FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)
SECRETARIAT GENERAL: 13, Place Albert 1er B – 6530 Thuin (Belgique)

06.06.2025/ EN

FCI-Standard N° 146

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

ORIGIN: Southern Africa
Standard Supplied by the Kennel Union of Southern Africa and the Zimbabwe Kennel Club.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VALID STANDARD: 15.05.2025.

UTILIZATION: The Rhodesian Ridgeback is still used to hunt game in many parts of the world, but is especially prized as watch-dog and family pet.

FCI-CLASSIFICATION: Group 6 Scenthounds and related Breeds.
Section 3 Related breeds.
Without working trial.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY: The Rhodesian Ridgeback is presently the only registered breed indigenous to southern Africa. Its forbears can be traced to the Cape Colony of southern Africa where they crossed with the early pioneers' dogs and the semi domesticated, ridged, Hottentot hunting dogs. Hunting mainly in groups of two or three, the original function of the Rhodesian Ridgeback, or Lion Dog, was to track game, especially lion, and with great agility, keep it at bay until the arrival of the hunter. The original standard, which was drafted by F.R.Barnes, in Bulawayo, Rhodesia, in 1922, was based on that of the Dalmatian and was approved by the South African Kennel Union in 1926.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The Rhodesian Ridgeback should represent a well balanced, strong, muscular, agile and active dog, symmetrical in outline, and capable of great endurance with a fair amount of speed. The emphasis is on agility, elegance and soundness with no tendency towards massiveness. The peculiarity of the breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge is the escutcheon of the breed. The ridge must be clearly defined, symmetrical and tapering towards the haunch.

It must start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to the hip (haunches) bones. The ridge must contain only two crowns, identical and opposite each other. The lower edges of the crowns must not extend further down the ridge than one third of its length. A good average width of the ridge is 5cm.

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT: Dignified, intelligent, aloof with strangers, but showing no aggression or shyness.

HEAD

CRANIAL REGION:
Skull: Should be of a fair length (width of head between ears, distance from occiput to stop, stop to end of nose, should be equal), flat and broad between the ears; the head should be free from wrinkles when in repose.
Stop: The stop should be reasonably well-defined and not in one straight line from the nose to the occipital bone.

FACIAL REGION:
Nose: The nose should be black or brown. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown nose by amber eyes.
Muzzle: The muzzle should be long, deep and powerful.
Lips: The lips should be clean, closely fitting the jaws.
Jaws/Teeth: Jaws strong, with a perfect and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. The teeth must be well-developed, especially the canines or holders.
Cheeks: Cheeks should be clean.

EYES: Should be moderately well apart, round, bright and sparkling, with intelligent expression, their colour harmonising with the colour of the coat.

EARS: Should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at base, and gradually tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head.

NECK: Should be fairly long, strong and free from throatiness.

BODY
Back: Powerful.
Loin: Strong, muscular and slightly arched.
Chest: Should not be too wide but very deep and capacious; brisket should reach to the elbow. Forechest should be visible when viewed from the side. Ribs moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel-hoops.

TAIL: Should be strong at the root and gradually tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should be of moderate length. It should not be inserted too high nor too low, and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS:
General appearance: The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong and well boned, with the elbows close to the body. When viewed from the side, the forelegs should be wider than when viewed from the front.
Shoulder: The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular.
Metacarpus (pastern): should be strong with slight spring.
Forefeet: The feet should be compact and round, with well arched toes and tough elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads.

HINDQUARTERS:
General appearance: In the hind legs the muscles should be clean and well defined.
Stifle (knee): Good turn of stifle.
Hock joint: Strong, well let down.
Hind feet: The feet should be compact and round, with well arched toes and tough elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads.

GAIT / MOVEMENT: Straight forward, free and active.

COAT

Hair: Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance, but neither woolly nor silky.

Colour: Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes is permissible, but excessive white hairs here, on belly, or above toes are undesirable. A dark muzzle and ears permissible. Excessive black hairs throughout the coat are highly undesirable.

SIZE AND WEIGHT:

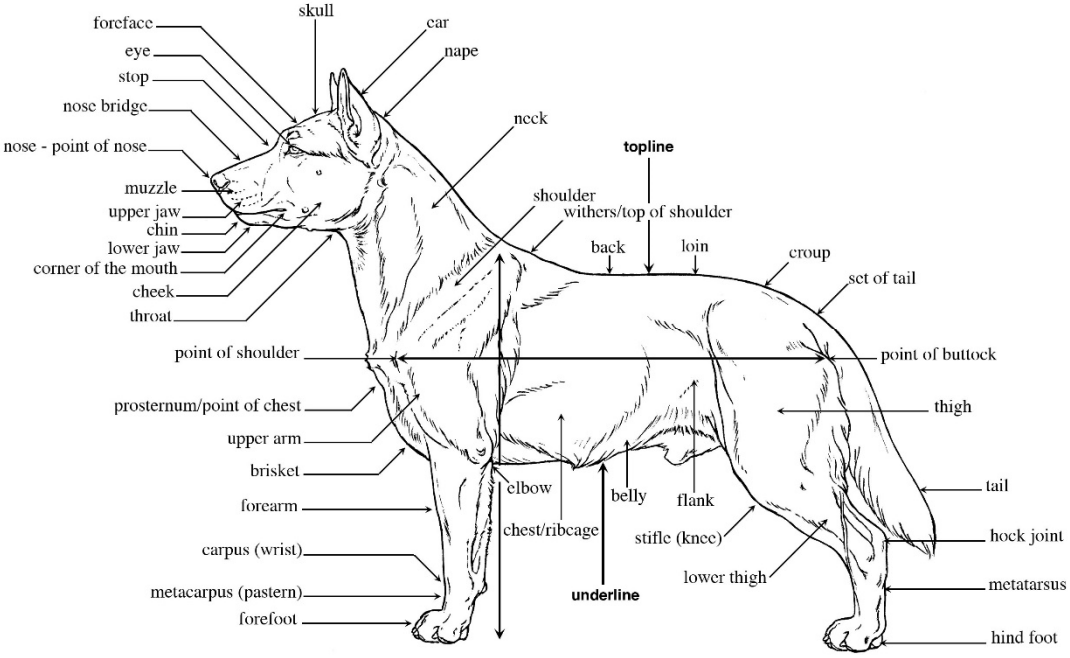
Height at the withers:	Males:	63 cm to 69 cm
	Females:	61cm to 66 cm
Weight:	Males:	36,5 kg
	Females:	32 kg

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 its ability to perform its traditional work**.

- **Incorrect crowns on ridge.**

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:
- Aggressive or overly shy dogs
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- **Dogs without ridge.**

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.

The latest amendments are in bold characters.

ANATOMICAL FEATURES