



**Fédération
Cynologique
Internationale**

For Dogs Worldwide



FCI MODEL FOR

ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION OF THE BORDER COLLIE

(FCI General Committee, Helsinki, October 2013)

Breed by Breed Education

(FCI Show Judges Commission, Cartagena, February 2013)

THE BORDER COLLIE

- ← *FCI Group 1: Sheepdogs and Cattle Dogs
(except Swiss Cattle Dogs)*
- ← *Section 1: Sheepdogs*
- ← *Breed number: 297*
- ← *Date of publication of the official valid
standard: 24/06/1997*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Premier Club

The FCI Breed Standard is based on the original Breed Standard for the Border Collie as defined the “***The Royal Kennel Club***” of Great Britain

This illustrated and expanded Breed Standard version has been prepared by “***The Border Collie Club of Great Britain***” for the FCI in September 2025.

THE BORDER COLLIE

Illustrated Breed Standard presented by

“The Border Collie Club of Great Britain – The Premier Club”



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DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMER'S DOG (BORDER COLLIE) – CANIS CONTRIBUTORS



European
Wolf

Roman
Herding
Dog

Alt Duetscher
Kuli

Spitz

Artic Wolf



Working Collie
Farmers Dog



Modern Border Collie

BREED ORIGINS



History – Great Britain

- ❑ Sheepdogs and sheep brought to Britain by the Romans !
- ❑ Sheepdogs became a necessity as the sheep industry grew – particularly in the Scottish Border regions where the breed was refined.
- ❑ In the early years, the breed has been known as the Working Collie, Old-Fashioned Collie, Farm Collie, Farmer's Dog, Shepherd's Dog and English Collie.
- ❑ 1918 - James Reid, Secretary of the International Sheep Dog Society in Great Britain, first called the dog a Border Collie.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE “BORDER COLLIE” SHEEPDOG



Selection Pressures

- ✓ “Eye” seen as an advantage since dogs having “eye” can better control stock.
- ✓ Early principle for breeding: *“Let the hills prove the dog”*.
- ✓ Herding trials further refined the breed.
- ✓ Establishment of the International Sheepdog Society (ISDS) in 1906.



“Adam Telfers Haig” Winner of International, Ayr 1921. Bred by Mr. Reid, Airdrie.

IMPORTANT EARLY ANCESTORS

Old Hemp (1893-1901)

Often described as the “Father of the Breed”, a black and white, powerful dog bred by Adam Telfer. Practically all present-day Border Collies trace their ancestry back to Old Hemp.



Old Kep (1901) – son of Old Hemp. Remarkable dog with a tremendous eye.



Wartime Cap (1937) – Bred by JM Wilson; Mated 112 bitches.



Wiston Cap (1963) – Wiston Cap became the most ‘used’ dog in the breed’s history and therefore made a huge impact. Prick ears, a variety of coat colours, good temperament, excellent working style are all thought to go back to Cap.

BREED DEVELOPMENT

(IN THE UK CONFORMATION RING)

Sh. Ch. Tilehouse Cassius of Beagold

- Cassius was the first Male Border Collie Champion in the Breed in the UK (1982)*



Sh. Ch. Muirend Border Dream

- Dream was the first Bitch Border Collie Champion in the Breed in the UK (1982)*

BREED DEVELOPMENT

(IN THE UK CONFORMATION RING)

NZ Ch. & UK Show
Ch. Clan-Abby Blue
Aberdoone

- *“Blue” was one of the first imports from New Zealand in the early 1990’s and was the first Border Collie to win the Working Group in the UK*
- *An influential stud dog, including being the sire of a Crufts RBIS winner, as well as influencing many lines across Europe.*



BREED DEVELOPMENT

(IN THE UK CONFORMATION RING)

Aust. Ch. & BIS,
BISS, UK Show
Danari De Beers
Sh. CEx.

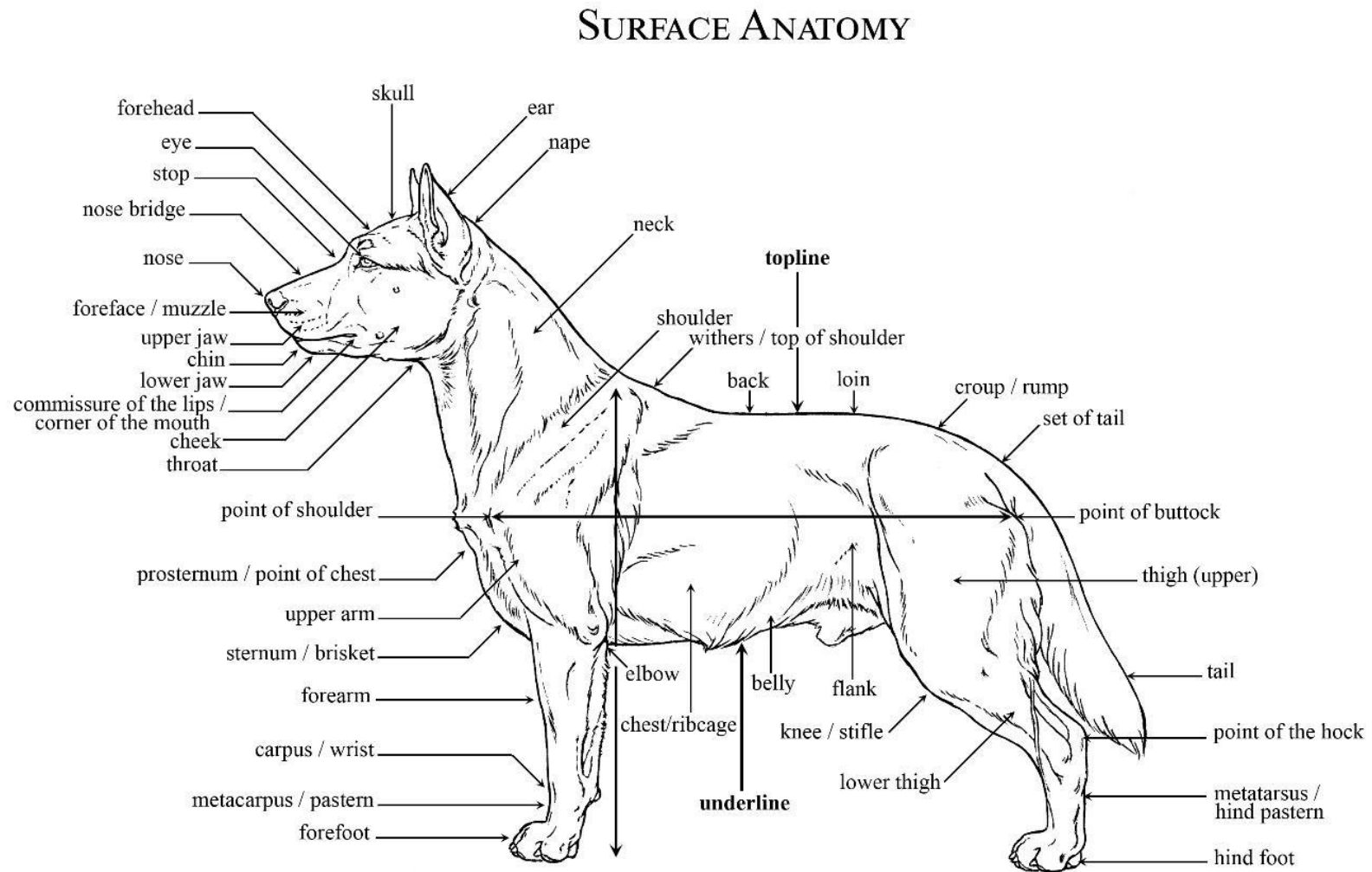
- *“Sylvester” is the only imported Border Collie to ever win BIS at an All-Breeds Championship Show in the UK (in 2011)*
- *A hugely influential show dog, in terms of breed profile in the show ring and an influential sire with Champion offspring in multiple countries*



FCI BREED STANDARD # 297

- **GENERAL APPEARANCE:** Well proportioned, smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to give impression of endurance. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness undesirable.
- **IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:** Skull and foreface approximately equal in length. Body slightly longer than height at shoulder.
- **BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT:** Tenacious, hardworking, of great tractability. Keen, alert, responsive and intelligent. Neither nervous nor aggressive.
- **HEAD - CRANIAL REGION:** Skull. Fairly broad, occiput not pronounced. Stop. Very distinct.
- **HEAD - FACIAL REGION:** Nose. Black, except in brown or chocolate colour when it may be brown. In blues nose should be slate colour. Nostrils well developed. Muzzle, Tapering to nose, moderately short and strong. Jaws / Teeth. Strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Cheeks. Not full or rounded.
- **EYES:** Set wide apart, oval shaped, of moderate size, brown in colour except in merles where one or both or part of one or both may be blue. Expression mild, keen, alert and intelligent.
- **EARS:** Medium sized and texture, well set apart. Carried erect or semi-erect and sensitive in use.
- **NECK:** Of good length, strong and muscular, slightly arched and broadening to shoulders.
- **BODY:** Athletic in appearance. Slightly longer than height at withers. Loins. Deep and muscular but not tucked up. Chest. Deep and rather broad, ribs well sprung.
- **TAIL:** Moderately long, the bone reaching at least to hock, set on low, well-furnished and with an upward swirl towards the end, completing graceful contour and balance of dog. Tail may be raised in excitement, never carried over back.
- **LIMBS - FOREQUARTERS:** Front legs parallel when viewed from front. Bone strong, but not heavy. Shoulder. Well laid back. Elbow. Close to body. Metacarpus (Pastern). Slightly sloping when viewed from side. Forefeet: Oval, pads deep, strong and sound, toes arched and close together. Nails short and strong.
- **LIMBS - HINDQUARTERS:** Broad, muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to set on of tail. Thigh. Long, deep and muscular. Stifle. Well turned. Hock Joint. Strong, well let down. Metacarpus (Rear Pastern). From hock to ground, hindlegs well boned and parallel when viewed from rear. Hind feet. Oval, pads deep, strong and sound, toes arched and close together. Nails short and strong.
- **GAIT/MOVEMENT:** Free, smooth and tireless, with minimum lift of feet, conveying impression of ability to move with great stealth and speed.
- **COAT – Hair:** Two varieties: Moderately long or Smooth. In both, topcoat dense and medium textured, undercoat soft and dense giving good weather resistance. In the moderately long-coated variety, abundant coat forms mane, breeching and brush. On face, ears, forelegs (except for feather), hindlegs from hock to ground, hair should be short and smooth. Colour: Variety of colours permissible. White should never predominate.
- **SIZE AND WEIGHT:** Ideal height at withers: Males 53cms (21ins); Females slightly less.
- **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 **and on its ability to perform its traditional work.**
- **DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:** Aggressive or overly shy. Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- **N.B.:** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation, should be used for breeding.

SURFACE ANATOMY



GENERAL APPEARANCE

- *Well proportioned, smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to give impression of endurance. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness undesirable.*



GENERAL APPEARANCE

- Well proportioned, smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to give impression of endurance. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness undesirable.*



IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- *Skull and foreface approximately equal in length.*



- *Body slightly longer than height at shoulder*



BEHAVIOUR & TEMPERAMENT

BEHAVIOUR:

- *Tenacious, hardworking, of great tractability.*



TEMPERAMENT:

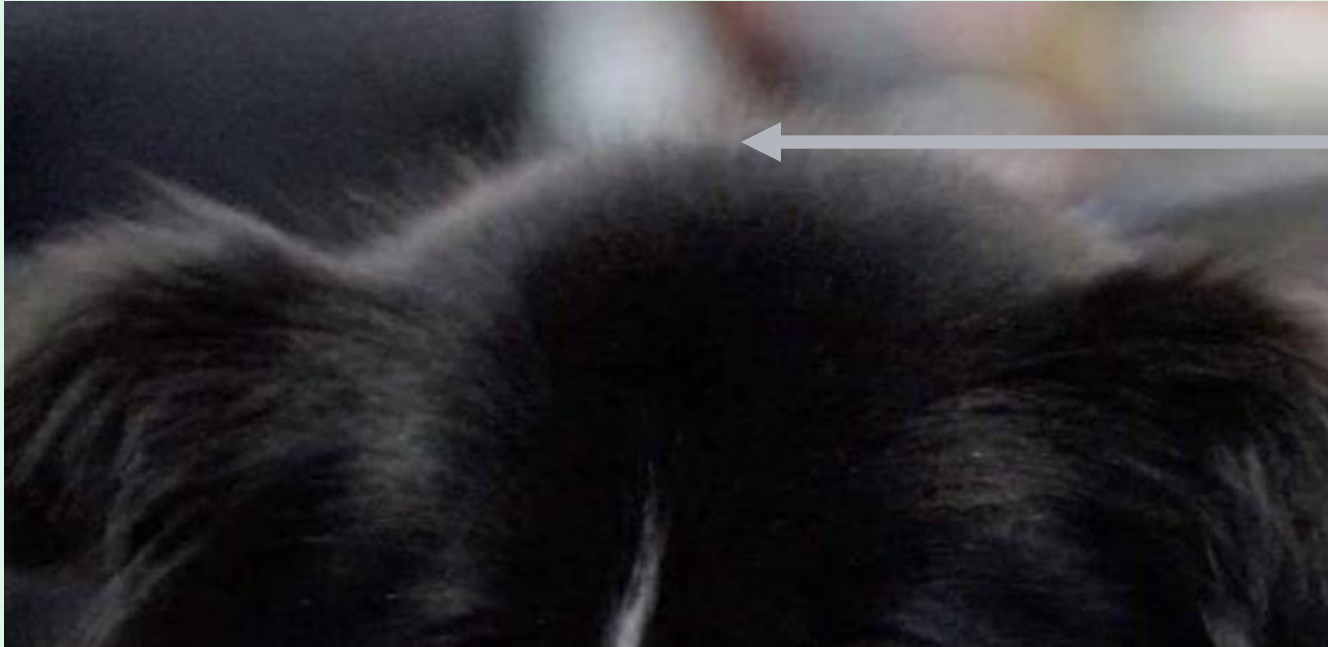
- *Keen, alert, responsive and intelligent. Neither nervous nor aggressive.*

HEAD : CRANIAL REGION

- Skull.
 - Fairly broad, occiput not pronounced.
- Stop.
 - Very distinct.



HEAD : CRANIAL REGION



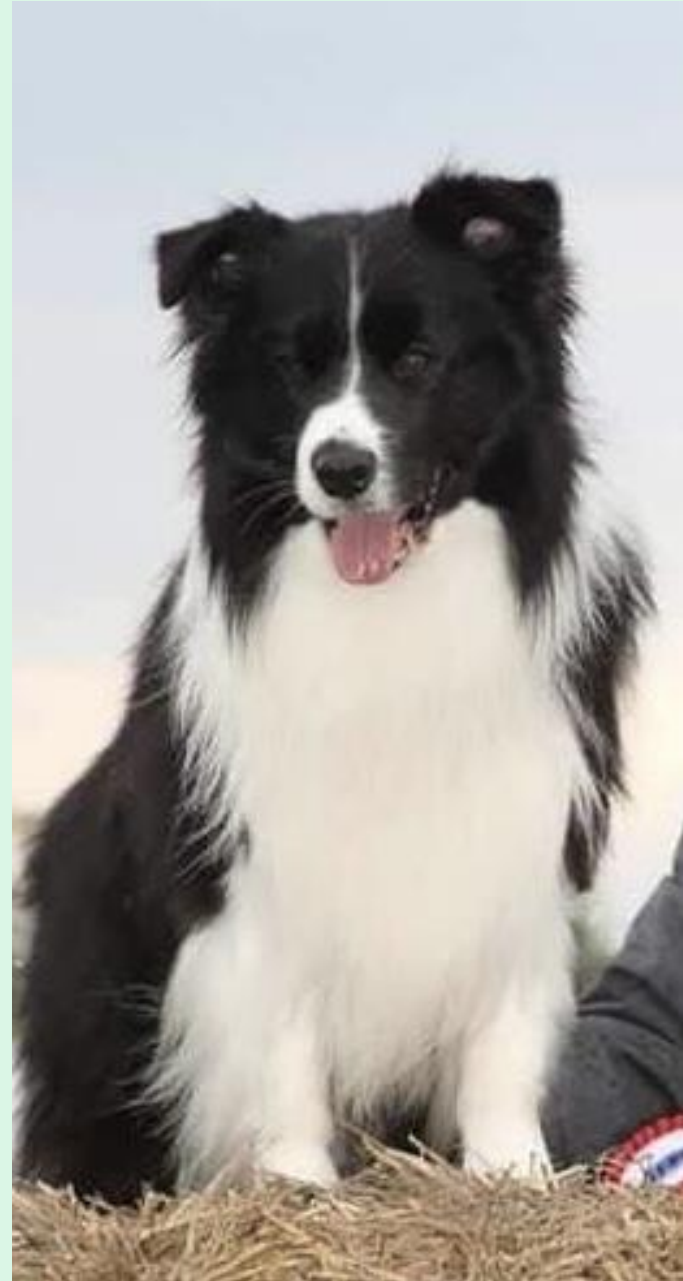
- *Apple Domed Skull*
(Not Desirable)



- *Long Back Skull*
and Ears set very low
Gives a "Snipey" unbalanced
head shape (not breed typical)

HEAD : FACIAL REGION

- Nose, Black, except in brown or chocolate colour when it may be brown.
- In Blues, nose should be slate colour.
- Nostrils well developed.
- Muzzle, tapering to nose, moderately short and strong.



HEAD : FACIAL REGION



- *Same attributes as the Male head in the previous slide, but should not be “doggy” in anyway at all*
- *Conversely a Bitches head should not in any way be “Snipey” which would give more of an impression of a Rough Collie head !*

HEAD : FACIAL REGION



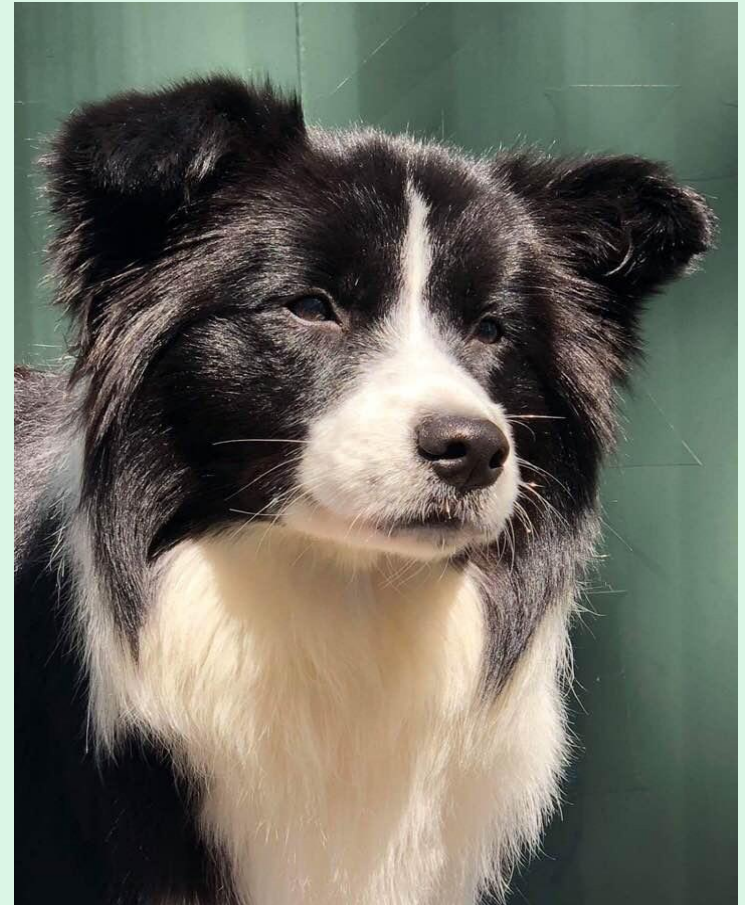
- Jaws / Teeth, strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws
- Cheeks not full or rounded.
- [Complete dentition is preferred. Missing molars or pre-molars are faults,* as is an undershot or overshot bite].



* But a missing pre-molar must be considered against the overall qualities of the dog !!

EYES AND EARS

- *EYES: Set wide apart, oval shaped, of moderate size, brown* in colour except in merles where one or both or part of one or both may be blue. Expression mild, keen, alert and intelligent.*
- *[Shade of Brown Eye not specified]*



- *EARS: Medium sized and texture, well set apart. Carried erect or semi-erect and sensitive in use.*

EYES

- *A Lighter Brown Eye Colour to tone with the coat colour is acceptable*



- Very round Eye is a fault to be penalised
- Light brown colour gives a less desirable expression and should affect the dogs grading

EYES

- *Blue Eyes are acceptable in a Blue Merle ... But in this example the eye is round which is not correct*



Both Eyes should be Brown – except in a Merle. One Blue Eye is a fault in a Black and White dog

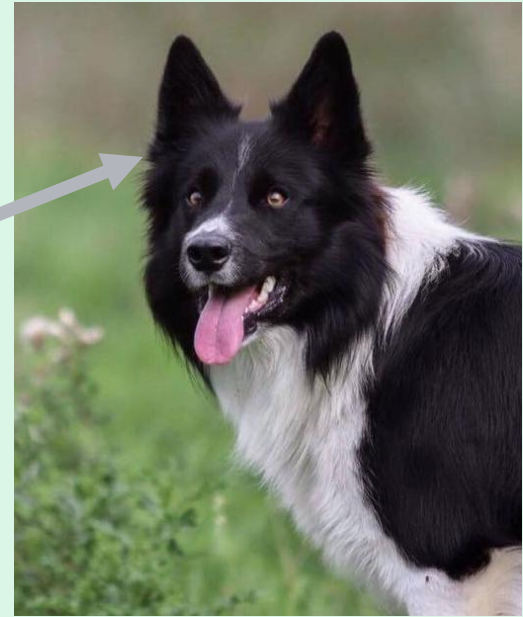
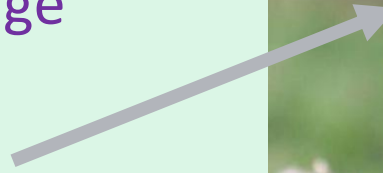
EARS



Ears too large



Ears too close
(narrow top
skull)



*Ears: Various
Combinations of
Ears that can be
seen in the breed*



EARS

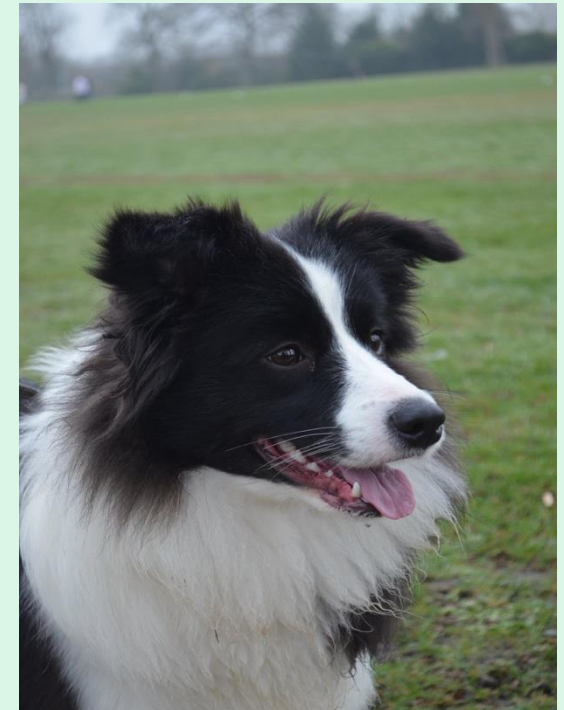
Ears are heavy and set low



Pricked Ears are acceptable



Well placed Up and Tipped Ears



One Ear Pricked and the other tipped is acceptable and should not be penalised



NECK

- Of good length, strong and muscular, slightly arched and broadening to shoulders.*



Desirable



Less Desirable



BODY



- *Athletic in appearance. Slightly longer than height at withers.*
 - *Loins, deep and muscular but not tucked up.*
 - *Chest, deep and rather broad, ribs well sprung.*



TAIL

- *Moderately long, the bone reaching at least to hock, set on low, well-furnished and with an upward swirl towards the end, completing graceful contour and balance of dog.*



- ✗ *Tail may be raised in excitement, never carried over back.*



LIMBS: FOREQUARTERS

- *Front legs parallel when viewed from front.*
- *Bone strong, but not heavy.*



LIMBS: FOREQUARTERS



- Shoulder, well laid back,
- Elbow, close to body.
- Metacarpus (Pastern), slightly sloping when viewed from side.

LIMBS: FOREQUARTERS

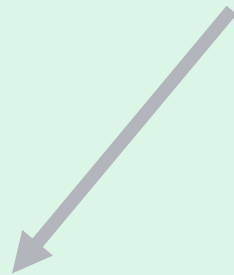


- *Forefeet - Oval, pads deep, strong and sound, toes arched and close together. Nails, short and strong.*

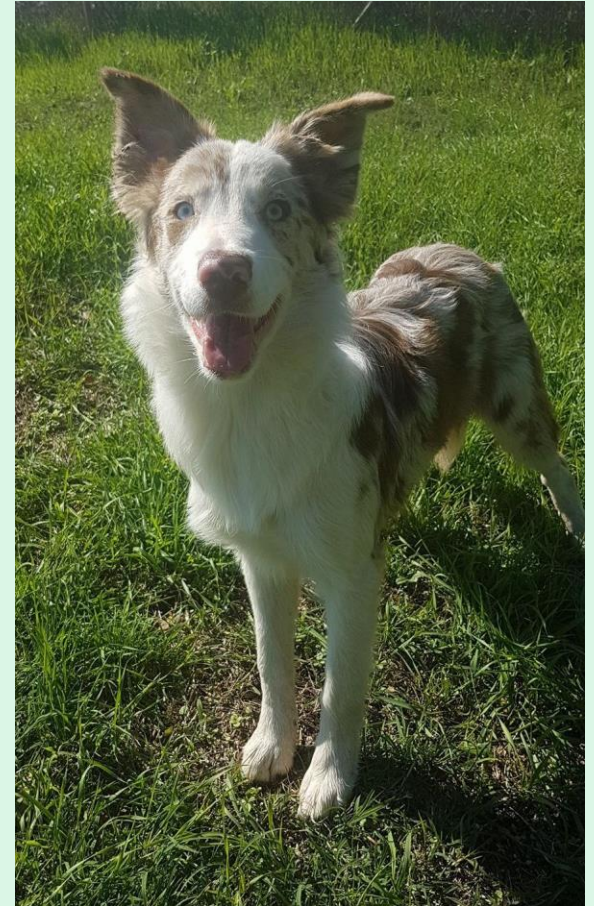
LIMBS: FOREQUARTERS



*Poor front:
Front legs not
parallel*



*Poor front: —————→
Legs parallel, but
narrow in Chest*



LIMBS: HINDQUARTERS



- *Broad, muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to set on of tail.*
- *Thigh, long, deep and muscular*
- *Stifle, well turned*
- *Hock Joint, Strong, well let down*



LIMBS: HINDQUARTERS

- Metatarsus (Rear Pastern)
 - From hock to ground, hindlegs well boned and parallel when viewed from rear
- Hind feet
 - Oval, pads deep, strong and sound, toes arched and close together.
 - Nails short and strong.



GAIT / MOVEMENT

- *Free, smooth and tireless, with minimum lift of feet, conveying impression of ability to move with great stealth and speed.*



*[Note...The Breed Standard does not say anything about topline,
but a level topline on the move is desirable.
A dog with a roached back or dippy topline is unlikely to be constructed correctly]*

GAIT / MOVEMENT

- A well-balanced dog will have synchronisation of front and rear drive on the move
 - ❖ *Note a dog with incorrect front with correct rear, or vice versa will always look unbalanced.*



GAIT / MOVEMENT



- *Free, smooth and tireless, with minimum lift of feet, conveying impression of ability to move with great stealth and speed.*
- *[Note the Head position !]*

Use this web address to see this dog working at the English National Sheepdog Trials in 2025
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Bh8CjD3-jU>

COAT

Hair: Two varieties; Moderately Long or Smooth.

In both topcoat dense and medium textured, undercoat soft and dense giving good weather resistance. In moderately long coated variety, abundant coat forms mane, breeching and brush. On face, ears, forelegs (except for feather), hind legs from hock to ground, hair should be short and smooth.

Moderately long



Smooth



COAT

- Colour
 - *Variety of colours permissible.*
 - *White should never predominate.*



Blue and
White



Black and
White



Red and
White

COAT

- Colour

Tri Colour
(Black, White
And Tan)



“EE”
Red



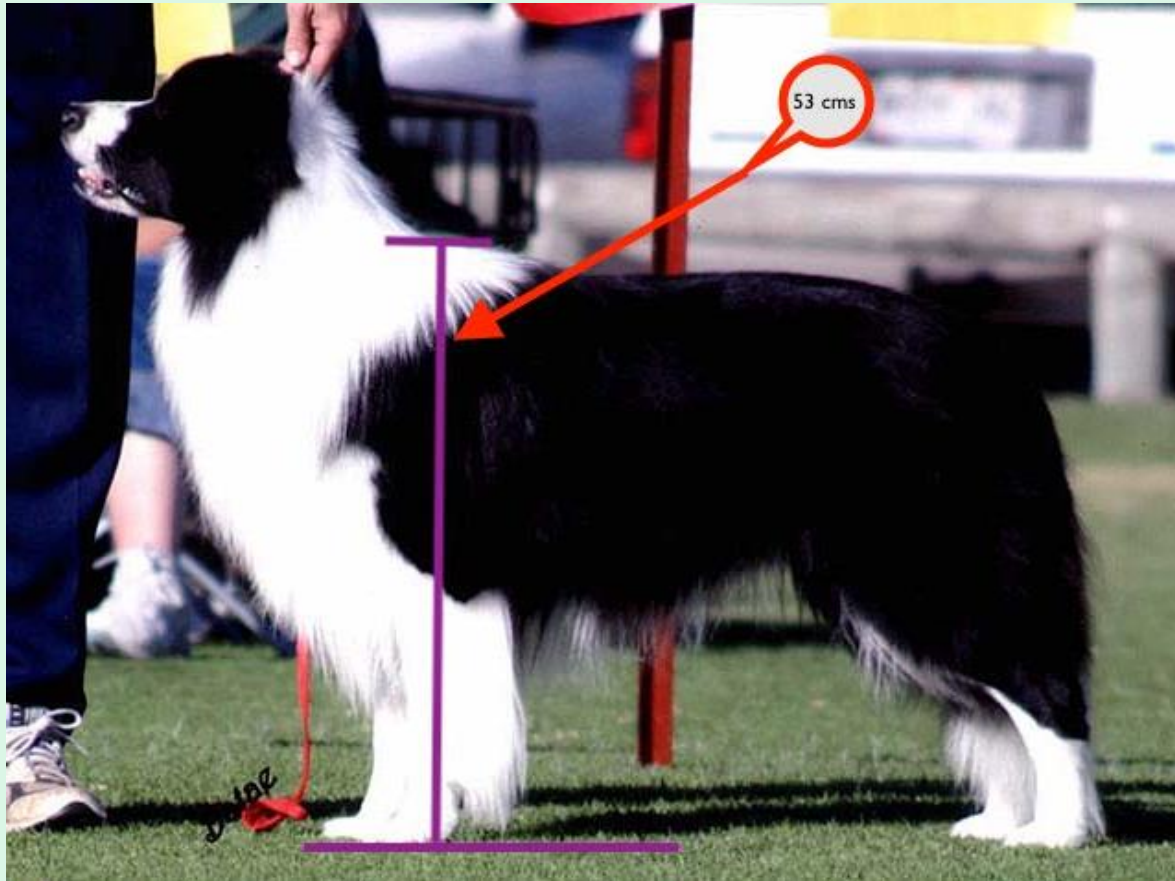
Red
Merle



Blue
Merle



SIZE AND WEIGHT



- Ideal height at withers:
 - ✓ Males 53cms (21ins).
 - ✓ Females slightly less.
- *What does “slightly” mean ? Although not in the Breed Standard I would suggest that about 5cms (2ins) less is probably about right.*
- *Preferred weight is not specified*