ability. When a dog finds himself being driven backward, he must rely on the natural springiness of the well bent hock and stifle to control his movement. Dogs with a straight or the frequently seen "double jointed" hock of many of the Dibo bred dogs, will wrestle well as long as muscle power can sustain them, but if pushed, will tire in the back end more quickly and soon lose their wrestling ability.

Forequarters: He should have a deep rib cage, well sprung at the top but tapering to the bottom. Deep and elliptical, almost narrow is preferred to the round or barrel chest. The rib cage houses the lungs which are not storage tanks, but pumps. The ribs are like a bellows. Their efficiency is related to the difference in volume between contraction and expansion. A barrel chested dog, in addition to carrying more weight for his height, has an air pump with a short stroke. He must take more breaths to get the same volume of air. Depth of rib cage gives more room for large lungs.

Shoulders: should be a little wider than the rib cage at the eight rib. Too narrow a shoulder does not support adequate musculature but too wide a shoulder makes a dog slow and adds unnecessary weight. The scapula (shoulder blade) should be at a 45 degree or less slope to the ground and broad and flat.

Forelegs: The humerus should be at an equal angle in the opposite direction and long enough that the elbow comes below the bottom of the rib cage. The elbows should lie flat, the humerus running almost parallel to the spine; not out at the elbows which gives a wide "English Bulldog" stance. This type of shoulder is more easily dislocated or broken. The forearm should be only slightly longer than the humerus and heavy and solid-nearly twice the thickness of the metatarsal bones at the hock. The front legs and shoulders must be capable of sustaining tremendous punishment and heaviness can be an asset here. The relationship between front and back legs should be, at first appearance, of a heavy front and a delicate back. This is because in an athletic dog, the metatarsal bones, hock and lower part of the tibia will be light, fine and springy. The front legs will be heavy and solid looking. The experienced bulldog man however, will note the wide hip, loin and powerful thigh, which makes the back end the most muscular.

Head: Varies more in the present day pit bull. More than any other part of the body, probably because its conformation has the least to do with whether he wins or loses. However, there are certain attributes which appear to be of advantage. First it's overall size. Too big a head simply carries more weight and increases the chances of having to fight a bigger dog. Too small a head is easily punished by a nose fighter and is especially easy for an ear fighter to shake. In an otherwise well proportioned dog, the head will appear to be about two thirds the width of the shoulders and about 25% wider at the cheeks than the neck at the base of the skull.

Stop: From the back of the head to the stop, should be about the same distance as from the stop to the tip of the nose. The bridge of the nose should be well developed which will make the area directly under the eyes considerably wider than the head at the base of the ears.

Jaw: Depth from the top of the head to the bottom of the jaw is important. The jaw is closed by the Temporal Fossa muscle exerting pressure on the Coronoid process. The deeper the head at this point, (that is, between the zygomatic arch and the angular process of the bottom of the jaw) the more likely the dog is to have leverage advantage both in closing the jaw and in keeping it

closed. A straight, box-like muzzle and well developed mandible will not have much to do with the biting power but will endure more punishment. "Lippy" dogs are continually fanging themselves in a fight, which works greatly to their disadvantage.

Teeth: Teeth should meet in the front, but more importantly, the canines or fangs should slip tightly together, the upper behind the lower when the mouth is closed. Fangs should be wide at gum line and taper to the end. Soundness and healthy with none missing.

Eyes: The eye elliptical when viewed from the front, triangular when viewed from the side, small and deep set. In general, such a head will be wedge shaped when viewed either from the top or side, round when viewed from the front.

Skin: Thick and loose, but not in folds. It should appear to fit the dog tightly except around the neck and chest. Here the skin should be loose enough to show vertical folds even in a well conditioned dog.

Tail: It should be low. The length should come just above the point of the hock, thick at the base and tapering to a point at the end and should hang down like a pump handle when relaxed.

Feet: Small and set high on the pasterns.

Gait: Light and springy. Most of the above relates to the skeletal features of the dog. When we look at muscles, from the breeders standpoint, it is much more important to look at the genetic features of musculature than those features due to conditioning. A genetically powerful dog can be a winner in the hands of even an inept owner, but a genetically weak dog needs a good matchmaker to win.

Conditioning won't do much for him. Think of bones as levers with the joints as the fulcrum and the muscles being applied to the power source. The power being applied to the lever is more effective the farther away from the fulcrum it is applied.

Muscles should be long, with attachments deep down on the bone, well past the joint. Short muscled dogs are impressive looking but not athletic. A muscle's power value lies in it's ability to contract. The greater the difference between its relaxed state and it's contracted state, the greater the power.

Coat: Any color or any combination of colors. It should be short and bristled. The gloss of the coat usually reflects the health of the dog and is important to an athletic American Pit Bull Terrier.

Above all, the American Pit Bull Terrier is an all around athlete. His body is called on for speed, power, agility and stamina.

He must be balanced in all directions. Too much of one thing robs him of another. He is not an entity formed according to human specialists. In his winning form he is a fighting machine...a thing of beauty. In judging the American Pit Bull Terrier 100 points will be possible for the ideal dog. The breakdown is as follows.

Overall appearance height to weight ratio overall body shape health of dog.....	20 pts
Attitude of dog alertness carriage of dog.....	10 pts
Head and neck teeth eyes size and shape of head/neck.....	15 pts
Front end of dog ribs shoulders chest front legs.....	20 pts
Back end of dog loin hip stifle hock back legs and feet set of tail.....	30 pts
Tail and coat length and shape of tail gloss & length of coat.....	5 pts