



GROUP VII: HERDING DOGS

BERGER DES PYRENEES

RECOGNIZED: 1992

Effective: January 2018

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

ORIGIN & PURPOSE

Rough-Faced Variety: Coming from humble beginnings as working farm dogs in the isolated farms of the French Pyrenees Mountains, it was practically unknown to the official dog scene until the early 20th century. Its type varies considerably from one valley to the next, its shape and coat can be very different, but its character and behaviour never vary.

Smooth-Faced Variety: This variety of Berger des Pyrenees (*Pyrenean Shepherd Dog*) was principally found in the foothills of the French Pyrenees Mountains where it was much appreciated by horse-dealers and cattle-drovers.

The two varieties, smooth-faced and rough-faced (including both demi-long and long-haired coat types) are born in the same litters.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Dog displaying a maximum of excitable energy in a minimum of size and weight.

TEMPERAMENT

A courageous and resourceful little dog showing initiative and total devotion to its master. It is headstrong by nature and firm control is usually needed to channel its energy and bring out the best of its intelligence liveliness. His always-alert expression, cunning and wary looks, together with great liveliness are giving this dog a personal stamp that is not to be compared with any other. Sometimes wary of strangers.

SIZE

Rough-Faced Variety

Height at the withers: Dogs, 42 to 48 cm (16.5 to 19 in); bitches, 40 to 46 cm (15.75 to 18 in)

A tolerance of + or - 2 cm (1 in) is allowed for perfectly typed specimens.

Smooth-Faced Variety

Height at the withers: Dogs, 40 to 54 cm (15.75 to 21.25 in); bitches, 40 to 52 cm (15.75 to 20.5 in)

COAT

Rough-Faced Variety: The body hair is long, or demi-long, but always dense, almost flat or slightly wavy, thicker and more woolly on the croup and the upper thighs, the texture somewhere between goat's hair and sheep's wool. In some dogs the mixture of coarse and woolly hair can produce sorts of strands or cords called "cadenettes" found on the chest and the forelegs at elbow level; and sometimes matted or felted hair called "matelotes," which overlap like tiles on the hindquarters. The muzzle has shorter and less dense hair. On the end of the muzzle, and sometimes along the whole muzzle, it is laid flat and naturally grows from front to back. On the sides as well as on the cheeks, the hair is longer and brushed up in a "blown back look" from front to back. Eyes must be clearly visible and not covered by hair.

Smooth-Faced Variety: On the body the hair is demi-long or less than demi-long. It reaches its longest length on the neck and withers 6 to 7 cm (2.25 to 2.75 in) and on the median line of the back 4 to 5 cm (1.5 to 2 in). Slight feathering on the front legs and “culottes” or breeches on the hind end. On the muzzle and skull, the hair is short and fine, hence the name “smooth-face.”

COLOUR

Fawn, lighter or darker, sometimes overlaid with black hairs. Grey, lighter or darker. Brindle, lighter or darker. Black. Blue merle, fawn merle and brindle merle. Sometimes with white markings on the head, chest and limbs. Solid colours are preferred.

HEAD

Skull: The head is triangular in shape. Overall, the skull is moderately developed but remains the dominating part of the head. Almost flat with a slightly marked furrow, nicely rounded on the sides. The occipital bone should be little pronounced. The muzzle to blend gently and in a slight slope with the skull. Stop not visible. On the whole, the head should remind one of the brown bear. **Stop:** Scarcely discernible. **Nose:** Black. **Muzzle:** Should be straight, shorter than the length of the skull with skull remaining the dominating part of the head. The muzzle narrow without exaggeration and wedge-shaped. **Muzzle (Rough-Faced variety)** is slightly shorter than the length of the skull and appears noticeably shorter because of the longer hair on the face. **Muzzle (Short-Faced variety)** is longer than that of the Rough-Faced Variety and this is emphasized by the distinctive smooth face. The **lips** should not be very fleshy and cover the lower jaw without any hint of a flew. The mucous membranes of the lips and palate to be black or heavily marked with black. **Eyes:** The very expressive eyes should be surrounded by thin eye lids and black rims. They are well-opened, almond-shaped, of dark brown colour, neither protruding nor deep set. Merle dogs and slate-grey dogs are allowed a blue eye or eyes showing a partial depigmentation of the iris (these features being almost always typical with this colour). **Jaws/teeth:** Complete dentition. Large canines. Scissors bite (upper incisors covering lower incisors without loss of contact). Pincer bite (edge to edge) is tolerated. **Ears:** Both cropped and uncropped are equally acceptable. Natural uncropped ears are short, triangular, fine, wide at the base and ending in a point. The uncropped ear will stand semi-erect with the top third or half falling forward, or falling to the side in the case of a rose ear. An uncropped ear that stands upright is undesirable. The cropped ear has the top third of the ear removed, cut straight across, and standing erect. Ideally the ears should be symmetrical and very mobile.

NECK

Rather long, fairly well muscled, blending nicely with the shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS

Forelegs: Upright, lean, sinewy, well-fringed. **Upper arm:** Oblique and moderately long. **Forearm:** Straight. **Carpus (carpal joint):** Noticeable wrist joint. **Metacarpus (pasterns):** Slightly oblique seen from the side. Dewclaws: Single dewclaws.

Rough-Faced Variety

- **Shoulder** is rather long and angulation moderately oblique. The points of the shoulder blades project over the line of the back.
- **Foreleg** lean and covered in long or demi-long hair.
- **Feet** fairly flat, of a definite oval shape. Dark pads. Small hard nails covered by hair, which is also found under the foot, between the pads.

Smooth-Faced Variety

- **Shoulder:** Angulations are more open in the Smooth-Faced variety.
- **Forelegs** covered in short hair with a light fringe of hair on the back of the legs, and breeches on the back of the hind legs.
- **Feet** are tighter and more arched than that of the Rough-Faced variety.

BODY

The bone structure is strong without heaviness, muscle is lean. **Skin:** Should be thin, often spotted with pigment, whatever the colour of the coat. **Topline:** Well supported. **Withers:** Prominent. **Loin:** Short and slightly arched. **Croup:** Rather short and sloping. **Chest:** Moderately developed and reaching to the elbow. The ribs are slightly sprung. **Flank:** Not very deep.

Rough-Faced Variety

- **Back:** Rather long and strong. Length of body is noticeably longer than its height.
- **Loins:** Short, slightly arched but appears more arched because coat is often thicker on hindquarters and croup.

Smooth-Faced Variety

- **Back:** Well sustained. Shorter in body length than that of the Rough-Faced. Almost square in appearance.
- **Loin:** Short with less of an arch than the Rough-Faced variety.

HINDQUARTERS

Well developed, muscled but short upper thigh. Hocks lean, low set, **Metatarsus (Rear pastern):** Perpendicular to the ground or very slightly oblique from back to front. Dewclaws: Single or double dewclaws are acceptable on the hind legs, as is their absence. **Hind feet:** Dark pads. Small hard nails covered by hair, which is also found under the foot and between the pads. Hind foot attachment to metatarsus is sometimes slightly askew (toes out slightly). This unique adaptive feature for working on steep mountainous terrain is especially common with dogs born and reared in the mountains.

Rough-Faced Variety

- Rather closed angulation.
- **Upper thigh:** Not very long, moderately oblique, strong, well-defined muscle.
- **Stifle (knee):** Well-angulated and parallel to the body.
- **Lower thigh:** Rather long and oblique.
- **Hocks:** Lean, set low, well angulated. Hocks are sometimes a little close mainly in dogs born and bred in the mountains.
- **Feet:** Fairly flat, of a definite oval-shape.

Smooth-Faced Variety

- Rather open angulation.
- **Upper thigh:** Not very long, slightly oblique.
- **Stifle (knee):** Moderately angulated and parallel to the body.
- **Hocks:** Lean, set higher than the Rough-Faced variety. Hocks are sometimes a little close, mainly in dogs born and bred in the mountains.
- **Feet** are tighter and more arched than that of the Rough-Faced variety.

TAIL

A naturally long tail, or a natural bobtail, or a docked tail are all equally acceptable. A naturally long tail is well fringed and not very long. It should follow the line of the croup and should not be curled on the top of the back. Set on rather low with a hook at the tip.

GAIT

Because of his overall construction the Berger des Pyrenees displays a rather restricted pace. Ambling is not penalized but it should be considered that this is foremost a gait used by dogs while working with sheep in order to keep up with their reactions, or in the evening when they are getting tired after a full day's work. Ambling is therefore not justified in the show ring. The Berger des Pyrenees moves mostly at a trot. The latter should be clean and strong. At a slow trot the head is carried somewhat high, at a fast outreaching trot the head is level with the topline. The feet should never be lifted much off the ground. All the movements to be fluid, close to the

ground. A correct gait that is pleasing to the eye is the result of good shoulder and rear angulations. Because of its construction the Smooth-Faced variety has a shorter stride than the Rough-Faced variety.

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. The faults and disqualifications are the same for the Rough-Faced and Smooth-Faced variety except for those describing coat and proportions.

- General Appearance: Coarse appearance, lack of liveliness, loaded in muscles, common expression, unsound movement, short or mincing gait
- Head: Skull pointed and oblong in shape; head too short, too long, or too narrow. Marked Stop. Muzzle square, too long or rectangular shaped. Hair exaggeratedly developed, especially when falling over the eyes. Lack of pigment.
- Eyes: Eyes too small, too round, too light; lack of expression. Unpigmented eyelids.
- Ears: Set too low and badly carried
- Neck: Badly set on, coarse, weak, short or too long
- Shoulders: Shoulders too straight or too short
- Body: Coarseness, straight topline. Too short in length in the Rough-Faced variety. Too long in length in the Smooth-Faced variety.
- Forequarters: Double dewclaws. Unsoundness.
- Hindquarters: Straight hocks, joints lacking in springiness
- Feet: Too heavy coated feet showing an unsightly under part. Fleshy toes. Cat-feet. Long and light coloured nails. Insufficiently coated feet.
- Tail: Bad tail carriage or missing hook
- Coat: Excessive growth of hair on the head, especially if it is covering the eyes. Hair too abundant on muzzle creating a moustache and without a “blown back look.” Open and tight curls. Frizziness.
- Colour: White covering more than one third of the coat. Black with tan points.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Any size above or under the limits set by the present standard
- Nose of any colour other than black
- Blue eyes with any coat other than a merle
- Mouth: Over and undershot bite
- Naturally upright standing ears

Note: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.