

THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG

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Many of us became interested in the German Shepherd Dog as youngsters watching RinTinTin jump from 50 foot cliffs, scale 6 foot walls and protect his owner from a pack of wolves or a 12 foot bear. The German Shepherd Dog is a multifaceted animal capable of performing many different tasks.

Captain Von Stephanitz molded the amorphous mass of herding dogs into the beautiful and useful German Shepherd Dog. He was the father of the service dog. The breed was developed into a working dog and used for police work.

- a. Beauty-would it aid or hinder the dog in it's work efficiency
- b. Utility and intelligence are the bywords-Utility is the true criterion of beauty

The breed registry was started in 1899.

German Shepherd Dog Club of America-1st Specialty in was held in 1915.

The German Shepherd is used for many different duties, sheep herding, personal protection, guiding the blind, search and rescue, drug and bomb detection, police work, personal companions and wonderful family pets. German Shepherd Dogs participate willingly in many of the performance activities that are available today: Obedience, Agility, Working Dog Sport, Rally, Tracking etc. Breeding stock is evaluated in performance events so that the traits of intelligence and reliability can be taken into account.

The breed standard says "The first impression of a good German Shepherd Dog is that of a strong agile, well muscled animal, alert and full of life. It is well balanced, with harmonious development of the forequarter and hindquarter." The German Shepherd Dog should be approachable, showing confidence and will to meet overtures.

A sound **temperament** is the most important trait of a German Shepherd Dog. Without it the dog would be useless to perform all of the functions that are expected of it.

The **HEAD** should be cleanly chiseled, strong without coarseness-distinctly masculine or distinctly feminine. The expression is lively/composed/intelligent and noble. EARS-parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground.

The **NECK**- should be strong and muscular (to grip sheep, protect from predators, assist in law enforcement etc.)

BODY-withers are higher than and sloping into a level strongly developed back. Transmission of the powerful hind quarter to the fore assembly of the dog can only be accomplished over long periods of time when the back is relatively short and well developed. (Many of the tasks that the dogs are asked to perform are done with continuous trotting for many hours at a time.) The Body is solid without bulkiness. The German Shepherd Dog is an athlete, correct feet, balanced construction and soundness of movement coming, going and from the side of the utmost importance.

The STANDARD for the German Shepherd Dog is very definitive in the listing of faults and how to assess them when evaluating our breed.

Disqualifications: Cropped or hanging ears, dogs with noses not predominately black, undershot jaw, docked tail, white dogs. any dog that attempts to bite the judge.

Very Serious Faults: Deficiencies of character, i.e. shyness, tail-tucking, nervousness, timidity. Faults of gait, whether from front, rear or side (coming and going)

Serious Faults: Any missing teeth other than first premolars, pale or washed out colors, blue or liver

Faults: unlevel topline(withers lower than hip), crabwise locomotion, with dog's body sideways out of normal straight line, coat problems(short, silky, long coat, wooly, curly or open coat), overshot jaw or level bite, undue length between the last rib and the thigh, tail hooked to the side , to the extent it mars general appearance.

When evaluating an animal proper emphasis should always be placed on the total animal but it is important to understand how much emphasis should be placed on certain problems. As breeders, owners, handlers and judges, the preservation of our breed is in our hands. We are the artists who mold and develop these animals. Haphazard breeding and judging can seriously affect the future of the German Shepherd Dog.

Website for the German Shepherd Dog www.gsdca.org