

The Critique

The critique consists of 3-4 sentences which should give the reader (and owner) a mind's eye picture of the dog you are judging.

The first sentence gives overall impression of size, strength, balance, proportions and type. The second sentence gives description of the head and body, the third how the dog stands and moves coming and going. The last sentence describes the dog in movement.

When these critiques are read relative to the placing of the dogs, ideally one should be able to clearly understand why the dogs have been placed in their relative places. A critique equally gives the reader knowledge of how well the judge knows dogs and construction, as well as occasionally how poorly a judge knows dogs - both in construction and movement!

1. Overall Impression - the order can vary between judges.

Size - small, medium - above and below, the adjective 'well' can further break the groups, Large - indicates standing on the upper limit, and very large (indicates over size).

Strength (and substance) - very strong, strong, medium strong, sufficient and insufficient; Substantial - generally on males with very good strength.

Type - excellent, very good, good, sufficient, insufficient.

Proportions (and balance if very good) - correct, slightly stretched, stretched, long.

Top and underlines - usually only on very good individuals.

2. Head/Body Section - the adjectives correct, excellent, very good, good, sufficient and insufficient can be added to any area - the poorer the dog, the lower down the line one goes for the descriptive adjectives.

Head - masculine, feminine; expression, eye colour (dark, medium, light), strength of top and underjaw - generally only where very good or lacking.

Topline:

Withers - very good, good, normal, level or low.

Back - straight, tight, firm - can be just very good etc. Can be soft, nick behind wither, short, long.

Croup - length and lay. Length - very good, good, long, short. Can be excellent, correct. Lay - correct, very good, good, slightly steep, steep.

Angulation:

Forequarter angulation - shoulders - general comment of forequarter angulation followed by a specific comment on the upper arm (length and lay if needed - usually is!)

Hindquarter angulation - general comment followed by specifics if needed (not often generally).

Chest Proportions

Correct, very good, good, slightly deep etc - can comment on fore and underchest development if needed (either correct, very good, good or lacking).

3. Dog from Front and Rear and Movement

Stands in front - correct, slightly narrow east west etc, - can comment on the rear but generally only if a problem.

Steps front and rear - correct, narrow/close, wide;

Hocks and elbows - firm, slightly loose, "needs to find final firmness.

4. Dog from Side in Movement

Ground covering gait -far reaching, very good, good, restricted etc. Can comment on reach and drive and firmness over the topline.

Summary

It can sound rather complicated but in reality is quite easy, very adaptable to different age groups (less detail for puppies, more depth for adults) and different breeds. The terms regarding size are obviously relative to the desired range for that breed.

Examples

Puppy

Medium size, medium strong puppy of good type and correct proportions. Very good head and expression, good angulations, the upper arm could be longer and better angled. In movement the wither could be held a little higher, good reach, very good drive.

Junior Bitch

Well above medium size, medium strong bitch of very good type and slightly stretched proportions. Very good head and expression, correct dark eye. High withers, firm back, slightly short and steep croup. Very good forequarter angulation where the upper arm while of good length is steep, very good hindquarter angulation, correct chest proportions. Hocks still to find final firmness. During movement shows good ground covering gait with very good reach, firm ligaments over the topline, slightly restricted drive at the fast gait.

Adult Dog

Large, strong, substantial dog of very good type and correct proportions. Strong masculine head, expression slightly marred by a slightly light eye. Good withers, firm back, very good length and lay of croup. Good forequarter angulation, maximum depth of chest, very good hindquarter angulation, praiseworthy breadth of thigh. Steps correct front and rear, firm hocks and elbows. During movement shows good ground covering gait, powerful drive, firm ligaments over the topline, however the reach should be more effective at the fast gait.

A very good dog may have a relatively short critique eg.:

Correct medium size, medium strong, harmonious bitch of very good type and correct proportions. Very good head and expression. Very good top and underlines. Very good fore and hindquarter angulation, correct chest development. Stands and steps correct front and rear. During movement shows balanced far reaching gait transmitted through a firm back.

Critiquing the GSD

By Karen Hedberg BVSc. - Compiled: 2003

