

BRAZILIAN FILA (Fila Brasileiro)

Confederação Brasileira de Cinofilia - CBKC



BRAZILIAN FILA (Fila Brasileiro)

 FCI Group 2 – Pinscher and Schnauzer - Molossoid breeds - Swiss Mountain and Cattle Dogs.

Section 2.1 – Molossoid breeds, Mastiff type.

Without working trial.

Breed number 225.

 Date of publication of the official valid standard: 10/03/2004.

Points discussed

- History and origin.
- Work and character.
- Breed Standard.
- Typical and less typical points.
- Disqualifying points.
- Judging the breed.
- Related breeds.
- Problems to take into account.
- Pictures from typical and less typical dogs and points.

- The Fila Brasileiro is certainly the only breed in the world which name appeared before the breed itself. The name Fila Brasileiro comes from Portugal and is directly linked to loyalty, friendship and dedication to men, immortalized in Portuguese expressions such as "faithful as a Fila", "a real Fila dog", and so on.
- As we can see, the name Fila is linked to the dog's function, not its appearance.. "Cães de Fila": dogs that grab with their mouth, dogs who imobilize their prey.

The history of those dogs in Brazil has begun on the farms located in the countryside, where the Fila had multiple functions. They accompanied cattle herds side by side with herders or "vaqueiros", assisting them in dealing with the cattle on the way from farms to the slaughterhouses in the villages. The dogs were often looking for a stray cow, nibbling their legs to force the animal to return to the herd. If necessary, they captured and held an animal for branding. The dog would hold it by the nostrils forcing the beast to twist the head to one side, until it loses balance and was forced to the ground, waiting for the arrival of the "vaqueiros" to complete the job.

During the slavery period in Brazil, those dogs were constantly chosen by the "capitães do mato" (a kind of foreman) to help them in the pursuit, tracking and capture of fugitive slaves from the farms. Slaves were worth money, and could not be returned to their masters hurt, so it was important that the dog once subduing them, keep that poor people just immobilized and without hurting them, until the arrival of the "capitão do mato".

Nobody knows how to explain why people from the state of Sao Paulo, in the 30's, began to look for a certain type of dogs in the countryside of the State of Minas Gerais. Those dogs were know as "Cabeçudo" (Big Head), and according to their work, received several names such as "Onceiro" (puma hunter), "Boiadeiro" (Herder) and "Atravessado" (Crossed). The "Cabeçudo" was a medium to large dog, powerful and brave, that was used to guard farms and herds. They were also used for hunting deer, paca, tapir and jaguars.

• Many will say that such type of dog existed in many other regions of Brazil, not particularly in Minas Gerais, however, as a fact, it was there that people from Sao Paulo went first to get those dogs, called by themselves Fila dogs. They were the same "Cabeçudos", "Onceiros", "Boiadeiros" and "Atravessados", with multiple phenotypes, depending on their local uses at the places of origin. Therefore, in the early 30's, those dogs from Minas Gerais arrived in Sao Paulo where they were named Fila for the first time.

• Picture: One of the first's Fila's type.



- It's a watch dog. A guardian.
- They are used to herd cattle side by side with herders; often looking for a stray cow, nibbling their legs to force the animal to return to the herd; if necessary, they capture and hold an animal for branding; they are guardians of the owners` properties.
- There is a direct connection between the outlook/ type of the breed and its original work.

- Courage, determination and outstanding braveness are part of its character.
- With its owners and family it is docile, obedient and extremely tolerant with children.
- Its loyalty is proverbial, insistingly seeking the company of its master.
- One of its characteristics is suspicion/ distrust towards strangers.
- It displays a calm disposition, distinctive self-assurance and self-confidence one, remaining undisturbed by strange noises or circumstances.

- An unsurpassed guardian of properties, it also instinctively indulges in big game hunting and cattle herding.
- Apathy and timidity are high disapproved (are considered very serious faults).
- Aggressive or overly shy dogs are extremely disapproved (are considered eliminating faults).

Appointments: The Fila is a corageous, determined and brave dog. It does not hide neither its distrust towards strangers nor its docility, obedience and loyalty to his master and his family. In repose it is calm, noble and full of self assurance. Never displaying a bored or absent expression. When alert, its expression should reflect determination conveyed by a firm, penetrating look. He is extremely tolerant to the household children.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Typically a molossoid breed. Powerful bones, rectangular and compact structure, but harmonious and well proportioned. Displays, together with a massive body, a great amount of concentrated agility which is easily perceived. Bitches must show a well defined feminity which clearly distinguishes them from males.

 Picture: Very typical Fila, with good proportions, powerful bones, rectangular and compact structure.



• Picture: Atypical type.



• Picture: Atypical type.



Picture: Excessively massive and heavy dog.



IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:

The muzzle is slightly shorter than the skull.

The length of the body, measured from the point of the sternum to the point of buttock, is equal to height at the withers plus 10% (picture).



Picture: Disproportional dog; square structure.



BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT: Courage, determination, and outstanding braveness are part of its characteristics. With its owners and family it is docile, obedient and extremely tolerant with children. Its loyalty is proverbial, insistingly seeking the company of its master. One of its characteristics is its aloofness towards strangers. It displays a calm disposition, distinctive self-assurance and self-confidence, remaining unperturbed by strange noises or circumstances. An unsurpassed guardian of properties, it also instinctively indulges in big game hunting and cattle herding.

- Appointments (faults) <u>Behaviour/Temperament</u>:
- Tail carried between the legs.
- Distressed stare.
- Any sign of cowardness
- Negative reaction to shooting.
- Overly nervous.

EXPRESSION: In repose it is calm; noble and full of selfassurance (picture 1). Never displaying a bored or absent expression. When alert, its expression should reflect determination conveyed by a firm, penetrating look (picture 2).





Picture:

- <u>In repose</u>: Calm and secure look.



- Picture:
- In alert: Determination; firm and penetrating look.



- Appointments (faults) <u>Expression</u>:
- Lack of self assurance.
- Nervousness.
- Fear.
- Vacant look.

HEAD: The Fila head is big, heavy and massive (picture 1), always proportionate to the whole body(picture 2). From a top view it resembles a trapezoid figure into which a pear shape is inserted.





CRANIAL REGION:

- <u>Skull</u>: The profile of the skull shows a smooth curve from the stop to the occiput, which is well defined and protuberant specially in puppies. From a front view it is large, broad with the upper line slightly curved. Lateral lines come down almost vertically, in a slight continuous curve narrowing towards the muzzle.
- <u>Stop</u>: From a front view it is practically non existent. The median groove is slight and runs up smoothly to approximately the centre of the skull. Seen from the side, the stop is only slightly pronounced and virtually only formed by the well developed eyebrows.

- Appointments (faults) <u>Head/Skull/Stop</u>:
- <u>Head</u>: Narrow, samll, too big and out of proportion to the whole body.
- <u>Skull</u>: Flat at the top in both front or side views; very high in front and low at the back of the skull, narrow.
- <u>Stop</u>: High (overly pronunciated); absence of wrinkles at the forehead when alert.

Pictures: Excessively heavy heads.







Pictures: Excessively heavy heads; overly broad skulls.





Picture: Straight skull upper line; stop not evident.



Picture: Skull upper line excessively curved; stop overly pronunciated.



Pictures: Atypical heads.





FACIAL REGION:

<u>Nose</u>: Well developed, broad nostrils not occupying entirely the width of the upper jaw. Colour: black.

<u>Muzzle</u>: Strong, broad and deep, always in harmony with the skull. Fairly deep at the root but not deeper than long. Seen from above, it is full under the eyes, slightly narrowing towards the middle of the muzzle and again broadening slightly to the front line. Seen from the side, the muzzle is straight or has a Roman line, but never turned up. The front line of the muzzle is almost perpendicular to the bridge of the nose with a slight depression right under the nose.

- Lips: The upper lip is thick and pendulous and overlaps the lower lip in a perfect curve; thus the lower line of the muzzle is almost parallel to the upper line. The lower lip is tight and firm to the fangs and from there on it is loose with dented borders ending at the corners which are always apparent. The muzzle has a good depth at the root but without surpassing the length. Edges of the lips form a deep inverted "U".
- <u>Teeth/jaws</u>: The teeth are significantly wider than long. Strong and white. Upper incisors are broad at their root and taper to the edge. Canines are powerful, well set and well apart. The ideal bite is a scissor bite but a level bite is acceptable.
Pictures: Correct heads, lips and noses.





- Appointments (faults) <u>Nose/Muzzle/Lips/Teeth/Jaw</u>:
- <u>Nose</u>: Too big; wide; narrow; flesh coloured.
- Muzzle: Short; longer than the skull.
- <u>Lips</u>: Short; long; edges of the lips form a deep inverted "V".
- <u>Dentition/Bite</u>: Lack od any teeth not specially mentioned in the standard; undershot or overshot bites; teeth shown when the mouth is closed.

 Picture: Very long upper lip, connected to the dewloap.



- Eyes: From medium to large size, almond shaped, spaced well apart, medium to deep set. Permissible colours - from dark brown to yellow, always in accordance to the colour of the coat. Due to the loose skin many individuals present drooping lower eyelids which are not considered a fault as such a detail accentuate the melancholic expression which is typical of the breed.
- Ears: Pendant, large, thick, V-shaped. Broad at the base and tapering to the ends. Rounded tips. Attached at the back of the skull, in line with the eyes when in repose. When roused, the ears are above the original position. The root is oblique, with the front edge higher than the back edge. Falling over the cheeks or folded back showing the inside (rose ear).

Pictures: Correct eyes and ears.



- Appointments (faults) <u>Eyes/Ears</u>:
- <u>Eyes</u>: Round; porcelain eyes; overly light in colour; very close or very separated eyes set; bulging eyes.
- <u>Ears</u>: Small; thin; high set even when the dog is in repose; not "V" shaped; signs of surgery.

Pictures: Overly light coloured eyes.



NECK: Extraordinarily strong and muscled giving the impression of a short neck. Slightly curved at the upper side and well detached from the skull. Dewlaps at the throat (pictures).





- Appointments (faults) <u>Neck</u>:
- Thin.
- Long.
- Dry throat (no dewlaps).
- Showing horizontal wrinkles.
- High carriage.

- **BODY**: Strong, broad and deep, covered by thick and loose skin. The thorax is longer than the abdomen.
- <u>Topline</u>: Withers, in sloping line, are set well apart from each other due to the distance between the shoulder blades. Withers are set lower than the croup. After the withers, the upper line changes direction, ascending smoothly to the croup. Back line shows no tendency to sway or roach back. Loin/Flanks: Shorter and not so deep as the thorax, showing distinctly the separation of the two component parts. In females the lower part of the flank is more developed. Seen from above, the loin is narrower than the thorax and croup but should not form a waistline.

<u>Croup</u>: Broad, long, sloping at angle of approximately 30 degrees to the horizontal and ending in a smooth curve. The croup is set a little higher than the withers. From a back view, the croup is ample almost as wide as the chest and can be even broader for females.

<u>Chest</u>: Well sprung ribs though not interfering with the position of shoulder. Deep and broad chest reaching to the level of the elbows. Well pronounced brisket.
<u>Lower line</u>: A long chest and parallel to the ground in all its extension. Slightly tucked up but never whippety.

• Appointments <u>Body</u>: The croup, seen from behind, must be large, wide, well muscled and the thigh also well muscled and defined by it, with legs in line with the thighs. The ribs should have a good and yet smooth springing, constant since the set of the rib to the spine. The ribs cannot give the impression of a barrel, or be straight leading the thorax to be away from the shoulders (narrow), resulting in toes pointing outwards. If the ribcage is too sprung, the chest will not be at the elbow level, lacking depth to the body.

 Picture: Correct body, topline, loin/ flanks, lower line and croup.



 Picture: Correct body, topline, loin/ flanks, chest, lower line and croup.



- Appointments (faults) <u>Body</u>:
- <u>Thorax</u>: narrow; overly wide; square; barrel-shaped; short.
- <u>Top line</u>: straight, sway or roach backs; withers higher than the croup.
- <u>Loin/flanks</u>: without distinguishing points between them; narrow; tucked up; long.

Picture: Incorrect (level) topline.



- Appointments (faults) <u>Body</u>:
- <u>Croup</u>: flat, lower than the withers, narrow; too high in relation to the withers leading to a sway back.
- <u>Chest</u>: narrow, not deep; flat forechest at the shoulder level.
- <u>Bottom line</u>: short sternum; tucked up; loose and low.

Picture: Very high croup and incorrect topline.



TAIL: Very wide at the root, medium set, tapering rapidly to reach the hocks (pictures). When the dog is alert, the tail is raised high and the curve at the extremity is more accentuated. Should not be carried curled over the back nor touch it.





- Appointments (faults) <u>Tail</u>:
- High or low set.
- Short.
- Any signs of surgery.
- Thin.
- Shorter than the level of the hocks.
- Curled.
- Carried over the back.

• Picture: Curled tail.



LIMBS

- FOREQUARTERS: The length of the leg, from the ground to the elbow, should be half of the height from the ground to the withers.
- Shoulder: The shoulder structure should be composed by two bones of equal length (scapula and humerus); the former at 45 degrees to the horizontal and the latter 90 degrees to the scapula. The scapla-humerus articulation forms the point of shoulder which is situated at the same level but slightly behind the point of sternum. In the ideal position, the point of shoulder should be half way from elbow to withers. An imaginary perpendicular line coming down from the withers should cut the elbow and reach the foot.

Forearm: The limbs must be parallel. Strong and straight bones.

Carpal joint (wrist): Strong and apparent.

Metacarpus (pastern): Short, slightly sloping.

<u>Feet</u>: Strong and well arched toes not too close together. The dog stands on thick toes and pads which are long, broad and deep. In the correct position, the feet should point forward. Strong, dark nails; white nails permissible when the corresponding toes are white.

Pictures: Correct forequarters.





- Appointments (faults) <u>Forequarters</u>:
- Flat withers; high withers.
- Loose elbows.
- Tip of the toes not pointing straight to the front.
- Misformation of the feet pad.
- Toes too high or too open.
- Cat feet or hare feet

 Pictures: Incorrect forequarters (feet not pointing straight to the front).





<u>HINDQUARTERS</u>: Less heavy boned than forelegs but never appearing thin compared to the overall build. Hindlegs are parallel.

<u>Upper thigh</u>: Broad with curved outline shaped by strong muscles coming from the ilium and ischium which design the curve of the buttocks and for this reason the ischium must have a good length.

Tarsus (hock): Strong.

<u>Metatarsus (Rear pastern)</u>: Slightly sloping, longer than the metacarpus. Moderately angled stifle and hock.

<u>Feet</u>: A little more oval than the forefeet but the otherwise identical. Should not present dewclaws.

Pictures: Correct hindquarters.







- Appointments (faults) <u>Hindquarters</u>:
- Lack of angulation.
- Cow hocks.
- Barrel legs.
- Toes and knees pointing outwards or inwards.
- Toes too high or too open.
- Cat feet or hare feet.

Pitures: Lack of angulation of the hindquarters.





Cow hocks.

 Picture: Overly heavy dog; disproportion between forequarters and hindquarters.



Picture: Overly tall dog.



GAIT/MOVEMENT: Long and elastic feline-like strides whose principal characteristic is the pace; a two beat lateral gait in which the legs of each side move back and forth exactly as a pair ("camel's pace" or amble) causing a rolling or rocking motion of the thorax and hips accentuated by the tail when carried erect. When walking, it carries the head lower than the back line. The trot is smooth, free and effortless with a long, powerful and reaching stride. The gallop is powerful, attaining unsuspected speed for such a large and heavy dog. Due to its articulations, typical of molossoids, the Fila's movements not only give the impression but actually allow him to make sudden and rapid changes of direction.

 Appointments <u>Movement</u> (Pace): Movement may seem a little awkward but it is not. The typical movement is the camel's pace or ambler, where there should be a swing at the sides of the thorax, croup and tail. The steps are flowing and long striding ones. The head, while moving, can be carried at the level or slightly below the topline.

Video: Correct camel's pace movement.



 Appointments <u>Movement</u> (Trot): It is the result of the body structure. If the body fits the demands of the standard, angulations and sizes, the trot will be typical for the breed. The effective trot is the one that enables the dog to cover groung with a minimum effort, with long, smooth and balanced strides.
Video: Correct trot movement.



- Appointments (faults) <u>Movement</u>:
- <u>Pace</u>: No swing/ roll; not using the legs of the same side at the same time; crossing over in the front and rear legs; short stepped.
- <u>Trot</u>: Heavy: No swing; raising the limbs high from the ground; no ground cover; no direction.

SKIN: One of the most important breed characteristics is the thick, loose skin over the whole body, chiefly at the neck forming pronounced dewlaps and many times it can extend to the brisket and abdomen (picture 1*). Some individuals present a fold at the sides of the head, also at the withers running down to the shoulders (picture 2^{*}). If the dog is in repose, the head should be free from wrinkles (picture 1*). When alert, the dog raises its ears and the contraction of the skin on the skull forms small longitudinal wrinkles between the ears (picture 2*).

* = next slide.





Picture 1.

Picture 2.

- Appointments (faults) <u>Skin</u>:
- Lack of loose skin (when stretched).
- Thin skin.
- Dry throat (no dewlaps).
- Wrinkles on the forehead and skull (when the dog is in repose).
- Horizontal ou transversal folds of skin.

<u>COAT</u>

HAIR: Short, smooth, dense and close to the body.

<u>COLOUR</u>: Any solid colours are permitted except the disqualifying ones. Brindles with a solid coat and more or less dark stripes. A black mask may or may not be present. In all permitted colours white marks are allowed on the feet, chest and tip of tail. White markings on other parts of the coat are considered a fault.

- Appointments (faults) <u>Size/Weight</u>:
- Long coat.
- Partial absence/ loss of hair.
- <u>Not permited colours</u>: White; mouse-grey; carrying small or large marks; black and tan; blue

SIZE AND WEIGHT:

Height at withers:

Males: from 65 cm (25.6 ins) to 75 cm (29.5 ins) at the shoulder.

Bitches: from 60 cm (23.6 ins) to 70 cm (27.5 ins) at the shoulder.

Weight:

Males: minimum: 50 kgs (100 pounds). Bitches: minimum: 40 kgs (80 pounds).

- Appointments (faults) <u>Size/Weight</u>:
- Height at the withers over or under the size of the standard.
- Over and under weight dogs.

Serious faults

- Short muzzle.
- Small ears.
- Highly set ears.
- Excessively light coloured eyes.
- Wrinkles when the dog is in repose.
- Undershot bite.
- Double chin (folds in front of dewlap).

Serious faults

- Sway back.
- Very narrow croup.
- Curled tail carried over the back.
- Chest insufficiently deep.
- Pronounced deviation of pastern or rear pastern.
- Over angulated hindquarters (sickle hocks).
- Short steps (poor reach).

Very serious faults

- Apathy and timidity.
- Square build.
- Small head.
- Pronounced stop seen from the front.
- Short upper lip.
- Protruding eyes. Round eyes. Lack of pigmentation on eyelids.
- Lack of 2 teeth except PM1 (first premolars).
- Lack of dewlaps.

Very serious faults

- Roach back or level back.
- Excessive tuckup.
- Light bones. Lack of substance.
- Cow hocks.
- Lack of angulation at the hindquarters (straight hocks).
- White markings exceeding 1/4th (one fourth) of the body.
- Height exceeding the maximum.

Disqualifying points

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Flesh-coloured nose.
- Overshot bite.
- Undershot bite with teeth visible when the mouth is closed.
- Lack of 1 canine or 1 molar except the 3rd one.
- Wall eyes.
- Cropped ears or docked tail.
- Croup lower than the withers.

Disqualifying points

- Dog not walking at camel's pace.
- Skin not loose and supple.
- All dogs which are white, mouse-grey, carrying small or large marks; black and tan, blue.
- Height inferior to the minimum.
- Cryptorchids or monorchids, use of artificial methods to produce certain effects, albinism, lack of type.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.

The major faults that the judges have to be aware of

- Atypical type; square build; dogs not well proportioned.
- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Atypical head; too long head/ overly weight head; pronounced stop; short muzzle; very long upper lip, connected to the dewloap; incorrect edges of the lips (forming a inverted "V" but not the correct deep inverted "U"); excessive long ears; cropped ears.
- Dog not walking at camel's pace; short pace; jumpy movement.

The major faults that the judges have to be aware of

- Pigeon chest; overly wide thorax/ barrel thorax; level topline; croup set bellow or at line from the withers; croup much higher than the withers; different wide between the croup and the chest; desproportionated hindquarters and forequarters; docked tail.
- Skin not loose and supple; excessive skin.
- Long hair; incorrect colour.
- Overly small and/or height dogs; "short legs"; dogs with excessive mass and/or very weight.

- Appointments:
- There should no be excessive loose skin, and the exageration must be penalized. The skin should not form neither horizontal folds or wrinkles on the neck area, nor, being in repose, on the forehead.

Appointments:

The height at the croup should be slightly over the height at the withers, that is, two horizontal and parallel lines that pass in the top of each one are very close to each other; the dog should not have the croup much higher than the withers.

- Appointments:
- Movement is the key to find out a real balanced dog, and a Fila must be moved in a loose lead. Certain characteristics must be shown while in movement: long stretching feline-like steps, (camel's pace), with the head at the same level or slightly below the top line.

Appointments (important general faults):

Cowardness; croup lower than the withers; roach back; sway back; round eyes; signs of surgery on ears and tail; very distinguished stop; white areas on the coat more than ¼ of the body; very narrow croup; lack of chest depth; narrow skull; small ears; high set ears; short muzzle; short upper lips; light bones; square structure; small legs; in repose, presence of wrinkles on the head; lack of body substance; heavy movement; over or under the standard height; absence of loose skin.

Related breeds

Breeds that have been used to develop the breed:

- Bulldog, Bloodhound and English Mastiff.



Related breeds

- Breeds to which it is closely related:
- Bloodhound.
- Bullmastiff.
- Cane Corso.
- Coohound.
- English Mastiff.
- Mastino Napolitano.

Problems to take into account

- Health problems:
- Cancer.
- Dilated cardiomyopathy.
- Ectropion.
- Gastric dilation and/or torsion.

Problems to take into account

- Behaviour problems:
- Apathy ou timidity dogs.
- Overly aggressive dogs.
- Overly shy dogs.

Problems to take into account

- Movement and other problems:
- Dog not walking at camel's pace; Short pace; Jumpy movement.
- Physical and health problems.

PICTURES

Typical dogs and points

Correct type







Harmonious and well proportioned structure



Harmonious and well proportioned structure



Correct rectangular structure



Correct rectangular structure



Correct heads (lateral and frontal view)



Correct heads, lips, eyes and ears





Correct heads, lips, eyes and ears


Correct head, chest and forequarters



Correct forequarters and topline



Correct chest and forequarters



Correct chest and forequarters



Correct chest and forequarters





Correct hindquarters and topline



Correct hindquarters and tail















PICTURES

Atypical dogs and points

Atypical type







Disproportional dog and incorrect build (square structure)



Incorrect heads





Incorrect heads





Incorrect heads





Atypical heads





Atypical heads





Atypical head and incorrect upper lip



Excessively massive and heavy dog



Excessively massive and heavy dog



Excessively massive and heavy dog



Overly tall dog



Overly height dog



Head disproportionate (too heavy) to the body and incorrect (level) topline



Very high croup and incorrect topline



Overly heavy dog and with disproportion between forequarters and hindquarters



Incorrect forequarters (lateralized feet)





Incorrect hindquarters (lack of angulation)





Atypical type and coat colour



Presentation developer / collaborators

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Elaborated by the Technical Committee

