

## **Does Your Bedlington Measure Up?**

Our parent club regularly obtains and publishes critiques from Judges that officiate at our Specialty Shows. The feedback has been very encouraging lately, with the few negatives addressing issues of dogs not measuring up to the breed standard specifics, especially in regard to height and ears.

There are no disqualifications in the approved Bedlington Terrier breed standard. This does not mean, however, that breeders should take great liberties with the specifications outlined in the standard, both literal and relative. To do so can create a generic dog, even in a breed like ours that is so distinctive.

As in most Terrier breeds, the head has great importance. In standards of the past and overseas, which offered point values for the features, the Bedlington's head accounted for 40% to 45% of the dog in many cases (both past AKC Standards as well as The Kennel Club). We do not have point values in today's standard, but it puts the importance of the head in perspective. The first measurement is relative: Head: "shorter in skull and longer in jaw" with no specification of relative proportions. The standard specifies that the eyes should be "small". Ears: "Point of greatest width approximately 3 inches. Ear tips reach the corner of the mouth". Some breed specialists have been observed pulling the ears under the chin to see if the tips meet. This is a quick and easy way to confirm that the ears are proper, as touching the corner of the mouth can sometimes cause squirming and struggling. A narrow, short ear or an overly heavy ear can ruin the whole head and harmony of the dog.

In addressing the body, the standard states: "body slightly greater in length than height." The American Kennel Club measurement instruction for all breeds' bodies is to measure from the point of shoulder (manubrium where the scapula and humerus meet) to the point of buttock or rump (ischium). Note that the relative measurement is described as slightly, but a deviation back to square or cobby which is desirable in many Terrier breeds, would be most objectionable. Many give the bitches a little more leeway in body length.

The significant measurement relative to legs is: "Hocks strong and well let down" meaning that the distance between the stifle and the tarsus should be longer in proportion to the distance between the tarsus and the metatarsus. High hocks seriously affect the balance of the dog's outline, not to mention movement.

The measurement of coat length is all too often overlooked by Judges and exhibitors. Our standard is specific and emphatic on the subject. Coat: "When in show trim must not exceed 1 inch on body; hair on legs is slightly longer". A Bedlington with leg furnishings flopping in the breeze is an incorrect presentation which should be penalized. The only aspect of the Bedlington standard that is described as a serious fault is a dog's deviation from the height preferences. Height: "The preferred Bedlington Terrier dog measures 16 ½ inches at the withers, the bitch 15 ½ inches. Under 16 inches or over 17 ½ inches for dogs and under 15 inches or over 16 ½ inches for bitches are serious faults. Only where comparative superiority of a specimen outside these ranges clearly justifies it, should greater latitude be taken". We should consider function as well, since Bedlingtons are eligible to compete in earth dog trials. A reasonable person may consider deviation on the small side to be a bit more tolerable. Our Specialists all seem to mention that our dogs are getting too big.

Weight: "to be in proportion to height within the range of 17 to 23 pounds" which brings us to the central issue of balance. Does your Bedlington measure up? If he does, his balance and proportions will be pleasing and he will be well on his way to possessing very desirable breed type.

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