

UK Gordon Standard

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

"Stylish dog, with galloping lines, consistent with its build which can be compared to a weight carrying hunter. Symmetrical in conformation throughout."

"Stylish dog"

The first word of the Gordon Setter standard says a great deal. Webster's defines style as "Mode or manner which is deemed elegant or in accord with a standard..." and again "The quality which gives distinctive excellence to artistic expression..."

"Consistent with its build which can be compared to a weight carrying hunter."

The reference in the standard to a horse, in this case a weight carrying hunter, is particularly apt with regards to the Gordon Setter.

There is little difference in the height of the racing thoroughbred (the Irish Setter?) and the weight-carrying hunter - itself usually a thoroughbred - the difference lies in the substance of the animal. The weight-carrying hunter must be able to go all day carrying a heavy rider. He is therefore capacious in chest and lung room, strong and well muscled in loin, solidly boned legs and most important he should also apply to the Gordon Setter.

"Symmetrical in conformation throughout."

The previous standard added more detail to this, thus, "showing true balance. Strong fairly short and level back. Shortish tail. Head fairly long." Symmetry in conformation is essential. The dog must show "true balance". Trueness is the correct formation and angles of the frame. The frame of a dog should be true. The limbs must be vertical uprights in support, when viewed from the front, or rear. The movement should also show a trueness of direction, and limbs must not have any deviation in construction that will interfere with this true locomotion.

Balance and symmetry also demand that all parts of the dog should fit together harmoniously. The head should not be too heavy for the body - the neck should have the length to carry the head in a noble and aristocratic way, the front end should match the back in strength and substance, angles and lengths of limbs should compare with each other. The total dog should consist of qualities that blend so that they belong to the whole. It should never look as though one part could belong to another animal.

The symmetry and balance are of course applicable to the mature Gordon. It should be noted that the Gordon is a very slow maturing dog and therefore young Gordons up to the age of two to three years may not have achieved their final balance. It is common for young Gordons to grow unevenly so that the legs may be out of balance with the body. This should be borne in mind when assessing young dogs.

CHARACTERISTICS:

"Intelligent, able and dignified"

Do not forget that the Gordon was developed as a working gundog. He has to use his nose, brains, and common sense. He has to have the "intelligence" to recognise and obey commands of all kinds. His intelligence is one of the assets that make him an endearing companion. The Gordon's intelligence makes him a good obedience dog and there have been many with obedience titles.

The "ableness" required encompasses his sensing ability and physical build for his work. This, of course, requires him to be a sound dog. Therefore soundness is one of the basis on which a judge must assess his worth.

The Gordon is "dignified" with a quiet and reserved demeanor. These are qualities, which distinguish him from the other setters. He does not go willingly to every stranger, and may appear quite aloof in the ring. This however does not suggest that he should back off, or show shyness.

COLOUR:

"Deep shining coal black, without rustiness, with markings of chestnut red, i.e. lustrous tan."

Dead hair which has not been groomed out properly and which is dry in texture will give a rusty appearance. The tan markings should be a lustrous rich chestnut red, reminiscent of the colour of a ripe horse chestnut. Tan that is too pale and straw coloured should be penalised.

The Gordon Setter is a black and tan dog and the standard is very detailed regarding the markings.

"Black pencilling on toes and black streak under jaw permissible. "Tan markings": two clear spots over eyes not over 2cm (3/4in) in diameter; on sides of muzzle (tan not reaching above base of nose), resembling a stripe around clearly defined end of muzzle from one side to other; on throat;

The tan should come along each side of the muzzle and along the front of the muzzle under the nose and be clearly defined. It should not come above the base of the nose. The tan extends from under the jaw to about half way down

the length of the neck. The standard does not mention that most Gordons have a "dew drop" or a tan spot between the neck and eye which is partly concealed by the overlapping of the black hair. Tan hair may also be found on the inside of the ears. Puppies very often have tan across the end of the nose that should later, with maturity, disappear. The tan markings of some Gordons darken or blacken as they grow older, most noticeably on the sides of the muzzle.

"Two large, clear spots on chest;"

There should be two large clear and distinct spots on either side of the chest which are not joined. Sometimes the longer black hair of the chest coat obscures the tan spots.

"on inside hind legs and inside thighs, showing down front of stifle and broadening out to outside of hind legs from hock to toes; on forelegs, up to elbows behind, and to knees or little above, in front; around vent. Very small white spot on chest permissible. No other colour permissible."

White hair is sometimes found in the tan around the vent and is a minor fault. The black hair should be free of any tan hairs and likewise the tan should be free of black hair except as allowed in the standard, the seriousness of the fault is relative to the degree of the mismarking. The clearer the colour and the markings the better.

However, it should be stated that an excellent specimen should not be discarded should the colour not be quite as required - other points must also be considered when making a judgement and these may be of more importance than colour.

COAT:

"On head, front of legs, tips of ears short and fine, moderate length, flat and free from curl or wave on all other parts of body. Feather on upper portion of ears long and silky, on backs of legs long, fine, flat and straight; fringes on belly may extend to chest and throat. As free as possible from curl or wave."

"On head, front of legs, tips of ears short and fine, moderate length, flat and free from curl or wave on all other parts of body."

A slight wave in the coat is characteristic of many Gordon Setters and is generally considered acceptable, unless it is excessively wavy or curly.

"Feather on upper portion of ears long and silky, on backs of legs long, fine, flat and straight; fringes on belly may extend to chest and throat."

Most adult Gordons will have fringing on the chest but may have the throat fringe trimmed for showing. The fringing should be of only moderate length so as not to interfere with the dog's working ability.

"As free as possible from curl or wave" refers to the feathering and fringing.

The texture of the coat should not be harsh or coarse or so fine as to be wispy.

Many Gordons take 3-4 years to develop the heavier coat of the mature Gordon. Young dogs will therefore often not have much coat and should not be penalised for it.

SIZE:

"Height: Dogs 66 cms (26 ins); Bitches 62 cms (24 1/2 ins)."

Although weight is not specified, the Gordon is a substantial dog for his height. His weight should come from muscle and bone, not excessive body fat.

Whilst extremes of height should be penalised, slight variations are not a major fault. Type, balance and soundness are more important.

NOTE: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

MOVEMENT - GAIT

"Steady, free moving and true, plenty of drive."

The Gordon Setter has a characteristic sound balanced gait usually seen in an anatomically correct dog. The hindquarters are the driving force, requiring a combination of muscles in the pelvis and upper thighs, assisted by the lower thighs and short rear pasterns. The forequarters give the required forward reach and the front legs pull the ground in under the dog. When moving the topline should be firm and level giving a picture of free flowing effortless movement.

"Steady", firm, stable, temperate, industrious, reliable. Creates a picture of a purposeful, active individual, not rushing, but always working.

"Free moving", uninhibited, easy, elastic, strong, untiring movement. A free moving dog moves without restraint or restriction, which allows the dog to cover the ground well in an effortless manner.

"True" movement requires that the dog's front legs and rear legs move in straight lines following each other (not pacing). The dog will tend to centre track as the speed increases. The twisting of joints should not hamper the gait, or inward or outward turned bone structure, all of which consume energy, causing the dog to tire quickly, and increase wear and tear in the joints.

"Plenty of drive"

Driving hindquarters propel the dog forward. A short stepping or up and down movement is incorrect. A long strong thrusting movement is what is required. This drive is essential in a dog working all day over uneven terrain.

The Gordon Setter in the field has a questing gait, not moving in a straight line, but hunting back and forth across a field. The young Gordon requires understanding a quite often they appear ungainly in the ring with their instinctive questing movement.

TEMPERAMENT:

"Bold, outgoing, of a kindly even disposition"

"Bold" and "outgoing" are qualities, which are best in evidence when working in the field. Here the Gordon should be alert and ready for action, and persistent even when the terrain is adverse.

A "kindly even disposition" is expected and is very obvious in the way he works in the field and by the loyalty and devotion he gives to his "family".

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."

The present standard does not specify any particular faults other than as stated above. When assessing a Gordon it should be recognised that a fault that affects a dog's ability to do the work for which it was developed, or affects the health or well-being of the dog should be viewed more seriously than faults which have only regard to the aesthetic qualities of the dog.

Summing up:

1. Colour - a black and tan dog.
2. Size - medium height with substance.
3. Total head - fairly long, skull deep, chiseled, noble.
4. Neck - long, arched.
5. Shoulders - long well laid back, flat. Upper arm well back under body. Together giving front vertical balance.
6. Chest - depth to elbow, with rib spring and ribbed well back.
7. Ribs - well sprung, back ribs deep.
8. Total body - of moderate length, not square or short, or too long.
9. Hindquarters - muscular, strong, with well-bent stifles, short hocks. Pelvis tending horizontal.
10. Tail - short, carried out.