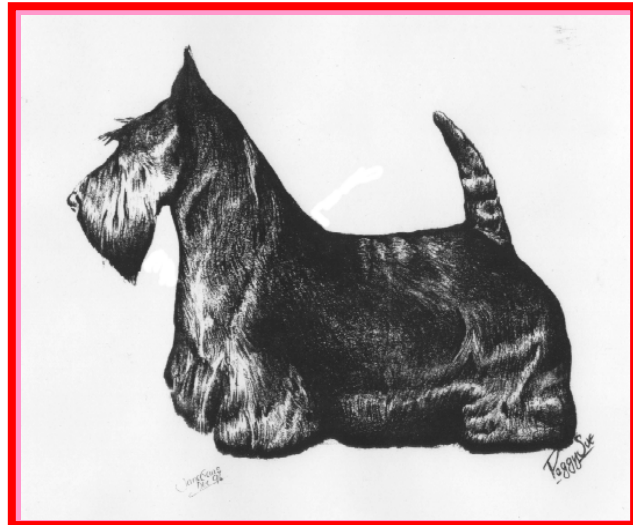


EXAMINING THE SCOTTISH TERRIER¹

By Vandra L. Huber, PhD ©



Examination of the Head



1. **Well Balanced Head.** Look for a well balanced head. The foreface should be equal in length to the back skull. Overall, about 8 inches in length. Too long and it throws the scottie off balance. Too short and it loses the character of the Scottie. Width of back skull should be slightly less than the length of the back skull.
2. **Level Head Planes.** Head planes should be level and parallel. The Scottish terrier standard is the only short-legged terrier standard that says explicitly parallel planes. There should be no indentations on the top of the skull.
3. **No Cheekiness.** Feel the bones at the side of the head away from the eyes and ears. These bones should be flat with no curves. Cheekiness is undesirable.
4. **High Set Small Ears.** The hands should go straight up the ears. Look for small (but not too small) ears, well placed on the head. When viewed from the front, they should NOT look like jug handles. When you run your hands up the side of the cheekbones, you should be able to go straight up -- without sweeping outward. Some Scotties when nervous may not use their ears well. Making a noise often helps bring ears into position.
5. **Wide set eyes.** Eyes should be well apart. Small, dark, almond shaped. Dark brown and black are acceptable. The eye color of wheaten's often appears lighter (brown) because the coat is lighter. Do fault round and big eyes.
6. **Slight stop.** Put your thumb between the eyes, there should be a slight stop but not as much stop as a westie or cairn would have.
7. **Filled in the Muzzle.** Put your hand beneath the eyes and around the muzzle. There should be good fill (snippiness is a concern at this time in the breed). And remember, it

is possible to get a well-filled muzzle without a coarse head or cheekiness.

8. **Square Jaw.** You should find a good wide mouth with a strong square jaw. It should not be under or over shot. A level bite is acceptable. Occasionally, teeth are crooked or a top tooth is behind. This is not desirable but not a major fault.

Examination of the Body



9. **Shoulder placement.** In checking the front end, run your hands down the neck which should flow gradually and smoothly into the shoulders. Shoulder placement should be well back away from the front of the chest. There should be no more than two fingers of space between shoulder blades.
10. **Tucked Elbows.** Elbows should be tucked away so that when you put your hands down from the shoulder to pick up the leg, you should not feel the elbow sticking out.
11. **Thick, well rounded forefeet.** Forefeet feet should be thick and well rounded. Good bone is preferred. Feet should point straight ahead but they may toe out to a slight degree without penalty.
12. **Forechest.** Put your hands between the two front legs to feel if the chest bone is forward in front of the legs, instead of recessed. Check this carefully. We do NOT want a fox terrier front. The front should be low, no higher than a man's fists from the ground (For women, I use my fist and my other hand placed flat on top of the fist as an upper limit for chest depth). We want more depth of brisket that what you find on a westie or a cairn.
13. **Width of Brisket.** Regarding the width between the front legs, use your fist but turn it parallel to the ground. A man's hand width This is about the right width. Nor do we want narrow fronts or lack of brisket seen in many breeds. Make sure the exhibitor has stacked the dog well. Some are notoriously bad at placing the feet to show the depth of forechest.
14. **Butts.** There should be as much out front of a Scottie as there is behind the tail (Scotties today also suffer from weak rears). We want a nice butt behind the set of the tail.
15. **Well sprung ribs.** Coming to the ribs, they should be well sprung, deep, barrel like and the ribs should flow back to the loin. A Scottish Terrier should not be short-ribbed. A rule of thumb is no more than two or three fingers from the end of the rib cage to the rear of the dog. Put your fist under the dog's chest and feel the ends of his ribs touching.
16. **Rear Legs.** Regarding the hind quarters, look for a very muscular double thigh. This is necessary to give the correct hindquarters with a proper well-bent stifle. (Think about the beauty of a Scottie, kicking up the dust with her rear legs). Pick up the back feet to see if

these are round and thick. Examine the hock, which must be no more than 2-3 inches in length and parallel to each other. Check for slipping stifles by pulling the hind legs straight back and looking for joint movement.

17. **Top line.** There should be no breaks in the top line. The topline should be level with no breaks. Push down at the withers and see if the back is strong or if it dips. Scotties have a tendency to be high in the rear. When stacked on the table, watch the spread of the rear legs. Good handlers compensate for high rears by spreading the rear feet wider than normal to level the top line out. Don't be fooled.
18. **Length of Back.** With the dog standing, take a side view. Look for a level topline. Length of back should be no more than 11 inches . It can be shorter and usually appears shorter because of neck hair. A balanced dog will look off square, lower than she is long. Make sure you actually feel where the back begins and ends. Dogs that appear square are often too high on leg. So check the height. Remember, with a good let down brisket in the front and a handful of rear behind the tail, the Scottie that is properly proportioned will appear longer than 11 inches in overall silhouette.
19. **Carrot-shaped Erect Tail.** The standard says nothing about a kink in the tail. They just happen with some lines. Do check for fixed tails. They will often move looser than an unfixed tail. Commend exhibits with nice fat-carrot shaped tails that are carried erectly or slightly forward. Low set tails are to be avoided.
20. **Coat Length and Texture.** The current standard does not reference a specific length for body hair. When you lift the coat to feel texture, you do not want to see skin. A scottie should have a dense undercoat with a hard tight top coat. Too many furnishings (cocker spaniel style) make a dog with a good front and rear look bad when moving.
21. **Stripping of Coat.** In judging coat, top coat on the back should be hand stripped. Most exhibitors strip the top of the head. Cheeks and the forechest are usually clipped. Shoulders should not be clipped. The clip line usually comes from the rear of the ear down in a straight line to form a "V" with a point at the front of the brisket. Wheatens and silver brindles are best exhibited if stripped all over. Commend exhibitors who do this.

Examination of Movement



22. **Gait of their own.** When a Scottie is coming towards you, you want to see two front feet and a powerful chest but you do not want to see the two back legs at the same time. The gait of a scottish terrier is completely his own. While some all breed authors contend that all the movement of all dogs converge eventually to single tracking, this is not a noteworthy feature of the movement of scottish terriers and should not be emphasized. In fact, the standard emphasizes the uniqueness of a Scottie's movement. Scottish terriers, like the Old English Sheepdog, have a distinctive roll to their

gait. In the case of the Scottie, it is because his front is quite broad and the feet must move out and around the let down front.

23. **Forefeet Movement.** From the rear you want to see the whole back foot come up. You only want to see the back foot. Watch for Scotties who are too close in the rear. Scotties with one or more rear legs turning in or cow hocked are an increasing problem.
24. **Tail carriage.** The tail should be carried erect -- not one o'clock or lower but erect or slightly curved forward. A moderately gay tail carriage is preferable to many breeders than a one o'clock tail. The former denotes the excitement of a Scot with true terrier spirit, the later denotes boredom as well as a low set tail. A judge should never put up to winners a Scottish Terrier with a tail not carried up erectly. Make sure also there is plenty of rear behind the set --on of the tail. A Scottie needs a fanny to pat.
25. **Attitude.** Because Scotties have to show diehard spirit and not come across as wimps, a common complaint of breeders is about the judge who puts up to winners a Scottie with its tail down (Down means lower than 1 o'clock). Do not reward a lack-luster attitude. Remember a Scottie has a heads up, tails up attitude.

26. **Sparring the Scottish Terriers.** Because the temperament of the Scottish Terrier is so important, sparring also becomes important. Sparring allows a judge to evaluate the ability of the Scottish Terrier to stand his ground without being overly aggressive or shy. It is also the best way to evaluate the silhouette of a Scottish Terrier without the handler propping the dog up or holding it together.



To spar Scotties, it is important to remain in control of the dogs AND the handlers. Bring out two but no more than three dogs at a time. Ask the exhibitors to allow their dogs to look at one another -- from a distance -- without being overly aggressive. Do not allow them to get too close or to throw their dogs at one another to get a nonshowing dog up. At the first sign of teeth, ask them to move back. Remember, if something goes wrong, YOU, the judge are at fault as YOU did not control your ring, the handlers or the dogs..

Overall Impression.

Some judges emphasize the head and ignore the front. Others focus on coat but fail to notice if the dog is cow-hocked. Some exclude Scotties with slightly gay tails but fail to fault a long back or coarse head. Lately, judges have been emphasizing depth of brisket but failing to consider parallel head planes, eye shape and color, coat texture or tail carriage. Others emphasize the

front but fail to insure that a Scottie can move. None of these approaches to evaluating a scottish terrier are correct.

**WHAT WE WANT IS A BALANCED SCOTTIE
WITH A HEADS-UP, TAILS UP ATTITUDE
THAT EXEMPLIES BREED TYPE**

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Much of this critique draws from the writings of Mary Darroch, England. The clarification and amplication of the standard prepared by the Scottish Terrier Club of America was also referenced extensively