

GREAT DANE

GROUP: Working

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

The Great Dane is a very large, short-coated dog with smooth, well-defined musculature. The body is square, but females may be somewhat longer in body than males. The length of the front leg (measured from the point of the elbow to the ground) is approximately equal to one-half of the dog's height at the withers. The head is long, rectangular, and finely chiseled. Ears are medium in size, high set, and may be drop or cropped. The tail is a natural extension of the spine, thick at the base and tapering to a point. Gender differences are apparent in this breed. The male is usually taller and heavier than the female. The female should appear feminine in contrast to the masculine looks of the male. The Great Dane combines great size with dignity and elegance, giving rise to its nickname, the Apollo of dogs.

SIZE:

The Great Dane is a giant working breed and should always be well-proportioned for its size. A mature male may not be less than 30 inches at the withers; a female may not be less than 28, although 30 inches or more is preferred. **Disqualification: A mature male Great Dane under 30 inches at withers; a mature female under 28 inches at withers.**

COAT:

Short, close, and thick with a smooth, glossy appearance.

COLOR:

Brindle: Base color a yellow gold and always brindled with strong black cross stripes in a chevron pattern; black mask preferred; black should be on eye rims and eyebrows, and may appear on the ears and tail tip. The most intense base color and the most distinct and even brindling pattern is to be most preferred. **Too much or too little brindle are equally undesirable. White markings at the chest and toes, black-fronted, or dirty colored brindles are not desirable and should be faulted to the degree of variation from standard.**

Fawn: Yellow gold with a black mask; black should appear on the eye rims and eyebrows, and may appear on the ears and tip of the tail. Preference should be given to a deep, yellow gold. **Faults: White markings on the chest and toes; black-fronted or dirty colored fawns.**

Blue: Steel blue. **White markings at the chest or toes are not desirable and should be faulted to the degree of variance.**

Black: Glossy black. **Faults: White markings on the chest and toes.**

Harlequin: Black, irregularly torn patches well distributed over a white background. The black patches should never be so large as to give the appearance of a blanket, nor so small as to give a dappled effect. The presence of a few small gray patches or single black hairs showing through the white background, giving a dirty effect, are allowed but not preferred.

Boston/Mantle: A solid blanket extending over the body and skull with the following white markings: white muzzle, collar, chest; white on part or all of the fore and hind legs; white tip of the tail; a full white color is preferred. A small white marking in the blanket or a break in the white collar is acceptable.

Faults: Any variance in color or markings as described above shall be faulted to the extent of the deviation. Disqualification: Albinism

HEAD:

Should be proportionate to the size of the dog, long rectangular, and finely chiseled, especially below the eyes. Viewed from the side, the skull and muzzle are of equal length, straight, parallel to one another, and joined by a strongly pronounced stop. Viewed from above, the planes of the skull and foreface are parallel

and the bridge of the nose is very broad. Gender difference should be very apparent in the head, with the masculinity of the male being quite pronounced, with the head of the female more delicately formed. Cheek muscles should not be prominent. The length from the tip of the nose to the center of the stop should be equal to the length from the center of the stop to the rear of the slightly developed occiput. The head should be angular from all sides and should have flat planes. Whiskers may be trimmed or left natural. Mouth should be dry and tight.

Faults: Muzzle too long or too short; loose, fluttering lips.

Eyes: Medium sized, almond-shaped, tight, and dark brown, with a lively intelligent expression. A slightly lighter shade of brown is acceptable but not preferred in the blue Danes. Light colored eyes, eyes of different colors, and walleyes are permitted in Harlequins, but not preferred. **Faults: Round or protruding eyes; yellow eyes; eyes too close together. Serious Faults: Visible haw; obliquely set Mongolian eyes; functional abnormality of eyelids or eyelashes.**

Ears: May be cropped or natural, with no preference given to either. High set and of moderate thickness. Natural ears are medium in size and fold forward close to the cheek. The top line of the ear fold is level with the skull. **Fault: Any deviation from the standard that contributes to a hound-like appearance.**

Nose: Black, except in the blue Dane, where it is a dark blue-black. A black spotted nose is permitted on the Harlequin; **Fault: Pink nose Disqualification: Split nose**

Bite: A complete set of evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite. **Minor faults: Crowded lower incisors; level bite. Serious Faults: Overshot; wry mouth Disqualification: Undershot.**

NECK:

Long, well-arched, and muscular; from the nape, the neck gradually broadens and flows smoothly into the shoulders. The underline of the neck is clean. **Faults: Short, thick neck; ewe neck; goose neck.**

BODY:

Broad loin, Chest broad, deep, and well-muscled, without a pronounced forechest; brisket extends to the elbow, with well-sprung ribs. Underline should be tightly muscled with a well-defined tuck-up.

Topline: Flows smoothly from the withers to a short, level back.

FOREQUARTERS:

Shoulders strong, smoothly muscled, and securely attached to the rib cage. The shoulder blades are long and well laid back. Upper arm appears to be equal in length to the shoulder blade and joins it at an apparent right angle. Elbows are close to the body. A line drawn from the upper tip of the shoulder blade to the back of the elbow joint will be perpendicular to the ground. Forelegs are straight with strong, slightly sloping pasterns. **Faults: Toeing in or out; down in pasterns.**

HINDQUARTERS:

Strong, broad, and muscular, with hocks well let down. The croup is broad and very slightly sloping. The angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with that of the forequarters. When the dog is standing, the short, strong rear pasterns are perpendicular to the ground and, viewed from the rear, parallel to one another. **Faults: Steep croup; lack of rear angulation; over-angulation; cow hocks; open hocks.**

Feet: Feet are round, tight, and well-arched. Nails are strong and as dark as possible, except that they may be lighter in harlequins. **Faults: hare foot; splay foot Serious faults: Rear dew claws; wolf claws.**

Tail: Natural extension of the topline; thick at the base, tapering to the tip; correct length extends to the hock, but never below; when dog is relaxed, the tail hangs down naturally; when dog is moving or alert, tail may curve slightly upward but never above the level of the back. **Serious faults: Ring or hooked tail ; Tail is not to be docked.**

MOVEMENT:

The gait should denote strength and power with long, easy strides resulting in no tossing, rolling or bouncing of the topline or body, showing good but not exaggerated reach in front and drive behind. Backline should appear level and parallel to the ground with only a slight flexing to indicate suppleness. Viewed from any position, legs turn neither in nor out, nor do feet cross or interfere with each other. As speed increases, feet tend to converge toward the centerline.

TEMPERAMENT:

Spirited, courageous, always friendly and dependable; never timid or aggressive.

Any departure from this standard should be considered a fault, and the final score should reflect the seriousness of the deviation from the standard.

Disqualifications:

Viciousness or extreme shyness

Albinism

Dogs under minimum height

Split nose

Undershot bite