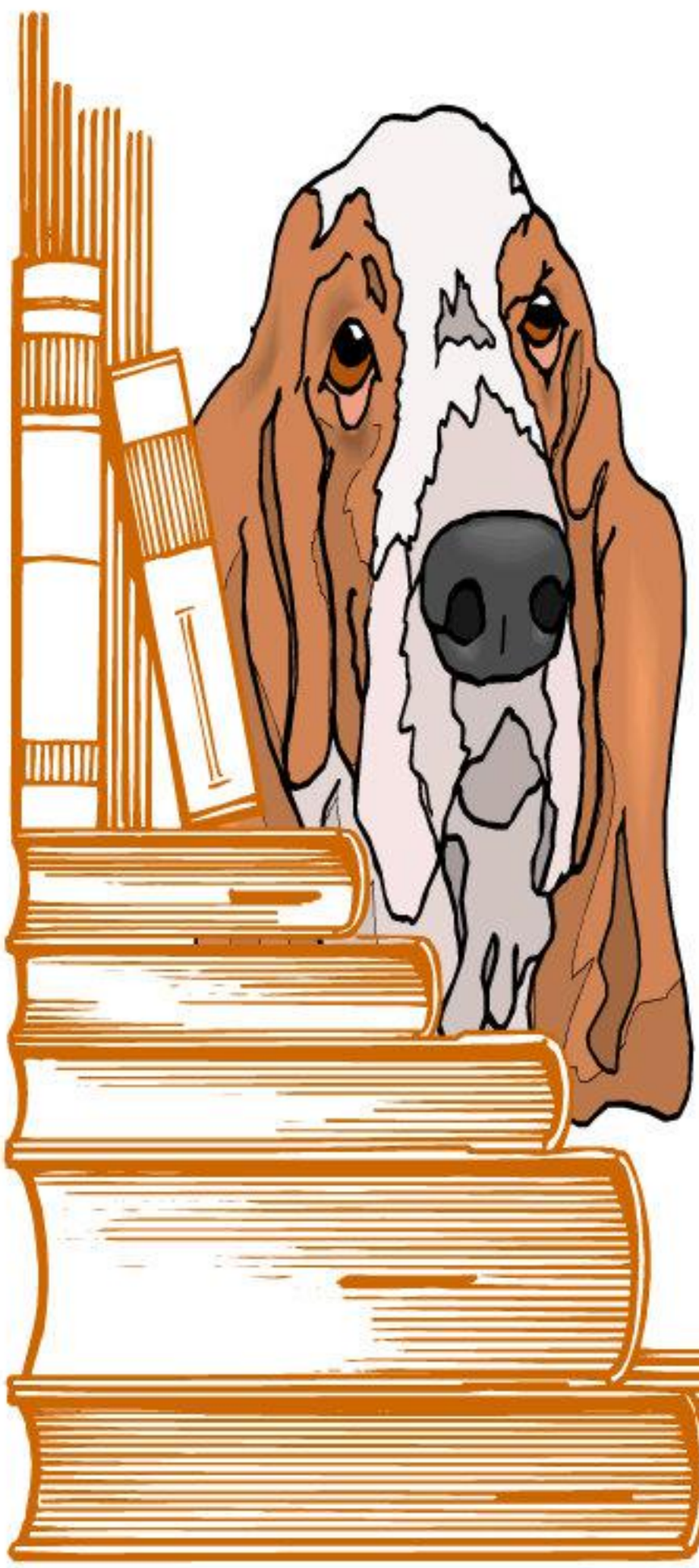
Basset Hound University

"Preserving Our Past and Educating Our Future"



Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature

Important Articles for Breeders, Judges and Handlers

Workbook Course #104

A Publication of the Basset Hound Club of America, Inc

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following members of the Basset Hound Cub of America for their generous contribution to this publication: Claire "Kitty" Steidel, Chairman, 2005-06 BHCA Judges' Education Committee, Claudia Waller Orlandi, PhD, Thad and Carol Makowski, Dawn Towne, Prof. Douglas Taylor and Mark and Sandi Chryssanthis.

What is Course #104:

Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature?

Basset Hound University ***Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature*** **(Course #104)** is designed around a series of educational articles that discuss the Basset Hound. These articles have been written by breeders, judges and canine experts and provide critical insights into understanding and evaluating the Basset Hound. The accompanying workbook exercises are based on these articles and will help you learn the important information discussed by the various authors. This course is recommended for all **breeders**, **judges** and **handlers** of Basset Hounds.

Copyright © 2006 Basset Hound Club of America, Inc.

Above drawing from the Basset Hound Illustrated Standard

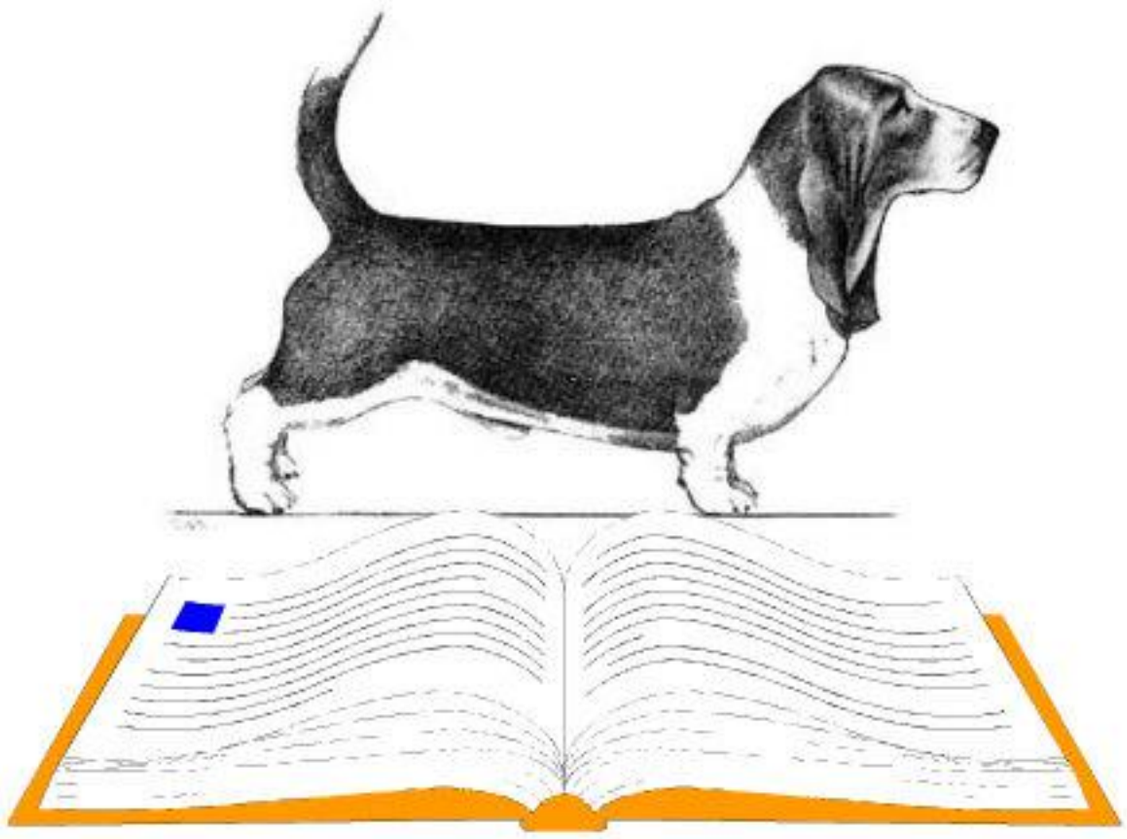
Print Code #104/9.10.06 Flipbook 2 20 2015

Basset Hound University

Course #104:

Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature

Workbook Program



The following course is designed to familiarize you with some of the most important articles written on the Basset Hound.

The articles included in this course will help deepen your knowledge of the Basset Hound breed.

A series of true and false questions have been prepared for each article and are grouped together by article at the end of the workbook. Questions should be answered based on the information in that particular article.

Above drawing from the Basset Hound Illustrated Standard

Course #104: *Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature*

Articles Included in the Survey of Basset Hound Breed Literature Course

1. Dr Leonard Skolnick: ***A Look At The Basset***
2. Dr Robert Cole: ***You Be The Judge – The Basset Hound***
3. Charles Leach: ***Perspective On A Basset***
4. Claire "Kitty" Steidel: ***Recognizing Type, Balance and Soundness in the Basset Hound***
5. Andrea Field: ***What Every Perspective Basset Hound Judge Should Know***
6. Margaret S Walton: ***Judging The Basset Hound***
7. Col Robert Booth: ***Let's Talk Basset Hound Breed Type***
8. Dawn Towne: ***Type – The Ultimate Goal***
9. Skolnick, Nelson and Scholz: ***The Basset Hound Front***
10. Col Robert Booth: ***Let's Talk Basset Hound Fronts***
11. Pat Fellman Gellerman: ***Understanding Shoulders and Upper Arms***
12. Michael Sosne: ***"Deliberate" Movement in the Basset Hound***
13. Brenda Jubin: ***Rib Cages In The Basset Hound***
14. Douglas Taylor: ***So What Is Any Recognized Color In The Basset Hound?***
15. Joan Urban: ***The Basset Hound: A"Different Sort of Dog"***

Article 1: A Look at the Basset
By Dr. Leonard Skolnick

From the purchase of his first Basset Hound until his death, Leonard Skolnick both appreciated and insisted upon a functional hound in the conformation ring. The following analysis of the breed in terms of its function was originally prepared for a Judges' Seminar. It is something from which we can all learn. It has a timeless quality that makes it one of the classics in the breed literature.

"The basset hound possesses in marked degree those characteristics which equip it admirably to follow a trail over and through difficult terrain." The first line of the Basset standard characterizes the Basset as a hunting hound of sound structure and running gear, capable of tireless, agile pursuit and great endurance. Although the Basset is a long, low, massive dog with short, heavily-boned legs and paws, he is also agile and sturdy but slim enough to endure. In the show ring, observation of the gait, therefore, is the surest and best way to evaluate the Basset. There is frequent opinion that because the Basset has an unusual proportion he can be allowed unusual guidelines for his movement. On the contrary, his heavy structure requires excellent movement and the expected features of the movement are not far different from any other hunting dog built for endurance.

ASPECTS OF GAIT

Balance: Stride and reach should be the same both front and rear. For example, it is more preferable to have inadequate angulation at both front quarter and hindquarter so that movement is balanced rather than having superior angulation in front and lack proper angulation behind.

Effortlessness: Balance, coupled with correct structure, produces a very evident feature of movement, [which is] effortlessness, [and] can be thought of as "moving on wheels." The topline appears to stand still with no movement either up and down or side to side when the dog is gaited at any speed.

Reach: In keeping with the need for strength and endurance with good shoulder layback and angulation and balanced angulation behind, proper gait requires a long stride or reach. When the dog is viewed in profile movement, this long reach should be balanced equally in the front and the rear. The front legs should move forward of the lowest point (when legs are perpendicular to the ground) and back from the lowest point an equal amount. A stride which

reaches only forward reveals a short upper arm. A stride of inadequate reach reveals a steep shoulder in front and/or inadequate angulation behind.

Moving away, going: The rear feet should follow in a straight line parallel to one another and perpendicular to the floor. As the dog increases his speed it is desirable for the rear legs to angle slightly inward toward the longitudinal center of the body. The hocks should be true, however, and either cowhocks or bowed legs behind are considered serious faults. Moreover, the rear legs should not move close behind. In viewing the dog's movement in going away, careful attention should be addressed to the serious fault of loose shoulders or turned out elbows in the front. Steep shoulders and a hackney gait often present an apparently pleasing gait when viewed from the front, but concomitant faults such as turned out elbows are usually evident when viewed going away.

Moving toward, coming: The crook of the front leg follows the curve of the ribs so that the wrists are closer than the elbows. The proper positioning gives support in motion. (Forelegs moving outside the body instead of under it cannot give support.) If the wrists are further out or if the rib cage is barrel shaped rather than oval, the displacement of support of the front legs results in a rolling gait with obvious effort and in extreme cases the feet may actually point inward, which is a serious fault. The aspect of movement is somewhat unusual in that the feet should be inclined outward to approximately the width of the elbows. A very exaggerated crook (fiddle front) or too straight a leg are both serious faults.

The observation of gait is the most important step in evaluating the structure of the Basset. The structure may, however, also be evaluated for placement and proportions in static balance or "posed." It should always be remembered, however, that skillful handling can disguise much in "posing" that cannot be disguised in gaiting.

FRONT QUARTER

The shoulders are well muscled with good layback (45 degrees desirable). The shoulder blade (scapula) is long and slopes obliquely forward forming a right angle with the upper arm (humerus), which is almost as long as the scapula. The forearm (radius and ulna) is short compared to other breeds and is moderately crook'd. The wrist (carpals and metacarpals) is comparatively straight and is covered with skin that is wrinkled, terminating in a well-rounded, massive paw (lower metacarpals and phalanges), which is inclined outward.

Viewed from the front, the crook of the legs follows the curve of the ribs to

the lower portion of the forearm, the wrist and feet closer together than the elbow, but not close enough to form a fiddle front. The crook of the legs should be moderate and even on both sides, and the feet inclined outward to the width of the shoulders at most. An exaggerated crook with too much turn of foot or too straight a leg are equally undesirable. The legs should be strong and heavily boned with no indication of knuckling or weakness in pasterns. Weakness in pastern is a very serious fault, and knuckling is a disqualification.

The toes (phalanges) are neither separated nor spayed, but should form a compact, short paw, with the toes of sufficient length to cover the heavy pads underneath. The dog should stand well up on his feet and the feet should be firmly supported by a heavy heel pad and toes.

The shoulder blades stand close at the withers and slope obliquely outward providing a clean, smooth appearance. Viewed in profile, the shoulder blades and elbows are flat and tight to the body with no indication of turnout. If there is any appearance of lack of smoothness it should be the result only of excess skin. Feeling the shoulder and elbow assembly will reveal whether the assembly is tight to the body, looseness in this structure being a serious fault.

The entire shoulder assembly should be placed far enough back on the body so that the front leg covers the lowest point of the breastline when viewed in profile, and the foremost part of the sternum should be clearly visible from the side. If a plummet line were dropped from the onset of the neck, it should drop through the deepest part of the dog's chest and touch the ground between the feet and in front of the wrist. Length of body should be considered as the distance from the front of the sternum to the base of the tail, not the distance between the front legs and the rear legs. By avoiding this error, judges will avoid rewarding a misplaced front assembly by considering the dog to be of greater length. Shoulder structure and upper arms too far forward on the body and not at the center of gravity of the dog (at the deepest portion of the chest cavity) are very serious faults which affect the ultimate purpose of the breed.

TRUNK

The breastbone (sternum) is strong and prominent, the brisket deep, full, oval and well let down between the legs. The rib structure is extremely long, smooth and carried well back, the ribs full volumed and well sprung. The loin is strong, firm and comparatively short, the abdomen only very slightly

drawn up. The topline is straight and horizontal and free from a tendency to sag or give.

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarter is very full and well rounded and is of approximately equal width to the shoulders. It should be in perfect proportion to the frontquarter and trunk should be judged in relation to the total balance of the dog. It should never appear slack or light in relation to the overall depth of the body.

The hindquarter is extremely powerful, the muscles standing out prominently, the legs strong and capable of a forward drive. The dog must stand firmly on his rear legs showing good angulation, the rear legs not too far under the body, and with no tendency toward a crouching stance. Viewed from behind, the rearquarter appears firm and well rounded, the legs parallel with the hocks turning neither in nor out.

Viewed in profile, the pelvic bones slope well forward, forming a pelvic cavity of ample girth. The upper thigh bone (femur) is set at an approximate right angle to the pelvic bone, and the lower thigh (tibia and fibula) at an approximate right angle to the upper thigh, with the connecting stifle joint well bent. The hock joint (tarsus), connecting lower thigh and metatarsus, is well let down and distinctly bent. The metatarsus (erroneously called the hock) connecting the hock joint and the foot, inclines forward, except when the dog is otherwise posed. The rear foot is well rounded and somewhat more compact than the front foot, and the whole of the foot should be poised equally on the ball and toes. The rear feet point straight ahead.

The rearquarters must be strong with great driving power and complete freedom of action. A steep rear with straightness in either stifle or hock joints is a very serious fault, but excessive angulation with any tendency toward weakness or unsteadiness in either movement or stance is also undesirable. In proportion, the thigh is somewhat long, the metatarsus short. The thigh is thick and muscular and well rounded throughout. A thin, weak, rangy thigh is faulty. The reverse proportion, a short, tight thigh with a long metatarsus inhibits freedom of action and forward drive and is a serious fault.

HEAD

The head is narrow in proportion to its length with very little taper from the temples to the nose. Viewed from the front or the top, it appears to have been flattened at the sides. It is clean-cut and free from any indication of cheek bumps. Viewed in profile the toplines of the muzzle and skull are straight and lie in parallel planes, with a moderately defined stop. The length from the nose

to the stop approximates the length from the stop to the back of the occiput. The skull is narrow and well-domed, rounded from side to side, culminating in a very pronounced occipital protuberance. The back of the skull is distinctly developed and sharply defined from the neck. The skull should not be wide or flat, and the brow should not be prominent although due to the deep set eyes and loose skin, it sometimes has that appearance.

The eyes are soft and sad, the expression one of wisdom and reposeful dignity. The eye is sunken, showing a small area or none of the white. The lids droop, showing the inside of the lower lid and haw.

FAULTS

Faults are of three types: **1) Very serious faults; 2) Serious faults; 3) Minor faults**, and should be penalized accordingly. In general, very serious faults are those that impair the endurance of the dog in the field. These are primarily faults in running gear and movement. Also regarded as very serious because of its strongly hereditary nature is an incorrect bite, especially if undershot. Extremely pronounced faults in topline are also regarded as very serious. Serious faults are in general the faults in body and proportion, and the important faults in type, especially in head. Minor faults are in general primarily faults of detail. The order in which faults are listed with their groups is not material.

Very Serious Faults: Steep shoulders with short scapulae and incorrect angulation of front quarter; loose shoulders; turned out elbows; weak pasterns; excessive crook in legs with exaggerated turn-out in feet; fiddle front; straight front legs with no turn-out of feet; flat feet; thinly padded feet; splayed feet; steep pelvis and incorrectly angulated rear quarters; straight stifle-joint; straight hock-joint; excessive angulation of rear quarter with unsteadiness or weakness of rear legs; bowed legs; cowhocks; important faults in gait; extremely pronounced faults in topline; overshot or undershot bite.

Serious Faults: Wide skull; flat skull; absence of well-developed occipital protuberance; snipey muzzle; weak underjaw; high, flat, pancake ear; barrel chest; short chest; flatsidedness; too much tuck up in abdomen; slackness of loin; roach back; sway back; higher at croup than at withers; absence of balance and proportion; coarseness, either in body or head; doggy bitches;

bitchy dogs; pronounced faults of temperament; absence of loose skin, flews, dewlap and wrinkle.

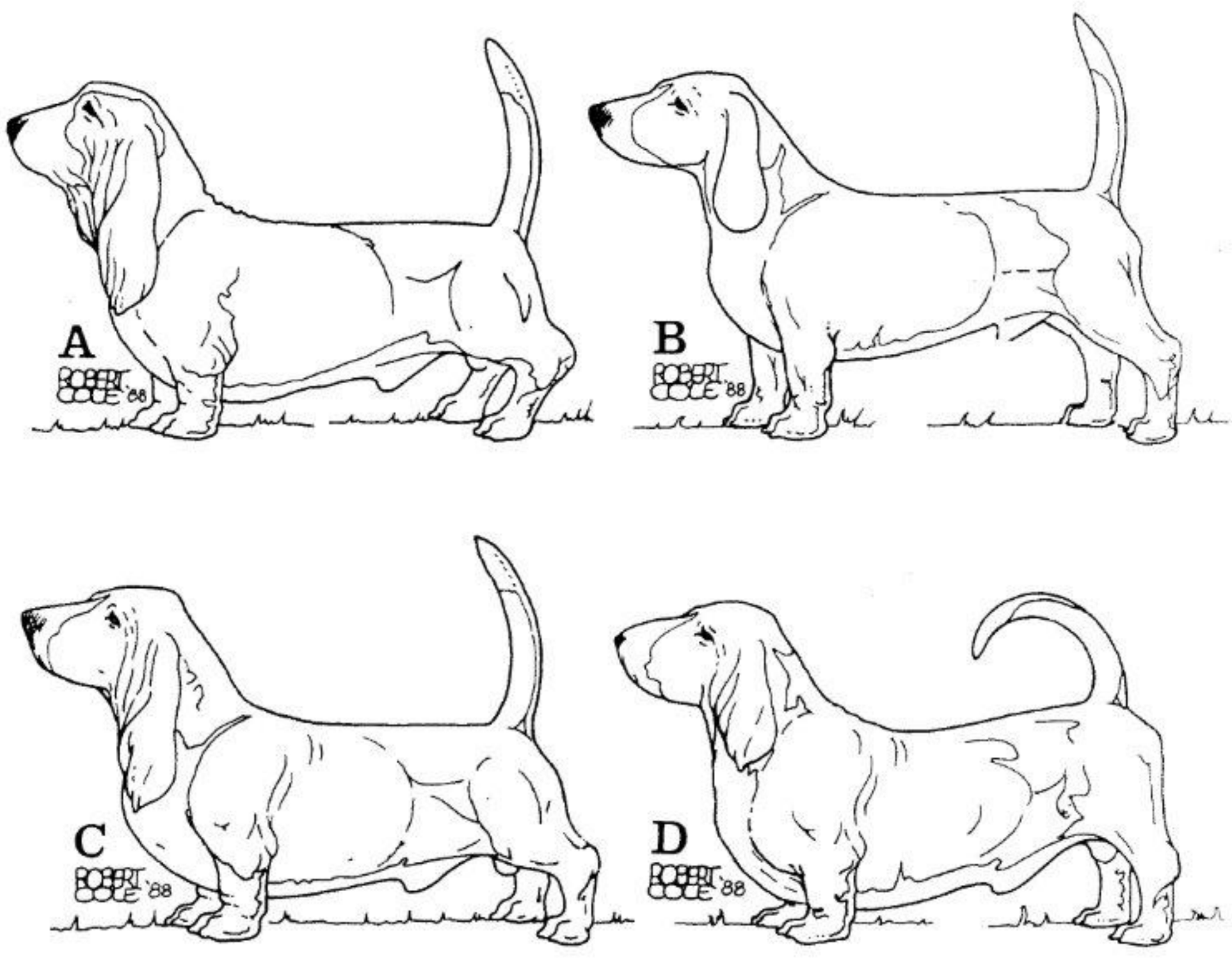
Minor Faults: Eyes lighter than tan of coat; round, prominent or protruding eyes; absence of dark pigmentation on eye rims, nose and lips; haws a different color in each eye; absence of haw; harsh expression; absence of parallel planes on tops of muzzle and skull; absence of straight plane on either muzzle or skull; brows too prominent; absence of stop or too much stop; dish face or down face; cheek bumps; incorrect tail; insufficient loose skin, wrinkles, flews or dewlap.

(Cole, p 1)

Article 2: You Be The Judge: The Basset Hound

By Robert Cole

It must be kept in mind that in this article Cole is describing the Basset Hound based on the Canadian breed standard, which differs from the American standard.



One of these four Bassets stands more than 15 inches at the highest point of the shoulder blades. This is not a disqualification in Canada as it is in the United States (in Canada only unsoundness in legs or feet disqualify). However, this dog is a good place to start because he possesses three unacceptable departures that you must identify in order to fully appreciate typical.

Dog B (Fourth Place)

This is not to say this oversized (fourth place) dog is without virtue. In addition to soundness, he has a large black nose (large open nostrils), a nice firm topline and a correctly high set tail. As for his markings (not mentioned in the CKC Standard) they are of no importance - any recognized hound colour is acceptable world-wide and the distribution of colour and markings is of no (or little) importance. (In Canada, we have a rider that advises that in the closest competition colour can have weight with a judge's decision!)

An unorthodox breed conformation-wise, this example best serves to illustrate two head departures blending into a neck fault and a major forequarter departure.

For a Basset, his head lacks the power that depth and deep flews would convey. This form of dry neck is a fault. The second head fault is the high set, thick, flat, rounded at the bottom, ugly ear.

The major forequarter departure centers on the shape of the front legs. This example's straight legs are wrong for a Basset and are the reason he is too tall. He has been graphically made too tall by raising the body up till the chest is level with the elbow - correct for most breeds but wrong for the Basset.

The CKC Standard describes the correct Basset's front legs as: forelegs should be short, very powerful, very heavy in bone, close fitting to the chest with a crooked knee and wrinkled ankle (I prefer 'wrist'), ending in a massive paw". I would also prefer 'heavy' bone to 'very heavy' bone. This dog's legs are short but lack crook.

In addition, the Standard advises that: "A hound (Basset) must not be out at elbows. He must be perfectly sound and true on his feet, which should be thick and massive and the weight of the forepart of the body should be born equally by each toe of the forefeet so far as it is compatible with the crook of the legs.

To this description, I would add that viewed head-on the upper arm should incline slightly inwards but not to such an extent as to prevent free action or to result in legs touching each other when standing or moving, the wrists slightly closer than the elbows - a wrap-around front.

First Place (Dog C)

This representation of typical (Dog C) stands 14 inches at the shoulder (the Standard does not advise as to height) and weights 60 lbs. His large impressive head fits the dog. No one feature is exaggerated, each part balances with its adjoining part coming together as heavier in bone, height considered, than any other breed of dog but is in no way clumsy. The skin is loose and elastic.

In profile, it can be seen that the front leg of this representation of typical covers the lowest point of the chest line, that there is wrinkle at the wrist, and unlike most breeds, the elbow positions well above the bottom of the chest.

The large head is domed, has some stop and the occipital bone is prominent. Width is medium at brow and tapers slightly to muzzle, the fore face lean but not narrow, a width opinion seeming to conflict with the Standard's advice "skull narrow", but I believe the Standard really means narrow in proportion to its length. I mention this because narrow knife-blade heads are a current concern.

In profile, the top of muzzle is nearly parallel with line from stop to occiput and not much longer than skull. The sides of the head are flat and free from cheek bumps. The nose is black and protrudes a little beyond the pendulous, dark pigmented lips, the nostrils are large and well-opened.

The eyes are dark, lozenge-shaped, neither prominent nor too deep set, expression is calm and serious. The Standard calls for a "prominent haw". I have found this direction on occasion to be taken too literally and would add that the red of his lower lid is obvious though not excessively so. A prominent haw is one thing - a scoop collecting debris is another.

The body is long and deep, the breast bone prominent, the ribs carried well back, the topline level. The hindquarters are full and rounded, stifles are well bent, hocks are well let down. Wrinkles may appear between hock and at rear of joint a slight pouch can occur due to looseness of skin.

Second and Third

My second place is between Dog A and Dog D. I like the head on one but not the other. I like the ears on one but not on the other. The same goes for toplines and feet. I do not like either of their fronts but having a choice I'm going with the one that all things considered would appear the best equipped of the two to follow a trail over and through difficult terrain.

Second Place (Dog A)

Sacrilege, but I'm going with the Basset with the poor head (Dog A) and the steep shoulders and the faulty hindquarters - but faulty in a different way than Dog D's. This dog's hindquarter fault disturbs me as it does you but the whole dog has to be taken into consideration and then you go with what you have. You also have the option of with-holding ribbons.

This head has faults, but the ears are correctly low set, extremely long, narrow throughout their length and curling well inwards, they are fine and velvety in texture, very supple and hang in loose folds.

There are three head faults and a further one combining head and neck . . . First, the muzzle and skull are on two different angles, the stop is too pronounced, the occiput is not pronounced enough and . . .there should be dewlap (two pouches of skin on the neck) but not to this extent.

This dog has a pincer bite. The Standard only requires that the teeth meet. I interpret this as meaning either scissors or pincer bite is correct (over-shot or undershot are serious Basset faults).

His topline is level, his tail is set on high and he does have forechest, but he is not functionally balanced. Take the forechest for example. On most breeds, this would be a tremendous forechest but not for the Basset. Oh, the typical forechest is there, it's just that steep shoulders have moved the front assembly forward on the body reducing the amount of forechest exposed and positioning the foreleg in front of the deepest part of the chest instead of covering it.

Often this kind of departure causes the rear end to rise except in the case of this dog where faulty sickle hocks have lowered the rear. The faulty rear pasterns (between hock and foot) are too long requiring this Basset to bring its foot forward under the body for secure support of the rear. Sickle hocks prohibit a Basset at the trot from extending the hind pastern rearward further than the vertical.

Third Place (Dog D)

Like this example (Dog D), many Bassets have a slight roman nose. The reverse, a dish face, is a bad fault. This head has two faults, one affecting function and the second appearance . . . The functional fault is a small nose (and small nostrils).

The fault affecting appearance is the short ears (which if you believe traps scent can also be thought of as a functional departure).

The front feet are less than ideal. His neck is short. His tail curves too far forward. His shoulder blades are steep. The body is too low slung because it is too heavy. The steep shoulders and heavy body is slung too close to the ground. It is not too low slung because the chest is too deep (this body has the same depth as the other three examples), it is too low slung because the forequarters are inferior.

(Leach, p 1)

Article 3: Perspective On A Basset

By Charles Leach

Before the days of prepared mixes, the baking of a cake was a true art. All the ingredients had to be there in proper proportions and carefully guarded recipes were handed down from generation to generation. The icing on the cake was only the final touch in a long, exacting process, and was of the least concern when the prizes at the county fair were handed out. Today, even with prepared mixes, many people do not follow directions and the cake comes out flat or out of level. To correct these faults, or perhaps to make up for a hidden guilt because the cake was not "made from scratch," one simply piles on more icing. This is all well and good, but too much icing not only hides the faults, it overcomes the flavor of the cake.

In the last few years, there has been a phenomenal influx of new breeders and exhibitors into our breed. Of course, they all started with what they thought was the best stock, and then proceeded to add their own flavor. Finding no printed recipes for successful breeding, they started covering their faults with icing . . . in the form of excessive wrinkle, excessive fat, excessive ear, excessive bone, and in general loads of type. From these breeders, others have sprung up who have the recipe for success . . . loads of icing, and no concern for the cake.

Unfortunately, most judges have become experts on icing but have also forgotten the cake. The serious breeder of old has adapted quickly and no longer looks for soundness and balance, but for big, sloppy, typey pups to hold for the ring. Terms such as shoulder layback and drive have practically been replaced by "I just don't have his type," or "he likes red dogs and my dog's tail is still

not up or had too much curl."

We all are becoming icing experts, and he who still bakes cakes not only loses, but is looked upon as an inferior chef. The time has come when we must cut through the icing and look at the cake before the recipe is lost forever. We, as breeders, must now accept the responsibility of guiding the Basset toward perfection by breeding and exhibiting sound, well-balanced dogs until they are the rule, rather than the exception in the ring. We must learn to support judges whose opinions are based on more than icing or the name of the chef, but above all, have enough respect for the judge and ourselves to exhibit what we think is correct rather than what we think he wants to see.

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of talking to Mr. Richard Basset while watching a large Specials-only class. "That number 27 is an impressive animal," I said. "Yes, he would be if his rear had something to do besides go along for the ride," said Mr. Basset. After watching the dog more closely, I could see that indeed he was not generating real drive or more specifically, that his front end was not capable of handling the amount of drive his rear end could produce. After we left the ring I had the opportunity to pet the dog with probing fingers, and found that he was short in both shoulder blade and upper arm. I can no longer remember the dog in question, but shall always remember the brief but concise summary of the problem that Mr. Bassett had made, and the fact that I practically needed an X-ray to reach the same conclusion.

Too often a dog becomes a big winner in spite of his faults, and is then seen by many as the standard of perfection, faults and all. In order to overcome this tendency we must have an understanding of the various components of a Basset and what effect deviations in any part from the written standard, and common sense, will have on the total dog.

PURPOSE OF A BASSET

As we all know, the Basset Hound was bred to hunt. In the words of the American standard, "… the Basset Hound possesses in marked degree those characteristics which equip it admirably to follow a trail over and through difficult terrain." This excerpt as well as most of the remainder of the standard describes a sturdy dog with the endurance and ability to do just that. It is unfortunate that many breed only for the ability to hunt. In doing so the standard is often largely

overlooked. At times, the dogs are good hunters in spite of serious structural handicaps and sometimes bear little resemblance to the breed. If hunting ability is the only requisite of excellence, it is indeed a shame that one is supposed to breed only from purchased stock.

Equally unfortunate for the Basset is the fact that it happens to be cute and lovable. Many people breed to produce what is outwardly the type of Basset they like or that wins in the show ring, without regard to soundness. I once complimented an exhibitor on one of his two pups in the ring. When he asked which one I liked I said the one with the better rear. I was informed that both have fine apple-round rears. It's a shame that his eye for movement wasn't as good as his eye for apples.

The Basset Hound in Action

In the words of the standard of the Airedale and Fox Terriers, "Movement or action is the crucial test of conformation." The gait of the Basset is described in the American standard as smooth, powerful and effortless. Being a scenting dog with short legs, it holds its nose low to the ground. Its gait is absolutely true with perfect coordination between front and hind legs, and it moves in a straight line with hind feet following in line with the front feet, the hocks well bent with no stiffness in action. The front legs do not paddle, weave, or overlap and the elbows must be close to the body. Going away, the hind legs are parallel.

Bassets walk, trot and gallop. At the walk, the dog is normally supported by three legs, in the trot by two. The Basset's fastest gait is a modified double suspension gallop. In my opinion, the more common canter and gallop are practically nonexistent in Bassets conforming to the standard for the breed. In order to appreciate the revelation that at least one foot at a time must be off the ground while moving, try the following demonstration. Get down on all fours (or if that's too strenuous, just lean with hands on a table). With hands wide apart, left one hand. Now try with hands close together. Much easier. To keep from falling you must shift your weight so that the heel of the remaining hand is under your center of gravity. Your dog must compensate in the same manner. The same effect occurs when a rear leg is lifted, but to a lesser degree because the center of gravity in a Basset is just behind the front legs. Again, in my opinion, it is from the inability of the Basset to get the rear feet on the center line that the Basset has no normal gallop or canter, but throws his whole rear to one side so one leg is under the center of gravity.

Perhaps you can already see from our discussion thus far that the crook in a Basset's legs serves a purpose. The crook is the only way in which a dog with short legs can get his front feet under his center of gravity. The slight turning in of the heel pads is further compensation.

To many people attempting to breed a straight-legged Basset, I wish to point out that some amount of crook is necessary. How much? Any amount of crook that helps compensate for kinetic center of gravity is good, as long as the static balance is maintained. The outer toes of the front feet . . . turned out at no more than 30 degrees to each other . . . should be even with the widest point of the shoulder in a normal stance. Too much crook will actually place the feet further apart, and hence is a serious fault.

While at this point, I would like to state that it is impossible for a dog to move smoothly if its front legs are not tracking close to the center line. If they are far from it, only a "bulldog" gait can result. If we accept that fact, we must assume the Basset must track close in front, and therefore, if the rear legs are moving parallel to each other they cannot, in the words of the standard, follow in line with the front feet. If we wish to maintain parallel rear movement, we must disregard following-in-line or smoothness, take your pick.

However you look at it, it must logically be assumed that, as attempting to track-in at higher speeds is natural for all dogs, the tending to do so in the rear must not be as serious a fault as cowhocking or throwing the hocks out. This must especially be true when we consider that the tracking-in adds to efficiency of movement, and the other faults detract from it. As another personal opinion, I would like to see the standard read, ideally, "the rear legs should move parallel to each other, but tracking-in so as to follow in line with the front feet at a fast trot shall not be faulted as long as the legs move in one plane parallel with the direction of motion."

FRONT LEG STRUCTURE

The rear of a Basset is built for speed . . . the front is built to slow him down. In order to attain some sort of balance, we must build the front leg itself for maximum reach and efficiency. We must concentrate much of our effort on developing good front ends. I will not go into minute details, but for those interested, I suggest reading ***The Dog In Action***, by McDowell Lyon.

The shoulder blade does five things, basically:

1. Support weight
2. Absorbs concussion
3. Propels on turns
4. Offsets lateral displacement
5. Aids in maintaining level of center of gravity

To do these things, the blade should be of equal length with the upper arm, and on an angle of 90 degrees to the upper arm when the dog is standing in a normal position. (See Fig. 1) In this position, it gives maximum lift and reach, while providing best support in conjunction with the upper arm.

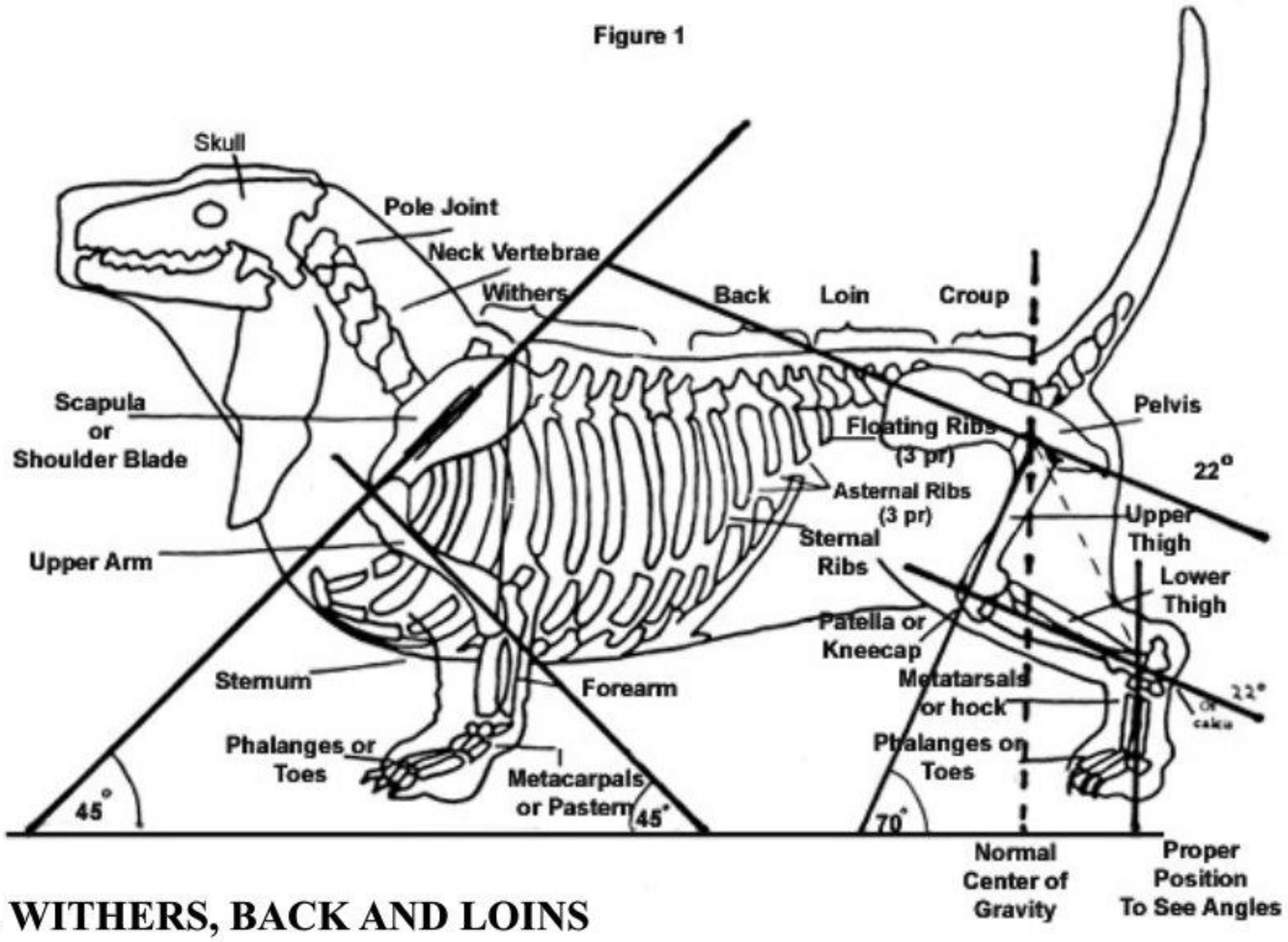
The bones of the forearms and metacarpals in the Basset are rather short when compared to other breeds. Ideally, the bones of the metacarpals should slope so that the heel is placed directly under the center of the shoulder blade. By no means should this slope be such that the dog looks "down on his pasterns."

The bend in the pastern does three things:

1. Provides greater lift to center of gravity
2. Prevents knuckling over
3. Absorbs shock

In order to demonstrate the danger of knuckling over when the pastern is too straight, try the following: Make a fist and put your knuckles down on a table and press. Hold your wrist joint, which is the same as the dog's pastern, up straight. In this position, it bears weight quite well. Now move wrist forward, out of line, and notice that a quiver starts. The wrist, like a dog's pastern, is not built to hold weight in that position.

Figure 1



D. WITHERS, BACK AND LOINS

I shall cover quickly the withers, back and loins. The withers consist of more than the top of the shoulder blades. In fact, the first seven vertebrae are so involved in the shoulder action that all are of importance to the assembly. There is often a slight dip indicated at its junction with the rest of the back. With a downward slope over the withers due to the muscles and the long fingers that support them), and a level back, there may be a slight dip where the two lines meet.

The back consists of six vertebrae. The power generated by the back legs is delivered forward by thrust through the spinal column. As there is no question that a straight line delivers thrust best, the back must be level.

The loins contain seven vertebrae. They give support to the rearing muscles. This is an unsupported area, or arch, between two business ends. Many standards require a slightly arched loin in order to gain strength. It should definitely be no longer than necessary.

E BACK LEGS

The main function of the back legs is to push the dog forward. The rear end is built to carry weight, and you will notice this when you press down on your

dog's loins. The start of a good rear is in a good pelvis. The most efficient pelvis is set at a 30 degree angle from the horizontal. Any deviation from this can be designated as a steep or flat croup. One of the best indications of pelvis inclination is the set of the tail. The high tail set is important because several of the thigh muscles originate on the fused vertebrae in front of the tail. As the length of the muscles must be good in order to give the dog proper drive, one can see that there is more involved than mere aesthetics in desiring a high tail set. Lengthening the pelvis behind the hip joint will also tend to lengthen these muscles, and thus is desirable.

The most obvious method of lengthening these muscles would be to lengthen the femur itself. In fact, this is what is meant by a well bent or let down stifle. There is a natural tendency for the thigh to assume an angle of 90 degrees to the line of the pelvis, and then 30 degrees to the ground. A more efficient angle would be 45 degrees to the ground, regardless of the croup angle. This again means a longer femur, which provides a better angle between it and the lower leg bones.

A well bent stifle also means a long second thigh. These bones running down to the hock joint provide a long Achilles tendon that motivates the hock joint. These muscles must be long enough to provide sufficient contraction to straighten this joint.

The hocks should be well let down. A long hock gives early speed, but no endurance. As explained later, the rear end of a Basset is normally capable of far more speed than the front end can handle. It is more important in the Basset than perhaps in any other breed to keep the hock SHORT.

F. RIBS

The ribs provide the chamber into which the diaphragm draws a vacuum, which aids in inhaling, or into which the diaphragm exerts pressure to aid in expelling air.

Each of the first 12 ribs is joined to the spinal column in a ball socket, and to the sternum, in such a way that they can pivot. The ribs curve back from top to bottom so that when they rotate forward, due to muscular action, air is inhaled and, when the muscles relax, they return and air is exhaled.

It is how much the ribs curve backward when relaxed, and how long they are from top to bottom (depth of chest) that determines their effective capacity. Contrary to popular opinion, the 'barrel type' chest actually reduces the capacity of the lungs and causes movement problems connected with wide fronts.

In our quest for "deep" chests, however, let us not make the mistake of settling for short legs. Refer to Figures 1-A and 1-B and note that the second dog's chest is the same as the first, but his leg is shorter.

G. NECK AND HEAD

The neck and head together act to maintain balance in turning, and are important in accelerating or stopping. In other words, to gain speed, a dog extends its head and neck to shift its center of gravity forward. To stop quickly, he will bring his head up to shift center of gravity back. In general, if a dog is supposed to have great speed, he should have a long neck and head so as to move the center of gravity forward as much as possible. If endurance is more important, a head and neck of medium length and weight are required. In the Basset, the neck should be of sufficient length to allow the nose to ride close to the ground in comfort, but he should not be encumbered by the weight of a "bull neck" which is so popular in the ring.

As for the ears, wrinkle and 'expression', I can only say that ears that are tripped over are in the way; wrinkle that falls over the eyes when the head is lowered does not aid vision; and exposed glands under the eyes can be hotbeds for infection. I brush these factors off with such brief commentary, not because they are unimportant, but because entirely too much attention is devoted to them and it is doubtful if anyone's personal taste would be influenced if we were to devote a whole book to them.

H. THE TAIL

Having covered the all-important set of the tail earlier, we can confine our remarks to the tail itself. The tail is, of course, easy to spot when the dog is working in the field. As the Basset is happiest when "doing what comes naturally", his tail normally working while he is working. By its action, the hunter can tell about how fresh the trail is, or what problems the dog is encountering. The tail could also be useful in turning and braking, as is evident in faster breeds.

Perhaps the most important function is as an indicator. Its action indicates his mood not his disposition, a substantial base indicates a substantial spine, and a curled tail which is not typical of the breed means improper muscular tension in the tail, which, in the opinions of many, could indicate problems elsewhere.

I. TEETH

The permanent teeth include 3 incisors, 1 canine and molars on each side of the upper jaw with the same arrangement in the lower jaw, plus the addition of one more molar on each side. In the case of the molars, this is not a set rule, because it is becoming more and more common to find missing molars. The standard on the Basset makes no mention of missing or extra teeth.

The standard does point out the overshot or undershot bites as serious faults, which indeed they are. I do not feet that a slight imperfection in bite should eliminate an otherwise well made dog from consideration. Many judges will not consider a dog with a tooth out of line, but will overlook faults that would impair its ability to perform its work.

J. BONE

"A short-legged dog, heavier in bone, size considered than any other breed". This excerpt from our standard is rather confusing. Is size based on height, weight or length? Based on weight, I fear that many of the 90-lb. Bassets of today would have difficulty in coming up with half the bone of a 150-lb. Newfoundland or Saint. This is especially true because we are not judging the size of the bone, but the size of the LEG.

In my kennel, I have a bitch that is a constant resident of our dietary pen. Even at her lowest weight, she is not unlike a tank. I have often asked visitors to pick out the heaviest boned, and she is always one of the first two chosen. When I place her on a table and have them actually caliper her bone, they are shocked to find that she has less bone size than most any dog in the kennel. Like many of our 'big boned' dogs in the ring today, she is heavy in LEG, but not in bone. Being overweight myself, I often try to pass my problem off as large bones. It's surprising how many of us large-boned individuals become light-boned, thin people after a good diet. The same would be true of our dogs if they were allowed to get down to a healthy weight.

K. THE BASSET IN THE RING TODAY

The typey head and happy tail are highly desirable traits, but are only parts of the whole dog. Too often a judge will take great pains to check the bite, expression, and wrinkle, and then examine the rest of the dog by running a hand across the back as if it were a banister on a staircase that one wants to know is there . . . but doesn't want to appear clumsy by gripping.

Too often, a judge will put a dog out of the ribbons because its tail wasn't gay enough. Of course, the standard says the tail is carried gaily in hound fashion, but it also says the nose is carried low to the ground, and everyone knows that a dog must hold its head high in order to win. One can always say that the tail down is an indication of incorrect temperament, but it is common knowledge that some top-winning dogs attempted to bite any dog close enough.

An outstanding example of inconsistency occurred at an area specialty show when the judge put down a novice with the comment. "It's a good pup, but it won't show", and followed that by picking a winners bitch that not only attempted to bite her professional handler, but the judge himself.

Some judges have made the statement, "I will never consider a dog for a first place ribbon if his tail isn't up." At one show, every dog in a class had its tail down, and the judge very clearly stated. "The first one that gets his tail up wins." This attitude is ridiculous. Of course, this judge should fault a tail that is down, but is it any worse than a short ribcage, broken down pasterns, or improper drive? If it is the most important factor, only the most honest are faulted for it, because everyone knows a few pills will make the dog as happy as can be.

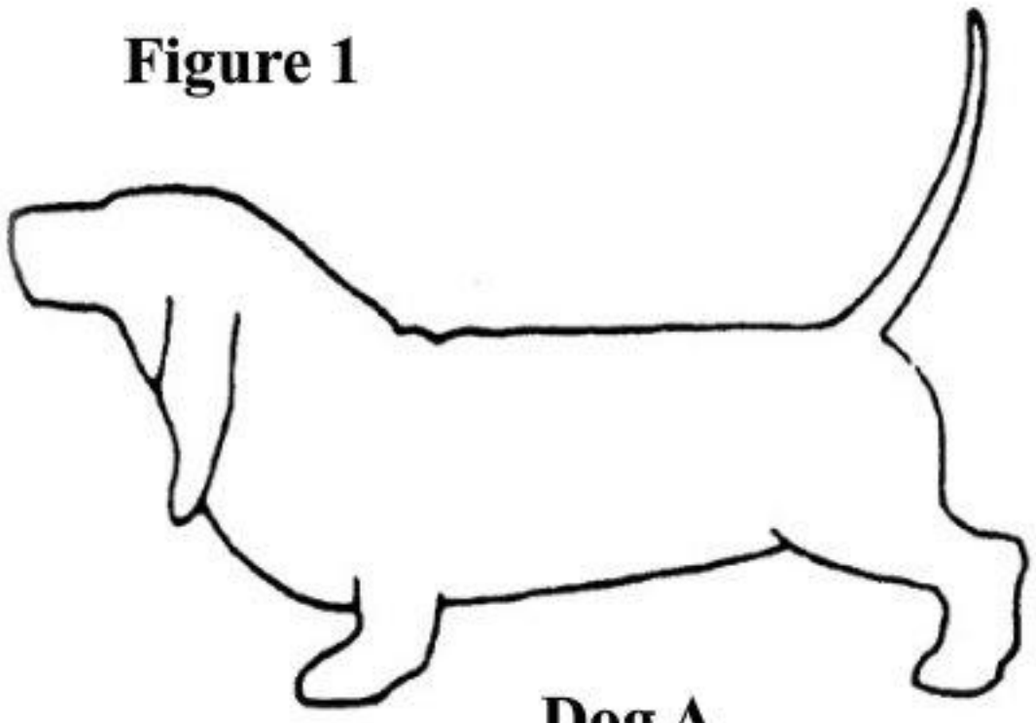
It is generally accepted that if a dog has a typey head, attractive markings, is large, overweight, has massive legs, and can walk around the ring with his tail up . . . he will win. Most of these factors can be grouped as "type". In answer to the age-old question of type versus soundness, let me state that BOTH are required. If a dog isn't sound, he should not be entered in a dog show if he lacks type, he should not be in the Basset ring.

A. NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PROPORTION

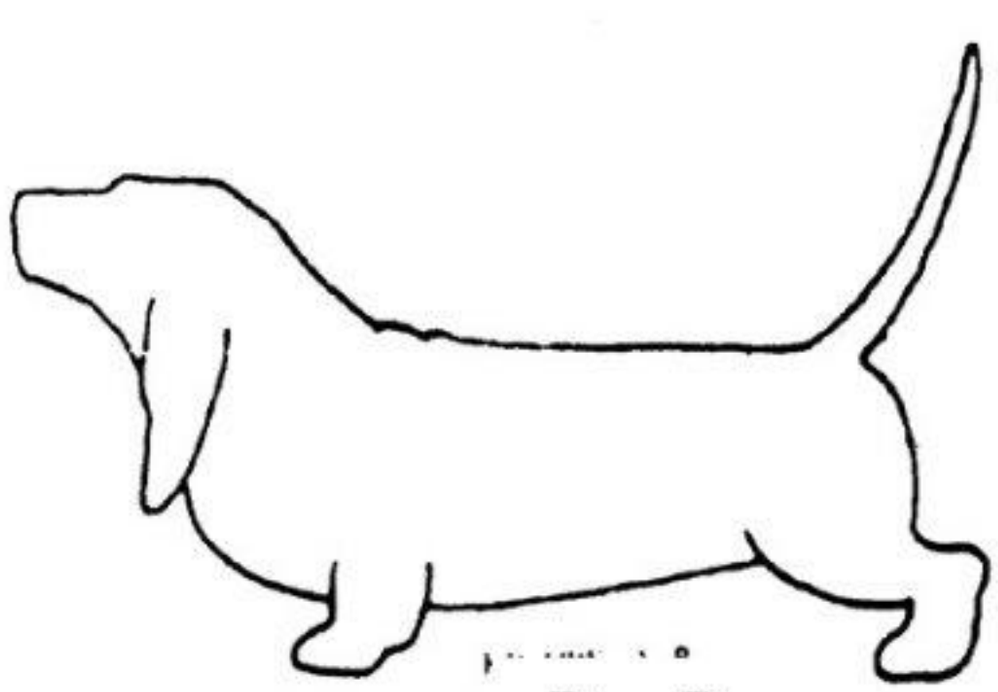
How long should a Basset be in proportion to height?
How long should his neck or hock, etc., be?

Note dogs A and B in Figure 1. I am sure you will agree that dog B is too long for his height, or has too much chest. The fact is that they are absolutely identical except for the length of lower leg.

Figure 1



Dog A



Dog B

I hope from this demonstration that it is evident that one cannot base proportions accurately on measurement involving combinations of so many variables. To say that dog B is too long, or has too much chest, makes as much sense as my deciding I must grow six inches to be in proper height. Whether it be the dog's short lower leg (or my fat), I wouldn't be solving the problem in either case by changing almost every bone in the body to correct the one fault.

If height is not the proper yardstick upon which to base all other measurements, what is? Theoretically, you could take any correct part of the body and base all other measurements on it . . . but which one? The answer, of course, must be "any part which can be proven correct to start", because if everyone disagrees with the ruler, there is no need to measure.

Perhaps the only feature that should be universally accepted as desirable is correct construction of the shoulder. (See Figure 2-A) Basically, the shoulder blades should be long in order to allow proper surfaces for attachment of muscles, and maximum leverage advantage. To allow maximum length without shortening the upper arm, or dropping the elbow below the ribcage, the shoulder blades should practically come together at the withers. When the head is lowered, you should not be able to place a finger between the withers. Aside from the mechanical advantage which allows the blade to perform its functions

with maximum efficiency, it should be noted that the longer blade allows the attachment of wider, thinner muscles, thus avoiding loaded shoulders (see Fig. 2-B). I bring up this final factor because the blade is attached by muscles and ligaments, and a certain cross sectional area of muscle is required to anchor it securely, yet allow it to pivot through about a 15 degree angle.

The upper [arm] should also be long in order to give the proper reach. How long? The answer is, assuming proper blade, that it should be the same length as the [shoulder] blade. The reason is quite simply that it should be set at 90 degrees to the shoulder blade and 45 degrees to the ground in order to give maximum reach and lift with the lift with the minimum amount of effort. If much longer than the blade, it will not only be unable to swing freely through its arc, but will place the pads of the feet behind the center of the shoulder blade in normal stance, thus causing an abnormal stress. In referring to Figure 2-A, you will note that a straight line dropped vertically from the center of the shoulder blade should intersect the heel pad if the dog has correct slope of pasterns. You can also see that incorrect pasterns would cause abnormal stress in the shoulder blades in normal stance, besides not fulfilling the functions as listed in Section C.

By drawing lines from the top of the shoulder blade to the [shoulder] joint, from the [shoulder] joint to the elbow, and from the elbow back to the top of the shoulder blade, we form an isosceles right triangle. We shall use the distance from the elbow to the top of the shoulder blade (which I shall call X) as our measuring stick to determine relative proportion. I choose this measurement not only because it turns out to have some rather direct proportional relationships, but because nature seems to attempt to make this length correct. Perhaps in order to maintain static balance, if a dog has a short upper arm. Mother Nature increases the angle between it and the blade by a more vertical set of the shoulder blade, thus keeping ‘X” more or less constant.

In order to be dramatic, we shall call the triangle that is formed by the shoulder blade assembly the MAGIC TRIANGLE. By dividing the hypotenuse (X) into 4 equal parts and cutting it out, we now are ready to build a paper Basset. The triangle used in drawing the dog in Figure 3 was one & 1/16th inches on the short sides, with X equal to one and one half inches.

Figure 2

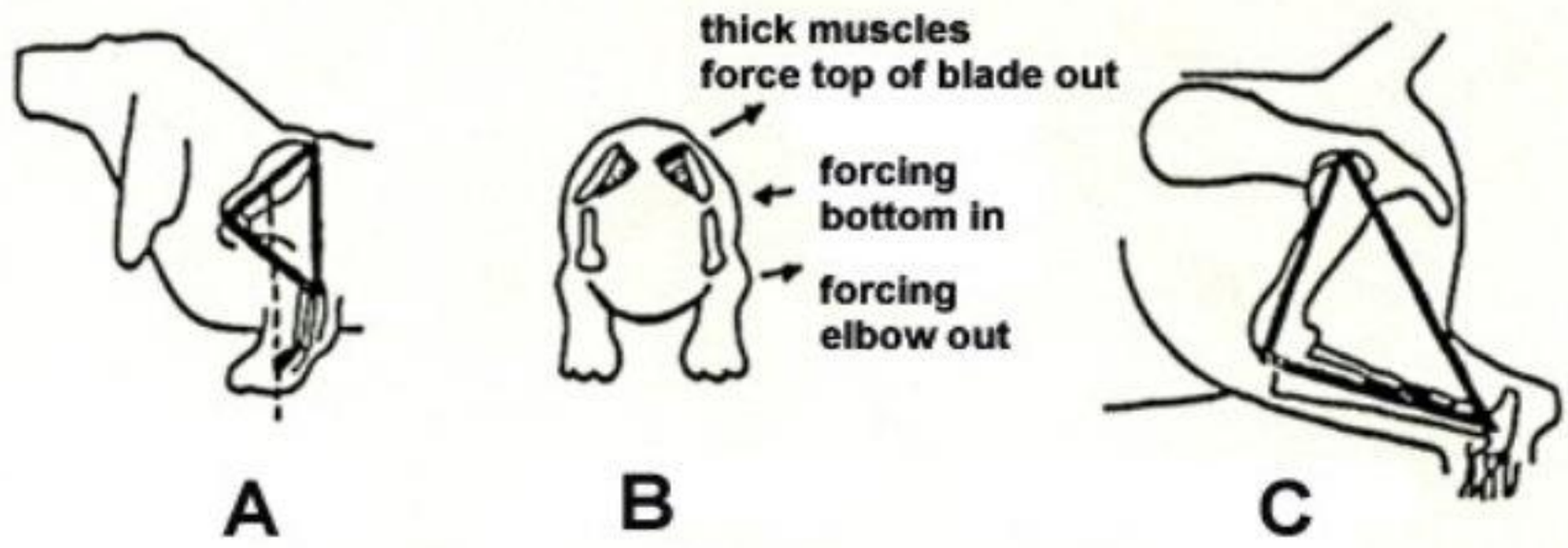
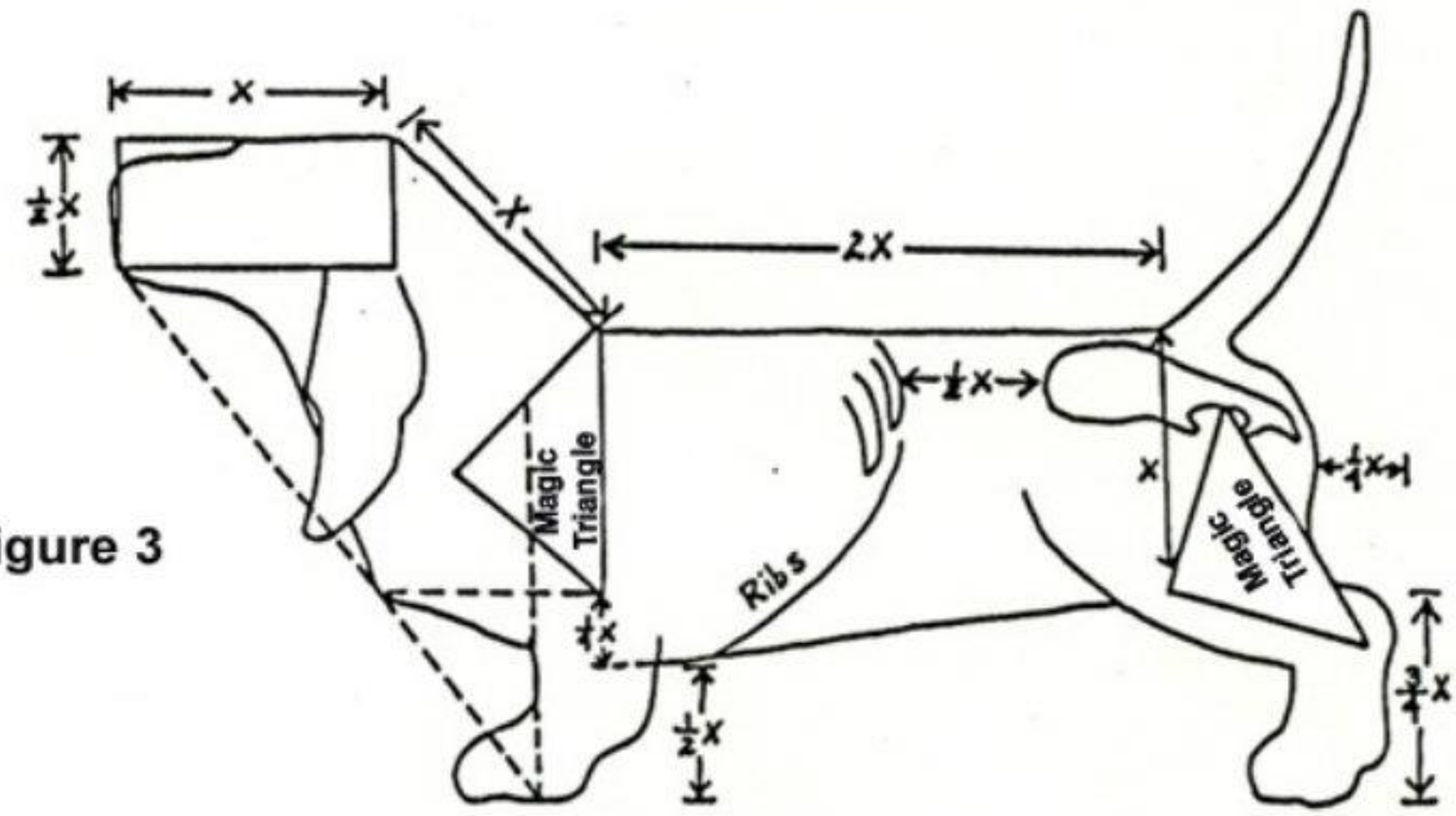


Figure 3



Note: A STRAIGHT LINE DROPPED FROM THE CENTER OF THE SHOULDER BLADE INTESECTS THE CENTER OF THE FRONT FOOT PAD.
A STRAIGHT LINE DRAWN FROM THE CENTER OF THE PAD TO THE TIP OF THE NOSE SHOULD CUT THROUGH THE CHEST.

Observing the triangle formed by the upper and lower bones in the back leg in Fig. 2-C., you will note that approximately the same triangle is formed by these bones, but because it is less involved with bearing weight, it is tilted forward to create more driving power.

While you are still laughing at the whole idea, you might check out one of your own dogs. By simply placing one finger on the elbow and one on top of the blade, and transferring this distance to the head, you may be amazed to note they are about the same. You might further note that the distance from the withers to the tail is about twice this distance.

If nothing else is gained from the effort, you can at least save some money by being able to make your own sign, with a life-sized Basset (which you don't like) on it.

(Leach, p 14)

Perhaps I should conclude by stating that I am not, nor have I ever intended to seem, an expert on Bassets. After reading this article, I am sure that many of you knew this already. My occupation is technical director and quality control manager for a small paper company, and in this capacity I often try to correlate rather diverse facts and information available into set rules. This is largely what I have done in this discussion.

Although they may not agree with portions of this article, I would like to thank Mary and Paul Marischen, John and Margaretta Patterson, Mary Jo Shields, and many others for answering the endless questions of a comparative novice. It is from these answers that much of the theory and information in this series was obtained.

(Steidel, p 1)

Article 4: Recognizing Type, Balance and Soundness in the Basset Hound

By Claire "Kitty" Steidel

The standard for the Basset Hound describes, part by part, those traits which make up the whole hound. We generally refer to these individual traits as features of 'type'. The standard was originally devised to describe the ideal dog whose purpose was "to follow a trail over and through difficult terrain." Thus, an integral part of his type, too, was the ability to fulfill his purpose. He evolved with a structure or conformation suited for trailing. Therefore, a good breeder or judge will not forget that this is a breed with purpose. Though he will know the individual type characteristics which are unique to the Basset, he will look at those traits as an integrated whole; for a good hound combines conformation details with soundness to create a unit which can function.

Movement is a good indicator of conformation, soundness, and probability of fulfilling purpose; and we use the analysis of movement of the entire animal (embodying these features of type) in the show ring to determine the degree to which a dog's conformation approaches the ideal put forth in the standard. Motion puts it all together. Without the parts functioning as a unit they are rather meaningless. A good judge will not place undue emphasis on any one or two features of so-called 'type', nor consider any one or two traits in isolation, but rather he will evaluate the whole as a unit – general outline, type details, and movement.

It is unfortunate that many judges and breeders of the Basset Hound make the erroneous assumption that if some (feature of type) is good, then more of that trait must be better and they breed for it to the exclusion of soundness or in the case of the judging, reward it (the feature) and thus overlook unsoundness in the show ring. Exaggeration and isolation of type trait is prevalent especially among novices for usually it is that trait which they feel looks cute or appealing such as superfluous skin or excess bone. The overemphasis of the importance of such traits at the expense of soundness in the dog is wrong. It leads to fad breeding and reduces the breed to caricature.

Soundness is defined by Spira (***Canine Terminology***) as the "reference to construction, both physical and mental, that enables a dog to carry out duties for which it was originally designed." Kalstone (***Soundness in the Dog and How to Recognize It***) describes the sound dog as the one able to do his job with the least amount of effort.

The standard depicts the perfect or ideal Basset Hound, but all dogs fall short of that ideal by virtue of faults. Many faults are minor. For example, a Basset should have a dark eye but with a lighter eye he can still see; his vision is not impaired; he is sound in that regard. With a light eye he is faulty in that type trait when compared to the ideal, dark eyes. A somewhat less than desirable dewlap, a slightly broader head, or absence of haw or the lack of dark pigmentation around eye rims are all rather minor faults of type for they affect neither his health nor the general well-being of the animal. On the other hand, straight or loose shoulders, cow hocks, out at elbows, knuckling over front legs, weak pasterns, straight stifle or hock joints, a weak topline, and soft splayed feet are more serious for they impede the Basset's ability to perform. They render him unsound. The Basset should be able to move agilely and effortlessly, free and easy; this is required for him to function properly. To have faults against soundness, those which potentially affect the health and general well-being of the animal or impede performance are more serious than minor type shortcomings. Even the dogs who come closest to standard will fall short of perfection in a few minor ways. But never could we call an excellent specimen a dog that is unsound. (Please read Leonard Skolnick's, "A Look at the Basset Hound", on very serious, serious and minor faults.)

Combining the parts that conform to the standard, with an animal's ability to utilize the parts as a unit, is what breeding is all about. This is breed soundness.

And evaluating that same thing is what judging is all about. And if the dog is in conformance with the standard and sound he will have breed balance. "Balance is the pleasing harmonious and well blending-in of an animal's parts and features, resulting in a final, composite effect of total symmetry," according to Spira. "Achieving balance," he contends, "is the goal of all connoisseurs of the canine race."

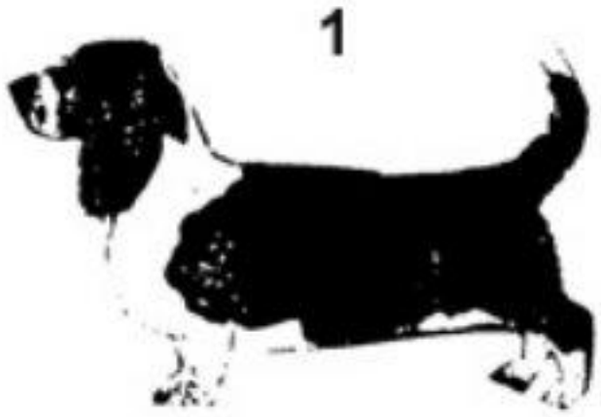
Most of us could enumerate those features which we consider 'type' in the Basset: the ears, the doleful expression, the skin, the length of body—low slung. Now let's consider how one determines balance and soundness in the breed. The standard calls for individual points to create a whole that can do something, will function, not merely look pleasing standing still. The reason we strive for the 'desired' features of the standard is because as more features in a dog approach the ideal, we have a balanced animal that could do something, perform with ease and effortlessly. As breeders and judges we must keep this in mind the parts in and of themselves are rather useless if they don't work and don't achieve a useful end.

The next pages depict unmistakenly the Basset Hound - the dog low to ground, with a long rectangular body, heavy bone, loose skin, long ears etc. The photos were selected for the sake of discussion of balance and conformation. There is variation in the dogs shown yet all are pleasing to look at. They have balance and Basset conformation. Some have more angulation than others, some more or less length of neck, some more or less loose skin, some more or less bone, some better head planes. But notice where the legs are placed under the deepest part of chest for support, how the shoulders are positioned in relationship to the neck, how the neck shows arch and length, how the front and rear angulation seems to match, how the topline is level and the tail is set in a continuation of the spine. The parts are in balance in each dog. They look 'right', like they belong to the same dog. No one thing is exaggerated, but rather all is in proportion. Figures 1-6 appear to have good shoulder layback, toplines and rears. Be aware that markings can give illusion of balance or lack of it too. Now compare these photos to the following silhouettes, which have less ideal outlines. Figure 1 seems to have shoulders forward and to be leaning into his front with legs placed under the body so that he appears to be uncomfortable. He appears balanced, i.e., straight front and rear, but not nearly so close to ideal in angulation or shoulder placement. Figure 8 appears slight, balanced in angulation but not well-angulated, nor is his shoulder assembly far enough back to bring his legs down under the body for support.

Figure 9 appears too short on leg, too short in length of body and he has similar problems with shoulder placement. Figure 10 is similar to 7 in that the dog looks uncomfortable in this stack, the far forward shoulder and too little neck length. Figure 11, too, is too low to ground for his height, too high in the rear, and needs length of neck and muzzle. It's difficult to tell about his angulation because he is stacked poorly. He appears to be slack front and rear.

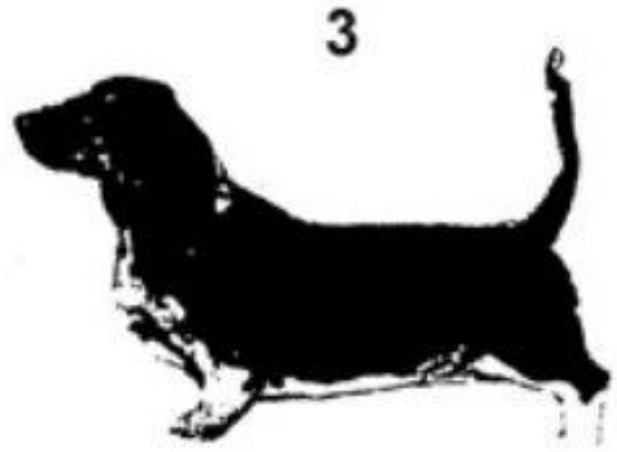
Outlines of Balanced Dogs and Bitches

1

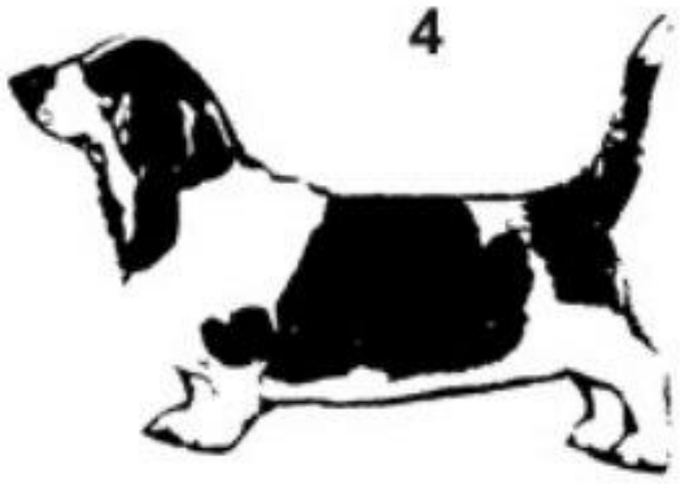


2

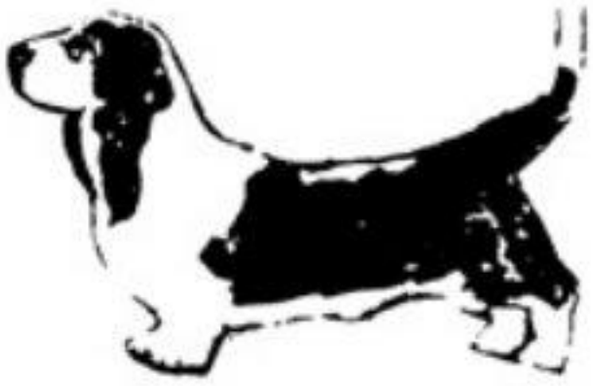
3



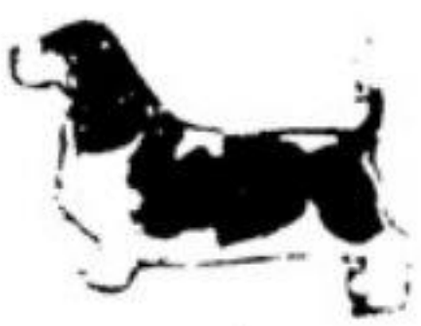
4



5

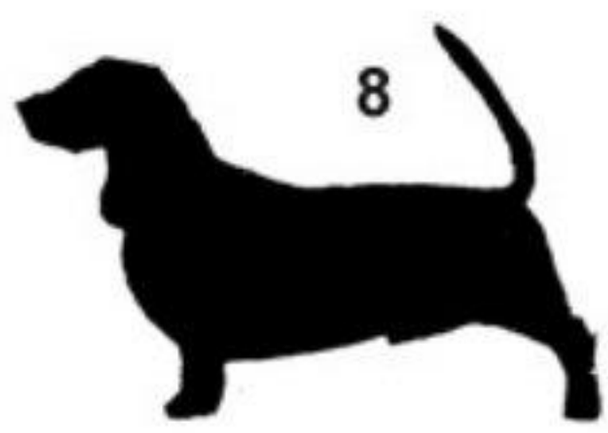


6

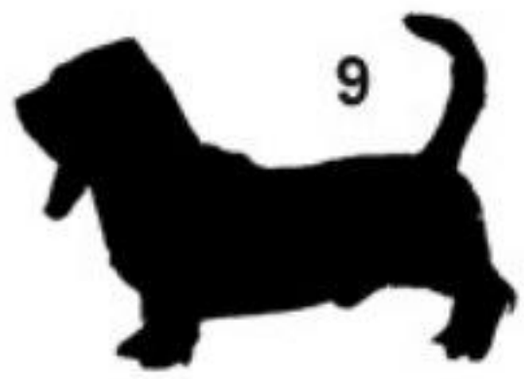


Faulty Outlines

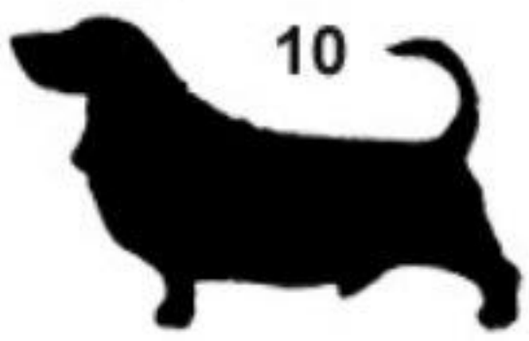
Straight front and rear



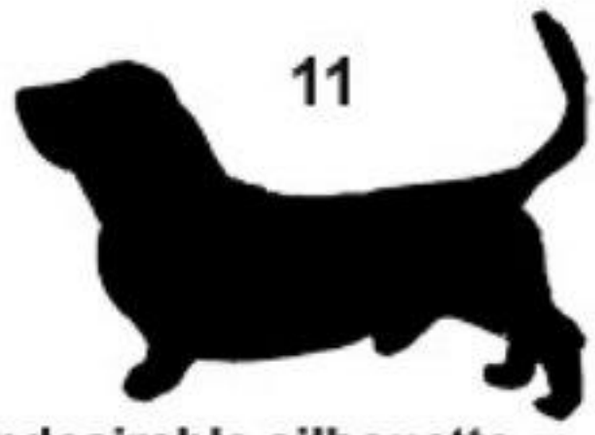
Fine bone, straight front and rear



Parallel head planes; cobby body

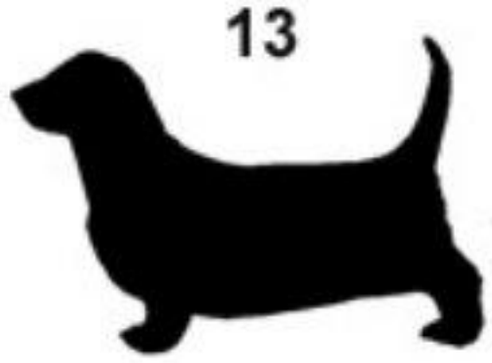


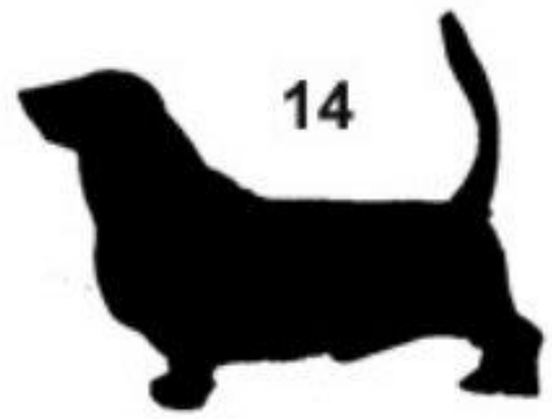
Straight, set far forward shoulders

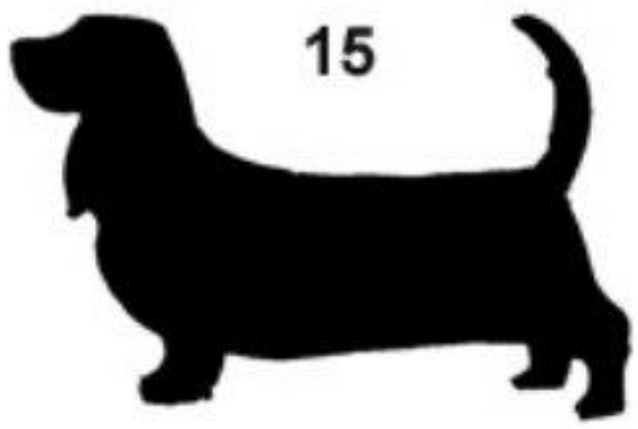


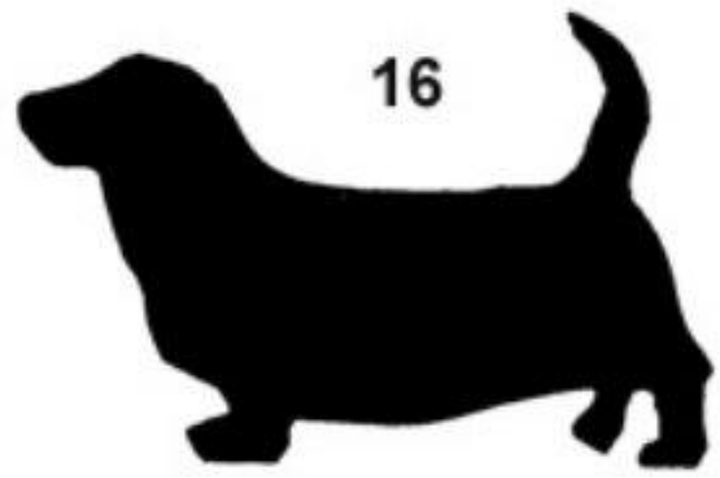
Undesirable silhouette

More Balanced Bassets









Look now at the silhouettes of more balanced specimens. Figure 16 appears dumpy but balanced. I included this one because l know it is actually a lovely specimen, but one who does possess a lot of loose skin - even that is nicely balanced over the body. The skin, however, can cause illusion, good and bad. This brings us to the next point: feeling for some features.

The good judge will feel to determine the existence of some traits. You must feel for the important parts. You must feel for prominent sternum because hanging skin can give the illusion of its presence. You must feel for the

smoothness of shoulder and ribbing length and spring, let down in rear, muscle tone. Let me re-emphasize - the dogs depicted in the first and third groups of illustrations "appear to be" balanced. Your best determiner of that fact, however, will be when you watch the dogs move. It will demonstrate how the dog uses what he has. Stacked dogs can give false impressions, positive and negative.

You have now checked the outline and felt for important parts, now you are ready to evaluate the soundness. Soundness, of course, could not be determined from the photos. Yet so many judges stand back (after they have examined and moved the dogs) and stare, then recheck a few heads to pick their winners. It's as if all else were equal, which is rarely the case. It would be wonderful if all else were perfect and we could make a decision on the great head! (Incidentally, rarely will you find so many nicely balanced dogs in the same class as pages of photo and silhouettes labeled as such.) Do not rely upon your eye alone and this stack. Just as markings create illusions so can clever handlers, well-trained stacked dogs, more or less loose skin, be confusing to the judge. The judge must feel for certain traits important to this hound. Keep in mind what this breed uses his parts for: the good Basset can stop, start, turn, go up, down, under with agility and ease. He is in no way clumsy.

Observing outline and palpating the structure of the dog still is not enough. You've checked general outline (stacked), felt for important items, and you might be able to predict fairly accurately how the exhibit will perform. However, you must move the dog to determine if he, indeed, uses what he 'apparently' has. Only by determining this are you certain you are considering the dog coming closest to the standard. In motion too, ask yourself does this head balance with this body? Is the front angulation equal to the rear angulation? Is the length of leg sufficient to go with the length of body? Your very best indicator of the structure in the dogs you are judging is in evaluating the gait.

In movement, what would you hope to see? (And I confine my remarks to the lateral move for it best determines balance. (Please read remarks on coming and going by Len Skolnick) First, you want to see the dog's topline remain level as he moves. If it bounces up and down, his structure is such that he is wasting motion and therefore energy. This reduces his endurance (refer to first paragraph of standard). You want to see him take a long stride, and both front stride and rear should be equal. You want to see that rear leg extend too, a kind of follow through. (see Skolnick article) Notice that many a "showman," instead "goes

nowhere fast" taking short, choppy steps and more steps than he should thus overworking and tiring. He extends neither in front nor rear—though he may be balanced, that is, equal at both ends. Further, can the dog increase or decrease speed easily, without breaking gait? A sound dog can do so. You are looking for ease and agility, a gait with effortlessness. You will not want to see hitches in the rear or breaking in the front, or any sign of weakness in the gait. Reread the first paragraph of our standard.

Shoulders—Poorly Angulated and Placed—Very Common Today

Grossly straight shoulders and front assembly

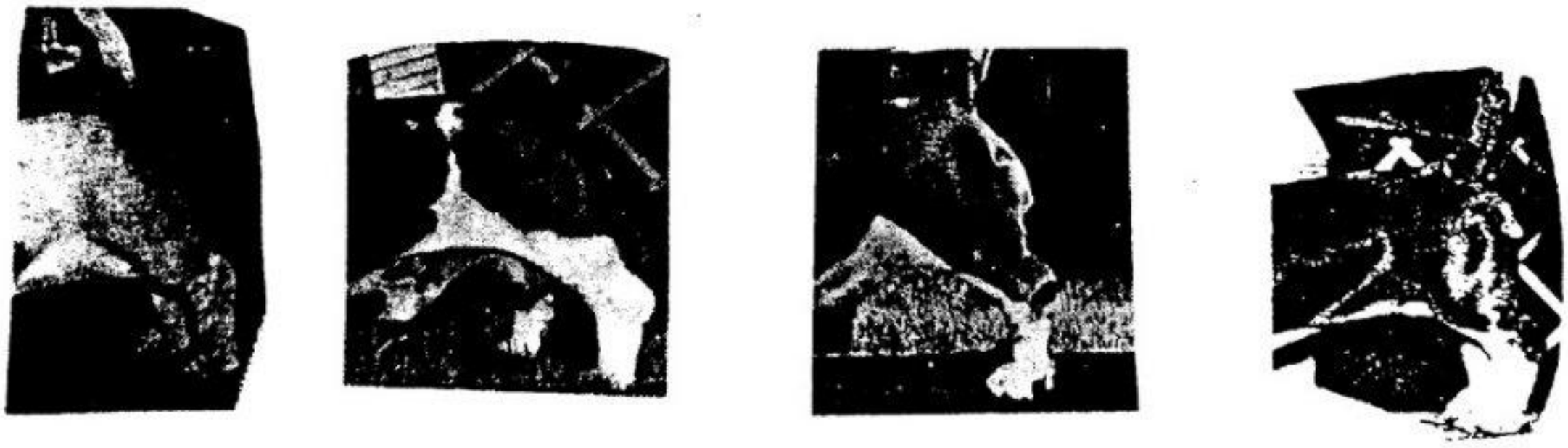
No forechest or sternum

No Forechest

Check this one for "Knuckling over, " a disqualifying fault

Look now at the above drawings which illustrate poor shoulders, a problem very prevalent in our breed and in most breeds today. In most cases the entire assembly is too far forward and the upper arm is short and the angulation poor. Why put the assembly further back on the body and why the length of upper arm and angulation? So that the weight of the dog is supported, and so that the dog can reach out in front of him. Again, good body support and a good amount of reach contribute to efficient movement which in turn will make for stamina and endurance. The 'heavy in the front' dogs depicted will make instead labored, short, choppy steps for they have short muscles (over short bones) that cannot expand for reach. I'll wager too that these dogs will be lumpy in the front for the front is heavy from overwork and too muscled up as a result of carrying excessive weight.

Poorly Angulated and Poorly Let Down Rears



Note now the above poorly angulated rears; they have especially straight stifles. The dogs will not drive or push from the rear. The action, instead, will be stiff and stilted. The standard calls for well let down stifle and short hocks for a reason. Remember you are not looking for speed; you are looking for agility.

My object was to give some visual aid to illustrate balance and some suggestions for evaluating balance and soundness as well as type in the Basset Hound. Enjoy your judging of this versatile hound and expect performance. To quote Dr. Skolnick, "Although the Basset is a long, low, massive dog with short, heavily boned legs and paws, he is also agile and sturdy, but slim enough to endure. In the show ring, observation of the gait, therefore, is the surest and best way to evaluate the Basset. There is frequent opinion that because the Basset has an unusual proportion he can be allowed unusual guidelines for his movement. On the contrary, his heavy structure requires excellent movement and the expected features of the movement are not far different from any other hunting dog built for endurance." Expect it; find it; and reward it.

Tally-Ho, Nov-Dec 1992

Article 5: What Every Prospective Basset Hound Judge Should Know

By Andrea Field

Today I will touch on a few of the facts and some of the myths about the breed to help you understand Basset Hounds. I do not plan to go through the standard line by line. Rather, I will talk about how I view Basset Hounds and hopefully, you will be able to find something in my little talk that will help you formulate your own "Basset Hound philosophy.“

First, let me say that I am not a breeder/judge per se and so am not afflicted with kennel blindness. I do admit to having my type preferences, but this comes from having been associated with the breed for over thirty years. I have learned that balance, proportion, and appropriate way of going influence me more than a particular "type.“

BASSET HOUND CHARACTER

Myth: The Basset is a comic hound who is better at clowning for the camera than at hunting.

Fact: The Basset is an excellent small game hunter and is all business in the field.

Always bear in mind that Basset Hounds are scent hounds and are happiest when out investigating smells. It is in the field that the true Basset personality is seen. The Basset, like other hound breeds can be aloof, preferring to keep his personality to himself. He can appear to be totally oblivious of his surroundings, OR he can be ridiculously happy and uncontrollably wriggly in the ring. Most Basset Hounds you will meet will not exhibit a wild love for showing. The "showing fool" in basset-dom is a one-in-a-million occurrence, but don't be taken in by his personality, he may be covering up for his lack of good conformation!

The important thing to remember is that the Basset Hound should NEVER be shy or sharp.

GAITING THE SHOW BASSET

Myth: Because Bassets are achondroplastic (dwarfs), do not expect them to move like other hounds.

Fact: Bassets are athletes of the first order; capable of traversing difficult terrain with grace and agility. They move as any other working hound—covering ground with purpose and economy of motion.

When I first became acquainted with the breed, it was considered a fact of life that a Basset Hound moved with his nose to the ground. Handlers grudgingly condescended to this fact and showed their hounds on a loose lead. Because many felt that this natural gait put the breed at a disadvantage in the group ring, and because many judges complained that they could not properly assess front movement with the head down, handlers started teaching bassets to trot around with their heads up. Those who did not take to moving with their heads up were "strung up" by their handlers. Personally, I feel that a dog straining against a lead is not a pretty sight and its movement is just as difficult to assess as when he moves with nose down. In cases where it appears that the dog's movement is impaired by the handler, ask to see the hound gait on a loose lead. If the handler does not comply, it's a pretty safe bet that there's a good reason for that non-compliance other than being hard of hearing.

A word about speed: Bassets move at different rates of speed, but never do they move so fast as to lose the athletic, deliberate, easy look. Unnatural speed often causes the dog to shorten his stride rather than lengthen it and the hound appears to scurry along. Maximum "reach and drive" is not obtained by speed so do not be taken in by the Basset Hound who passes by in a streak. Go for the one who takes his time and uses his well articulated joints to cover lots of ground with a minimum of effort. Always keep in mind that the Basset Hound is prized as a hunter because his slow, methodical hunting style suits those who hunt on foot.

HEAD

Myth: The Basset Hound is a "head "breed.

Fact: Yes, the head is important to establish "type," but a Basset does not hunt on the basis of a beautiful head.

Look for a head which is neither coarse or too refined.. "Slightly domed" means

different things to different people so you will find all sorts of topskull configurations. Place your emphasis on a prominent occipital protuberance and well-defined back skull. You should be able to see quite easily where the head joins the nicely arched neck. Beware the Basset skull that blends into the neck without clear definition. You are probably looking at "broken" head planes. Creeping into the basset profile is the slightly arched muzzle similar to the Dachshund "ram's nose" which I hope is just a passing fad. The muzzle should be straight in profile, equal in length and parallel (or nearly so) to the top skull with a moderate stop in between.

FOREQUARTERS

Myth: Good fronts are a dime-a-dozen.

Fact: Good fronts are as scarce as hen's teeth and not well understood.

Of all the components of a Basset Hound, the least understood is the front assembly. If you think of the shoulder blade and the upper arm as being equal in length and set at right angles to each other, you are well on your way. The shoulder blades are placed well back and obliquely. The forearm is crooked to help support the mass of the chest so that the feet appear under the hound but not so far under that both legs seem to be holding the hound up as if on a pedestal. A hound with the proper balance and stance will stand squarely on the both feet with an ever-so-slight turn-out.

You will not have any trouble seeing the properly laid back shoulder because you will note how smoothly the arched, muscular neck flows into the line of the withers. "Stuffy" necked Basset Hounds should alert you to one of two faults: either a neck which is too short; or steep shoulders, placed too far forward. If the hound appears to be wearing football padding under his ample folds of skin, he's got "loaded shoulders", a sure indication of an improper front.

The well placed front assembly will show off the prosternum. Be sure that when you examine for prosternum you are feeling bone not skin, fat or gristle. The sternum should not overpower, but should be a harmonious component of the forequarters.

Finding good fronts is like searching for the Holy Grail. When you see one

You will be tickled pink and you will reward it accordingly; you won't be able to help yourself. The secret is in learning how to spot the correct one.

BODY

The ribcage should be long and smooth and oval. However, when assessing puppies, you will often find lumps and bumps. These should disappear with maturity. The loin is fairly short and muscular. Topline is level, but you will discover that many Basset Hounds, especially bitches, are high in rear. When looking down, width at the shoulders should equal the width at the pelvis with a slight indentation at the loin. Tail set is high with no slope in croup to the base of the tail. The tail is carried gaily, you hope. A gay tail is important for its value in locating a Basset Hound in tall cover, so you do want to see it up and waving. However, if you have a so-so Basset with a gay tail, and a super Basset with a less than happy tail, go for the super Basset. You never know what might have affected the tail carriage before it entered the ring.

The underline should flow gradually up from the sternum to the flank. It is sometimes hidden by loose skin which forms a "skirt".

HINDQUARTERS

Hips should be ample. Again the bones of the upper thigh and second thigh form right angles matching the front angulation. Bassets tend to be high on hock and so stand naturally with their hind legs well under their bodies. This is frustrating to say the least for the handler with the hound that insists on placing one foot forward, (usually the one on the judge's side), in German Shepherd fashion. The dog with the proper length of hock will stand easily and squarely with his pasterns perpendicular to the ground and his feet pointed straight ahead. Well-rounded is the key word for the hindquarters, but you will see more stringy thighs than not. Rear feet are a trifle smaller than in front, but they should not be so small as to appear non-existent. If the hock joint is so covered with wrinkled skin that you cannot determine its articulation, do not hesitate to push the skin around for a check. It is important that the Basset have strong hocks for proper rear "drive"' and to lever his body over fences, walls, and other obstacles he might encounter in the field (or obedience ring!).

MOVEMENT

The key words are "DELIBERATE" and "EFFORTLESS". Remember, this hound should be capable of an eight hour "work day" and is to be followed ON FOOT by the hunter. Therefore speed is not of the essence; ENDURANCE is. Look for an unhurried, long striding trot rather than short, quick, choppy steps. Coming and going, the Basset Hound should move in a straight line without lumbering or rolling from side to side. The topline remains level.

CONDITIONING

Myth: Basset Hounds are naturally fat and sloppy.

Fact: Basset Hounds should be well-muscled and "hard" underneath the loose skin.

Large or small, you should expect to find firm flesh and not fat beneath the skin. The "Pillsbury Dough Boy" look is out of place for a working hound. Overweight Bassets were commonplace a few years ago and tolerated by judges. Today, most judges want to see fit Bassets and you should penalize the ones who have not had the benefit of an exercise program.

USE OF THE RAMP

If you anticipate a large Basset Hound assignment and you are not up to an hour or two of deep knee bends, by all means ask for a ramp! Judging Bassets can be made a little easier by using one and most superintendents will supply one as a matter of course. Be sure to request the ramp when accepting the assignment because the fact that you will be using a ramp must appear in the premium list. Most Bassets do not have a problem with ramps, but, as is always the case, there might be one who will not care for it. Judge it on the ground rather than make a case out of the situation. The proper ramp will be similar to a "Group" ramp with a "run-up ramp", and a platform, but will not have a "rundown ramp.. This is so that you, as judge, will be able to stand directly in front of the hound to begin your examination. If the platform has the extra ramp, ask to have it removed before you begin judging.

Editor's Note: Since the time this early article appeared, the Basset Hound Club of America is requesting that all judges use a ramp to judge the breed, regardless of the size of the entry.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Some handlers string up the Basset Hound's head to demonstrate the ample folds of skin. This often renders the head overdone; the ears set on too high with the flews and dewlap stretched unnaturally. Most handlers will lower the lead as you approach the dog for examination. If they do not, then ask them to so you will get a more pleasing picture of the hound's expression and conformation. Also, do not be afraid to lift the skin off the shoulders or for that matter, off any other part of the dog you want to examine more closely.

Some judges feel it necessary to "drop" the fronts to assess them. If you must resort to this practice, ask the handler to lift and gently return the dogs front assembly to the ground. Don't drop the dog yourself. (Actually, a mismatched front can be seen best while the dog is suspended. If you can't see what you are looking for with the feet planted on the ground, the fault - if there is one - is too miniscule to bother with).

Disqualifying Faults. Rarely, if ever does a "show" Basset Hound exceed the 15" height limit. However, if in doubt, do not hesitate to ask for the wicket. As for distinctly long hair, if it looks like a long-haired Dachshund, worry about it. Chances are you will never see one, nor will you see a knuckled-over front.

I hope this will give you a jumping off place for your lesson this afternoon. I expect you have not agreed with me on every point, but perhaps, something will stick in your mind that will help you formulate your own thoughts on what a good Basset Hound should be.

Article 6: Judging The Basset Hound

By Margaret S Walton

When Bassets first arrived on these shores they were brought to hunt as pack hounds. Little did those Masters dream that their wonderful, athletic, steady, docile hounds would turn into what we have today!!

The Basset Hound is NOT:

Block headed with a light eye and high ear set!
An overstuffed ottoman with a leg on each corner!
An unsound fronted hound with one foot heading north, the other west!
A short backed, clutsy clod who cannot make it around the ring, much less hunt for five hours in the field. Nor does he/she trip and stumble over feet due to poor shoulder placement.

The Basset IS:

An athlete, hard in body, muscled, with well-laid back shoulders, long body, sound front and rear movement. He/she has a quiet temperament, steady and sometimes almost a reticent nature, but NEVER shy or aggressive. The coat is hard and water repellent with little to no undercoat.

The head of the Basset has always been referred to as "a Bloodhound head, reduced". In the first British standard it states: "It is most perfect when it closest resembles the head of a bloodhound, with heavy flews and forehead wrinkled to the eyes." Since our first American standard for the breed was copied directly from the British with the change of only a word or two, we followed on for years. When the new and present standard was being worked on, the American Kennel Club stated they wanted no breed standard to refer to any other breed, thus eliminating the reference to the "bloodhound" head. Therefore the committee tried their best to describe the head without the reference. Even today, the general outline of the head is indeed bloodhound, although in most hounds we have lost the parallel planes; proper breeding could correct this in a very few generations.

I have always considered the entire forequarters of the Basset, including the neck, as one piece. The neck on a dog hound should be "stallion like" with a beautiful arch and very powerful, flowing into a well laid back shoulder (45 degree angle), the sternum MUST show prominently in front of the forelegs and the leg must wrap around the sternum giving the look of a "crook" but NEVER crooked. The leg from knee to foot should be straight or nearly so, a slight turning of BOTH front feet is permissible but NOT JUST ONE FOOT. One often reads articles written by "experts" stating that the front must turn out in order to balance the shoulder. I can produce photos of hounds of 85 to 100 years ago with perfectly lovely fronts and they also had excellent, well-laid-back

shoulders. If one places a ruler through the center of the front leg and go up through the shoulder, you will see exactly where the withers or top of the shoulder blade lie. Try this on any profile of a Basset.

The body should be long from sternum to set on of tail with an extremely SHORT loin, thus holding the spine in proper position. A hound with a long loin may eventually wind up with serious back problems.

The tail is set on as an extension of the spine and is carried with a slight curve - never “teapot”, bouncing off the back nor straight up as is sometimes seen.

When viewed in profile, the Basset should be 1/3 leg and 2/3 body in order to be functional in the job for which it was bred. Too low would inhibit proper movement and too high gives a very leggy appearance. Statements have been made that a 15’ hound would be leggy but that is not necessarily true. I once had a top winning and Best in Show hound who measured 14 3/4” and (officially) weighed 67 pounds, in top show condition and was the exact ratio of 1/3 to 2/3. Breeding does tell.

In the overall picture a basset is a regal, elegant, balanced hound with lovely head and expression, well-laid back shoulders, long body, and a rear no wider than his front. If the shoulders are not loaded and straight, the rear need NOT be overdone nor blobby. If a hound stands ‘hocked under” (hind legs forward under the body) you may be sure he is weak in the rear. If the exhibitor has the hound stretched out so it is standing on “tippy toe” he is probably trying to straighten out a poor topline.

A Basset should be judged coming and going as major faults in the breed are front and rear and are better assessed in this manner.

Many judges find this breed difficult to judge so an ideal solution would be to go out with a recognized pack and watch them do what they were bred for. If this is not possible, then spend some time ringside and study the breed. It will pay off with better judging!

Tally-Ho, January/February 2000

Article 7: Let's Talk Basset Hound Breed Type

By Col Robert Booth

The Breed Type of the Basset Hound is very much the thing that initially attracts all of us to the particular breed. Breed "type" is essentially defined as being those specific physical characteristics which distinguish one purebred canine from another. Breed type is that collection of obvious physical characteristics which differentiate, even for the relatively inexperienced dog person, the difference between the Basset Hound and all of the other AKC recognized breeds. In the case of the Basset Hound, those physical characteristics are: Heavy Bone (heavier in bone, size considered, than any other breed of dog). Short legs (any dog over 15" tall at the withers [top of the shoulder blade], is disqualified from conformation show competition). These first two characteristics of this breed are present as a result of a genetic condition known as Achondroplasia, an arrested development of the long bones of the dog. Simply stated, the Basset Hound is a dwarf. The extremely Long Ears, which are set on low, and far back on the head at the base of the skull, will, when drawn forward, fold well around the end of the nose. They are velvety in texture and hang in loose folds with the ends curling slightly inward. The Eyes are soft, sad, and slightly sunken, showing a prominent haw and should be dark brown in color. The haw is the third eyelid of the lower eyelids, all of which contribute to the soft, sad expression of the Basset Hound. The Loose Skin is probably the breed's most well known breed characteristic and, which over the whole of the head is loose, falling in distinct wrinkles over the brow when the head is lowered. The skin is loose and elastic.

Those characteristics described above are the essence of the Basset Hound. For those desiring to judge the breed, your challenge will be to find the structurally soundest hound that possesses all of those characteristics. Those who engage in the breeding and exhibiting of the Basset Hound have the biggest challenge of all. You must be super critical of your hounds in order to insure structural soundness along with proper breed type. The reason that this is a significant challenge is because the very characteristics that make the Basset a Basset are the very same genes that create havoc in terms of breeding for, and consistently producing, structural soundness.

Article 8: Type – The Ultimate Goal

By Dawn Towne

When Basset fanciers get together, the talk, of course, turns to their dogs. In this manner, I have heard such statements as: "I love to show Bassets because you can win with anything," "I started breeding Bassets because I intend to change this breed," "I love to show Bassets because they come in all shapes and sizes," "The Basset head should resemble that of a Great Dane."

Perhaps you have heard comments similar to these. It is that kind of fuzzy thinking that I find troubling. I worry that essential Basset characteristics may become diluted or distorted to the point that breed type is lost.

Variation in type is natural and inevitable, so it is not surprising to encounter fairly wide differences in style among Basset Hounds at any given show. Mrs. Margaret S. Walton, acknowledged pillar of our breed, has addressed this topic.

On page 29 in her book, ***The New Basset Hound***, Mrs. Walton defines type as ". . . the Standard for the breed . . ." and style as ". . . your own interpretation of the Standard." She then adds, "A strain . . . is your bloodline, developed over years of trial and error, giving you what you believe the Basset should be."

The issue of variation is fundamental to the survival of our Bassets as the unique creatures that we all love. All who show, breed or judge bear responsibility of understanding the difference between acceptable style variation and lack of type.

The American Kennel Club is speeding up the process of recognizing new breeds. People in our breed need to take note because there are several other Basset varieties in other countries. True, they are not yet recognized here, but who knows? Just as an example, in her book, ***The Complete Basset Hound***, Mercedes Braun describes several French Basset breeds, including the Basset Bleu de Gascogne, the Basset Artesian Normand, the two sizes of Basset Griffon Vendeen, and the Basset Fauve de Bretagne. Given the fact that the smaller Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen, popularly known in the U.S. as the PBGV, is already with us and the possibility of a fast-track introduction of other Basset breeds, it would seem to be a time to give careful thought to those essential qualities that say to all of us, "This is a Basset Hound, and no other."

Basset Hound type has been discussed since breeders began writing standards. At the end of the 19th century, Sir Everett Millais wrote in his Standard, "To begin with, the head is the most distinguishing part of all breeds. The head of the Basset Hound is most perfect when it closest resembles a Bloodhound's. It is long and narrow, with heavy flews, occiput prominent … and forehead wrinkled to the eyes which should be kind and show the haw. The general appearance of the head must present high breeding and reposeful dignity." (p. 30, ***The New Basset Hound***).

According to Mrs. Walton (p. 31, ***The New Basset Hound***), Captain Godfrey Heseltine took exception to the thought that the head was most important and went so far as to say, ". . . it was not so either in the Basset or the Dachshund, both of which are more distinguished from other hounds by the disproportion between their length and height than any other feature."

In his Standard, Heseltine says, "The chest should be deep and full. The body should be long and low . . ." (p. 33, ***The New Basset Hound***).

Robert Booth, in his book, ***The Official Book of the Basset Hound***, when describing our breed mentions ". . . the most obvious requirements loose skin, profuse wrinkles, long ears, a soft sad expression and very heavy bone."

On pages 46 and 47 in ***The New Basset Hound***, Mrs. Walton takes up the subject of the sternum, which our Standard says should be "prominent,…showing clearly in front of the legs." She elaborates on this topic by describing the sternum as ". . . a properly shaped structure of bone and cartilage extending well back under the hound's body." She also says, "The Basset Hound uses the sternum much as a sled does its runners and it is therefore an absolute necessity."

In quoting the opinions of noted breeders past and present, my purpose is not to advocate the viewpoint of any one over the other. Each statement was selected because some aspect or aspects of Basset Hound type was ably described. Taking into consideration all of the quotations, I think we should all be able to agree that those traits imperative to our breed should include a proper head, long ears, loose skin, a long and low profile, very heavy bone, and a prominent sternum, including a deep keel.

Before writing this article, I spoke informally to breeders from various parts of the country and was interested to learn that there is some concern about many aspects of breed type discussed by the authors I have quoted.

Mention was made of lack of sternum, too much leg, lack of skin and lack of bone exhibited by some dogs being shown today - all important aspects of proper breed type. Other concerns included such faults as short upper arms, long stifles and roached or sagging toplines. While important, I consider these faults to be structural in nature and outside the scope of this article.

Mention also was made of the ratio of body to leg, specifically the well-known "one-third to two-thirds leg to body" favored by some breeders. It is important to note that the Standard allows for variations under and up to the one-third limit. Differences in style can and do occur on this point, and all are legitimate. It is the leg that is more than one-third the height of the dog that should not be tolerated.

Comments also included use of the two-to-one ratio for body length to height. While our current Standard is silent on this topic, a study of Basset illustrations from the late 19th century to present should disabuse any notion that the Basset should have a square or tall appearance - those proportions being, in my opinion, beyond the realm of style preference and into the land of Lack of Type. In profile, the Basset should never be confused with the Beagle, for instance.

Some breeders will produce dogs with narrower heads or longer ears than others, or more bone or more loose skin. Some will breed larger or smaller dogs or concentrate on certain colors. Other variations will certainly occur. Staying within the acceptable limits is the key. It does a disservice to our breed to present a dog with light bone, no sternum, too much leg or other lacks [deviations of type] as being correct. These are faults, not virtues.

Kennel blindness is a common ailment. We probably all have suffered from it at one time or another. To view our precious dogs with a cold and critical eye can be difficult and downright painful. Concerning this problem, a wise breeder once gave this advice: "Look for the faults of your own dogs and the virtues in others. If someone is breeding dogs with a trait that your dogs lack, don't be too proud to breed out of your own kennel or even to bloodlines with which you are unfamiliar. Then will real progress me made."

The perfect Basset Hound is yet to be born. Given that truth, we all exhibit dogs that are less than perfect. For example, a dog may be presented that hasn't a great head but has other virtues . . . or one that has a beautiful head may be lacking in a different area. Showing our dogs gives us an opportunity to compare our accomplishments with those of others. Win or lose, seeing dogs other than our own can and should be a learning experience. Looking for the good points of dogs presented by others (which can be especially hard when they have just

beaten our own in the ring) is a helpful way of directing our own efforts. It is easier to find faults of a dog (to "take the dog apart") and harder to see the dog as a whole - a combination of good and bad points (to "put the dog back together"). Good judges do this and give us all an independent, objective opinion for our consideration. . .within the Standard. Poor judges either disregard the Standard or pick a certain style no matter what - ignoring other, better dogs because they don't fit the judge's style preference.

In the May-June issue of Tally-Ho, Claudia Lane submitted an article written by Elizabeth Hugo on the subject of quality. Ms. Hugo makes an appeal to look for quality in a dog, not just lack of faults. Quality, she acknowledges, is just one of those hard to define things - like the elusive definition of "an eye for a dog." But is quality really that hard to explain? I think not. I think we can be more explicit.

When critiquing the quality of a dog, I think we can consider soundness, temperament, health and intelligence as well as type. In order for a dog to be a superior purebred, however, excellence in type is imperative. That is not to say that a healthy, sound dog with no serious type faults cannot contribute to a good breeding program. Somewhat plain animals possessing other superior attributes can and have proved useful when bred properly.

For Basset fanciers, though, the ultimate goal must be excellence in Basset Hound type or the breed as we know it cannot survive. Judges need to reward typey dogs with a few minor faults over dogs with fewer faults but lacking in type.

Some would argue that type is useless if a dog is unsound. A judge, old in the l960s, once said, "Whenever I'm asked which is most important, type or soundness, I always reply: 'Soundness without type? We might as well go to a dog shelter, pick out two crossbreds and breed them together."

Perhaps it is really not possible to divorce soundness and type, and certainly the very best Basset Hounds are both sound and typey . . . but in the end, what do we have without type?

Perhaps you have been wondering why the current U.S. breed standard was not used exclusively in writing this article. Put quite simply, our Standard does not predate the Basset Hound. Just the opposite. Early standards tell us where we came from. They give us the long view. Now it is up to us to decide where

we are going. Will we stay true to the origins of our breed or take too many by-ways and end up with a dog entirely different from that intended by early Basset Hound fanciers? Inattention to breed type will do just that. That is not what I would like to see happen. I hope you feel the same way.

Dawn and husband, Garry Towne, are breeders and exhibitors of the Von Skauton Bassets of New York state.

The Bugler, March 2004

Article 9: The Basset Front Assembly – Three Views

By Marge Skolnick, Paul and Helen Nelson and Joan Sholz

By Marge Skolnick

To get a good mental image of what the running basset should look like, read over the standard for the breed…Here I would like to add a few comments on how this structure affects the running and trailing hound.

You should, of course, start with a hound that is slim and well muscled, healthy and free of disease. Your hound can do his best only in that kind of condition.

A key factor in endurance is a well angulated rear, muscled for drive. When the head is carried low with nose to the ground for trailing, greater propulsive force comes from the hind limbs.

The front structure should have deep and ample rib spring with the chest well supported by forelimbs. Hunting posture requires the forelimbs to support considerably more than half the weight of the body. For the chest to be supported, the legs must drop from under the chest and not beside it or at the outside of it. Part of the support necessarily will require the feet to turn out slightly. A good, powerful front structure without the strong driving rear may enable the dog to have plenty of initial speed, but on the long run he may at least figuratively fall on his face. A chest might be too deep as well as too shallow, but it can't be too deep provided that: 1. It is well supported by the legs, and 2. it

is balanced with the rear. The solution is not to have a more shallow ribcage, round and tubular rather than oval, since this will tend to interfere with the free action of the legs. The feet should be well up on the thick pads to take the shock of the heavy weight pounding along on an arduous run. A strong and well muscled neck with some length is desirable for a dog carrying the head low to scent. Too short a neck may be a result of loaded or steep shoulders.

We have patterned the basset head after that of the bloodhound and we want our "feller" to have a good "smeller" too. We have heard it said that the loose skin, dewlaps and long ears contribute to "sweeping in the scent."

We can't really prove or disprove that, although very tight and dry dogs also seem to have sometimes exceptional scenting abilities. However, we would like everyone to know at a glance that we are running bassets and not beagles or some other breed. It is also well to remember that the qualities of loose skin, pendulous ears, lip and dewlap, eye showing haw, although breed characteristics, should not be exaggerated. Excesses which might result in unhealthy or nonfunctional hounds must be avoided, just as limits are set in some breeds on coat length.

What sort of proportion should our hounds have? What leg length? How heavy? How long in body? Why was the basset bred for short legs? The answer to the last question is obvious—to slow him down. What limitations should be placed on this? We do not want our hound to lose the game on account of fatigue. There is a limit to how low we want him to be (and the same reasoning applies to how heavy we want him to be). Our standard asks that "the distance from the deepest point of the chest to the ground, while it must be adequate to allow free movement when working in the field, is not to be more than 1/3 of the total height at the withers of an adult basset." Body length should be measured from the front of the brisket (not from the forelegs) to the base of the tail to evaluate the total body length. If the forelegs are forward of the deepest part of the chest, the hound might actually appear longer than one with proper supportive placement. Also, true proportions are apparent on a slim, well muscled hound, whereas the proportions of length, bone, and overall size may be quite changed by fat and skin.

If our basset as described so far has the proper rear, front, muscles, and proportions, he is going to move well and effortlessly and that is going to be our most important test of his structure.

How is it that some of our hounds that fall far short of the ideal in structure manage to run rather well, indeed well enough to become field champions?

First of all, it is certain that such a hound has the right characteristics for performance, especially that of desire (sometimes called "heart"), and he has this strongly enough to overcome his physical handicaps. Still, in the long run (I mean literal long run), if he must compete with another hound of equal ability but better physical endowment, he will wear out. Those longer runs in second series and absolute winner contests will be his nemesis. With compensatory muscle development and plenty of "heart" you may get a fair athlete, perhaps a field champion, but the work will be harder and the risks higher. We owe it to our hounds to breed the best bodies we can. This may take some selection and time. Top show or field dogs are seldom "one generation wonders." With this in mind we should not become discouraged by remarks criticizing the appearance of "all" of the field bassets. All show bassets are not equally good either, none are perfect and very few are put to a field test.

By Paul and Helen Nelson

Probably the most commonly seen fault in the basset show ring today is that of the too far forward shoulder assembly, and one of the biggest reasons that it is so common is that it is not easily detected. We would hazard a guess that it plagues 90 percent of the dogs even in the best entries, and yet in most cases the exhibitors are only vaguely aware of it and in even more cases the judges seem to be totally unaware of it.

No basset can hope to be considered structurally correct whose shoulders are not back far enough on the body so that the legs will be directly under the lowest part of the body. This is the only way he can possibly have the correct center of gravity. Remember, the front legs of a basset (and all other very short-legged breeds) must support most of the body weight, and they must be under the body to do so. Any other placement means that the weight, instead of being actually supported, is being suspended, and when this occurs the entire body balance is thrown off. The ultimate result is that areas not designed to carry the load must compensate for this extra burden, and we then see overly developed neck and shoulder muscles, or popping elbows, or sometimes even complete crippling of the front legs, a much too common phenomenon in our breed. There are, of course, other reasons for these faults too, but one of the biggest reasons is often the least known or understood, and in nearly every case where the shoulder slope seems good, it is the placement that is at fault.

The basset front is the most critical of all the short-legged breeds because he carries twice the weight he should for his height; hence, what might cause minor faults in other breeds become major breakdowns in bassets after age and weight begin to take their toll. Basset judges and breeders should thoroughly understand the balance that must be maintained in order to keep the basset from eventually being reduced to a useless cripple. In the basset who forever leans backward when posed in exhibition, the obvious problem (with the exception of the lazy dog) is that the center of gravity lies somewhere just behind the front legs and the weight that should be over the legs is back just far enough that he finds it more comfortable to stand with a sag. Conversely, the dog who is just on the brink of falling forward when posed is quite often fighting the opposite problem of a center of gravity that falls just in front of his legs, and these dogs usually have a better topline than the former group, but a weakness in the front legs that borders on knuckling. In both cases, the factor in common is the incorrect placement of the shoulders, and it can be easily identified by the careful observer, by a close inspection of the forechest or, more properly, the lack of it. When the shoulder assembly is too far forward, proportionately more of the chest will be found behind the front legs, but the dog whose shoulders are placed back where they belong will show a big, full chest with a prominent sternum clearly visible well in front of the legs. This has no relation to a fat dog or a thin dog; the sternum, or breastbone itself should be clearly visible a considerable distance in front of the shoulders. Great depth of chest - or fat - sometimes gives a deceiving appearance, but closer examination will show whether or not the sternum itself is actually out where it belongs.

A clever handler can sometimes hide the problem when the dog is posed, but the minute the dog moves it becomes readily apparent. The dog whose shoulders are too far forward is easily recognized as he moves toward the observer, for when he moves the forechest settles back between and rather behind the front legs and the forechest tends to disappear.

We are being told that we must have straight legs because some judges want straight legs and we won't win without them. We've been told by advocates of the straight leg that the breeders had to put a straight leg on the dachshund in order to win, and you'll have to do the same in bassets. The dachshund standard nowhere calls for a straight leg but rather calls for a front leg that any self-respecting basset should be pleased to own: a leg where the forearm curves in under the chest and the foot turns slightly outward. The best dachshunds to be seen in the ring have exactly that type of front, and those that are truly straight-legged are invariably swivel-shouldered, loose in elbow and quite often rather

pigeon-toed and flat-footed. The only straight-legged bassets who are not too broad and loose through the shoulders are those who are leggy, and in their case the straight leg can function properly only because the body is predominantly above the level of the elbow. If the basset's body is down between his legs where it belongs, then those legs must curve under the body in order to support it. The feet must turn slightly outward in order to broaden the base of support and to keep him from being top-heavy. If we are to accept straight legs, we must then accept one of two alternatives: a tall, leggy dog who is sound, or a short-legged dog who is unsound. But a straight leg on a low-slung dog cannot exist with a sound structure and a good front movement. Straight legs, if properly short, can only produce a dog whose shoulders are too far forward, or in the case of the dog whose shoulders are back where belong, a dog whose body is suspended between the front legs rather than supported by them. In either case, the stamina of the dog is seriously affected because he must work so much harder to cover the same ground as the dog who is structurally correct. The show ring does not tell on such dogs in relation to stamina because the time duration in the ring is too short, but the future of the breed will tell because if these faults are continually bred together, sooner or later, the entire breed will reflect a gross deterioration.

By Joan Scholz

The common cry among basseteers is that poor judging, indifferent breeding, and a gross lack of knowledge in both categories prevail, especially in regard to fronts.

Any endeavor in order to be highly successful must have a clear-cut set of guidelines. In choosing to take a hard look at the basset standard regarding forequarters to discover the reason for confusion to judges and breeders, I found the section on forequarters to be somewhat like a bikini: what it shows is of interest, but what it doesn't show is vital. For instance, the standard says, "the shoulders are well laid back and powerful. Steepness in shoulder, fiddle fronts and elbows that are out are serious faults. Knuckling of the front legs is a disqualification." What the standard doesn't say is how the front should be made to avoid the presence of these faults which would be vital information to judges and breeders alike.

The entire shoulder assembly should be far enough back on the dog so that the front leg when viewed from the side and when perpendicular to the body covers the very deepest point of the chest thereby putting the support of the leg under the heaviest part. When the shoulder assembly is too far forward a clever handler can position the legs and feet to be convincing when set up. But, the jig is up

when he moves the dog whose chest will seem to disappear and flatten between the two oncoming legs. In fact, in extreme cases of forward shoulder placement, the chest will seem to sink back in between the moving legs. Unless the heaviest part of the basset— the deepest point of the chest—is being supported in the crooks of powerful heavy-boned forelegs, the shoulder placement is incorrect, and this tremendous weight is therefore being suspended from, as opposed to being supported by, these legs that in time will give in under the strain and become unsound. Hark the remark, "You never know with a basset. It can fall apart in front as late as two years old." An improperly built front or improper weight distribution of which you were unaware finally did him in.

Assume our basset has his shoulders back far enough on his body so that the front leg when perpendicular to the body covers the deepest point of the chest. His shoulder placement is correct. On to correct shoulder angulation and assembly. The points that must be made are these: 1. The shoulder blade and upper arm must be of approximately equal length; 2. the shoulder blade and upper arm must meet to form a right angle; 3. the elbow must be set in a vertical line below the withers, closely hugging the body.

The first thing that comes to mind after rereading the above paragraph is that I'd guess a healthy proportion of readers don't really know what or where the upper arm is. It is not the upper part of the foreleg under the elbow as you may think. The upper arm of a dog is just where the upper arm of a human is—above the elbow. It's the bone that goes from the elbow to meet the blade bone at the shoulder.

So, if you have the shoulder the proper distance back on the body and if you have a blade bone almost equal to an upper arm in length which meet to form a right angle and if you have a tight elbow below the withers in a vertical line, you have what the standard doesn't say makes up the proper front of a basset as far as the shoulder assembly is concerned.

If, however, you have a shoulder set too far forward on the body, a blade bone and upper arm of unequal length and/or not meeting at a 90 degree angle, or an elbow set too far forward or back to be in a vertical line with the withers, you have a basset that will have any of the faults described in the standard depending on which or how many of the faults in assembly your hound possesses.

If you have just hoisted your basset to the grooming table and have set him up, measured and checked angles and vertical lines and are convinced he's correct in shoulder placement and assembly, don't start blowing your horn yet! You

(Three Views, p 7)

have checked your hound from only one side. The tricky basset quite often measures just fine on one side while the other side has a shorter upper arm which will eventually cause a knuckling of one leg. Make sure both sides are equal. Then blow your horn!

While your basset is still up there on the table, check to see that "the chest is deep and full with prominent sternum showing clearly in front of the legs," as the standard states, and that his chest is not so narrow it causes wrists to touch and too much turn-out (fiddle front), nor so broad it interferes with free forward movement, and, that he sets on short powerful legs supported by massive, tough, strong feet inclined equally a bit outward so that viewed from the front the outermost point of the foot and the outermost point of the shoulder meet in a vertical line. Regardless of not-so-current fads and fancies for feet that point exactly forward, such a dog is not only incorrect according to the standard (which is extremely clear on this point), but not properly balanced.

If your dog checks out on these points, he has the ideal basset front and he surely is a rare bird. Why is a good front so rare? Look to our guidelines - the standard. Are they clear enough, descriptive enough, precise enough? Does anyone read them?

Tally-Ho, May/June 1984

(Booth, Fronts, p 1)

Article 10: Let's Talk Basset Hound Fronts

By Col Robert Booth

In the last column we discussed Basset Hound breed type in general and we learned that one of the distinctive characteristics of the Basset is that it is a short legged, heavy boned dog. We also noted that these two characteristics are a part of our breed type as a result of a genetic condition known as Achondroplasia, an arrested development of the long bones otherwise known as dwarfism. This condition manifests itself primarily in the dog's front end.

It is my experience that improper front structure is singularly the most commonly observed, least understood, fault in the Basset Hound. And no one

particular avocation has a lock on this understanding, or the lack thereof, whether it be Breeder, Exhibitor or Judge! I think that a part of this problem stems from the fact that many of us use certain common, but not necessarily technically correct terminology, to discuss with each other, what it is that we are observing in a particular exhibit. Only by being very specific can we identify the real cause of the problem that we are observing. To simply state that the hound has "a bad front" just doesn't contribute to understanding the problem.

Heading the list of front structure problems in the Basset Hound almost certainly has to be improper shoulder blade "set-on", or location. Many are set on too far forward on the dog, resulting in front legs which come down forward of the deepest point of the chest. Ideally, the tip of the shoulder blade (Scapula) should be located between the third and fourth thoracic vertebrae. Unfortunately this is not something that one can normally "feel" for, so one must develop an "eye" for proper location through education and experience. Your first clue to impropriety, however, IS easily observable—if the back side of the foreleg (radius and ulna) does NOT intersect the deepest point of the chest, SOMETHING IS WRONG! It may not always be the "set on" location that is at fault since steep shoulders and/or short upper arms can also cause the same result, that of the hound's forelegs not coming down under its center of gravity!

Another commonly observed problem is that of mismatched fronts. This condition generally is as a result of an unequal amount of crook (curvature) in each of the forelegs. This condition is easily observable to the trained eye when viewing such foreleg dissimilarity from the front while the dog is in the stacked position. For those not quite so experienced as to immediately notice what may be a subtle difference, an immediate clue will the unequal turnout of the front feet. Other factors can and do contribute to mismatched fronts as well. These may either excessive pastern length; weakness in the pastern; flat foot pads resulting in splayed feet; and/or combinations, in varying degrees, of all of the foregoing anomalies. One other mismatch that occurs from time to time is a slight difference in the length of the upper arms (humerus). Another thing that we are seeing more of these days, and which may be becoming a significant problem, is one of the front feet that is inclined a trifle inward!

If any of the conditions outlined above are present in a hound, they will be even more readily observable when the dog is moving as they will adversely affect proper movement. The Basset Hound front is likely the most critical of all of the short legged breeds because be carries twice the weight he should for his height.

Consequently, what might cause minor faults in other breeds become major breakdowns in Bassets after age and weight take their toll. Space in this column does not permit the liberty of detailed information concerning all of the anomalies which can and do exist in the Basset Hound's front structure. Those truly interested in learning more about this unique breed, be they Breeders, Exhibitors or Judges, will want to attend one of our major educational events of the year, the National Specialty.

Article 11: Understanding Shoulders and Upper Arms In the Basset Hound

Pat Fellman Gellerman

We have a good standard in comparison to some of the other hound standards. However, in reading the paragraph on shoulders and elbows, it is a help to go over to the "What to Look For" column in our interpretive comments booklet. Here it is explained that the "shoulder assembly should be far enough back on the body. The perpendicular front leg should, in profile, cover the deepest point of the chest, thereby putting the support of the leg under the deepest part. The shoulder blade should be laid back at a 45 degree angle. The shoulder blade and the upper arm should be of approximately equal length. The shoulder blade and upper arm should meet to form a right angle (90 degree)."

What really is a well angulated shoulder? Numerous breeders and judges concentrate on the relationship of the points of the shoulder blades at the withers with the elbows. The positioning of the upper arm is completely disregarded. (Unfortunately our standard does not discuss the upper arm.) This disregard of the positioning of the upper arm can lead to incorrect evaluations of Basset fronts.

Figure I, reprinted from the BHCA interpretive comments booklet, illustrates a good shoulder assembly. Figure II illustrates a basset with straight shoulders and a steep upper arm. The Basset illustrated in Figure I is obviously superior to the Basset illustrated in Figure II. But how could we ascertain this if we pay attention only to the relation between the withers and the elbows?

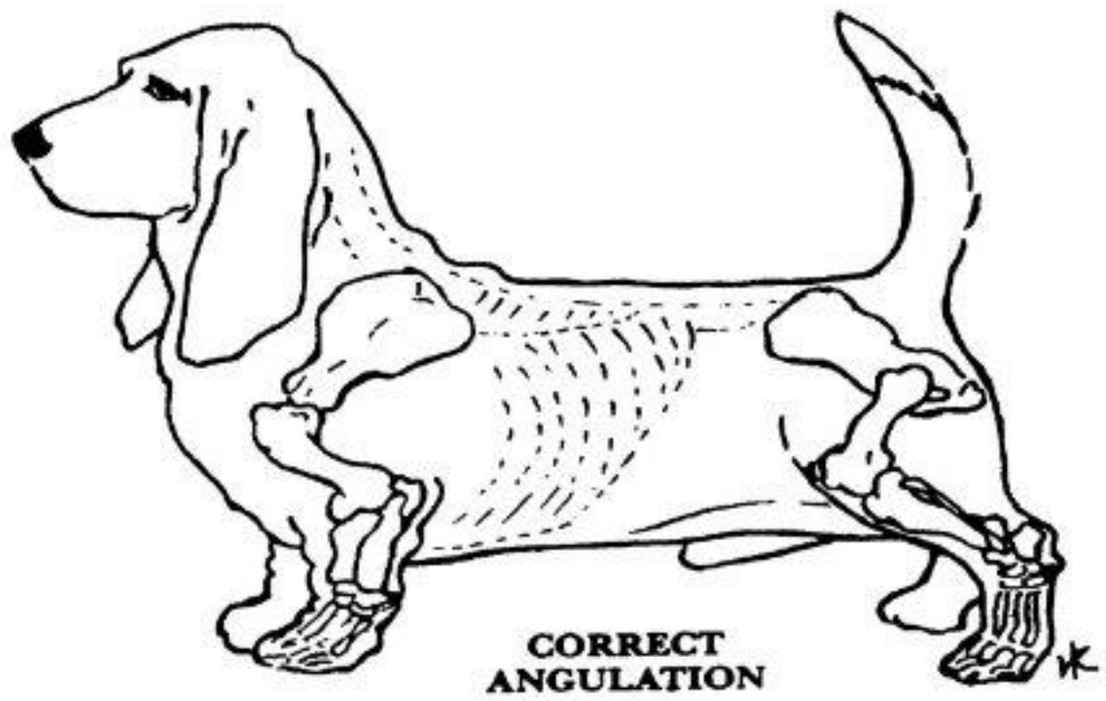


Figure I

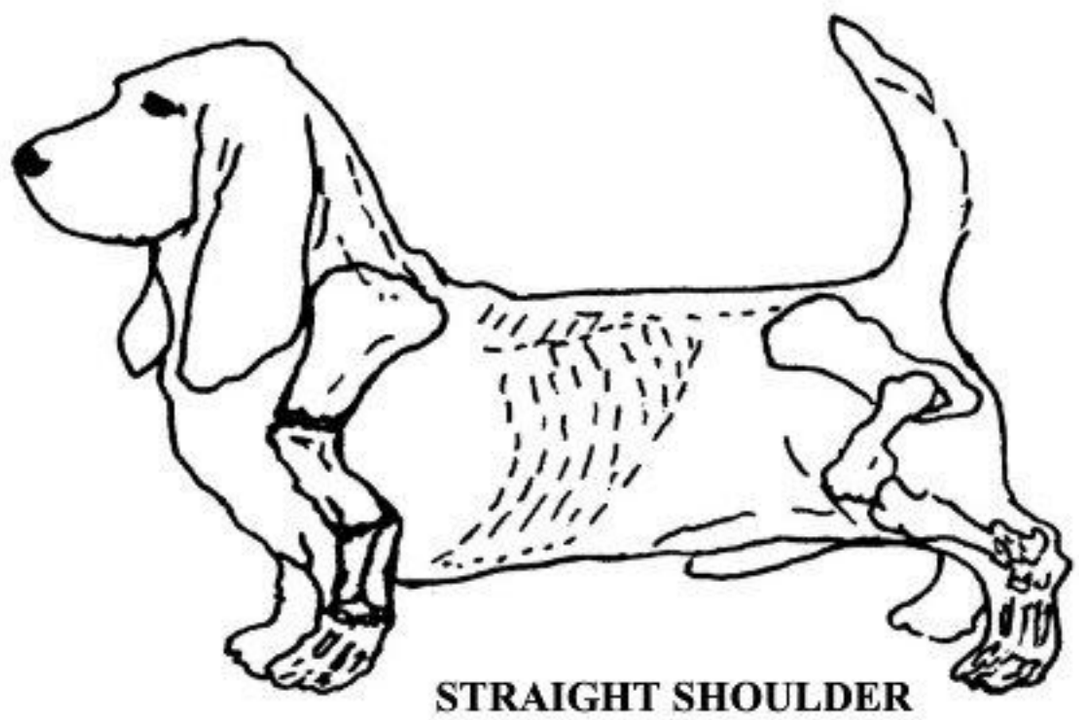


Figure II

If we draw an imaginary line vertically from the withers to the ground and it passes behind the elbow, the dog has a good shoulder (Figure I). So far so good. But if the dog has a steep upper arm, such a line will still pass behind the elbow when the angle at the shoulder joint is greater than it should be (Figure II). Therefore, in using this method, any variation from the correct in the positioning of the upper arm will give the appearance of good shoulders. The vertical line will come behind the elbow even if the shoulder blade is not correctly set.

Conversely, the slightest variation from correct in the lay-back of the shoulder blade will give the appearance of poor shoulders as long as the upper arm is correctly positioned. In this way a dog with correct upper arms but slightly steep shoulders will be classified as having poor front angulation, whereas one with incorrect upper arms will be commended for having good shoulders.

Why are we so concerned with shoulders in a hunting dog? When you have

straight shoulders and no bend to the upper arm (in other words, the more the bones tend to be vertical), the more the pounding is transmitted to the bones and joints themselves. Try jumping off a step without bending your knees. A hound with steep upper arms would quickly break down under conditions of prolonged hunting expeditions over rough terrain for which the Basset was intended.

Also the steeply set shoulder blade and upper arm is forward on the ribcage and causes the whole length of the body to come behind the shoulders, putting a strain on the back and leading to dipping toplines and swaybacks later in life.

Remember that the upper arm and shoulder blade are strapped to the ribcage by muscles. Looseness in front can give odd front movement including flapping elbows, paddling, and knitting. Side gaiting a straight front can give good forward reach but cannot bring the forefoot well back under the body. Also, the bouncing movement of the topline is the steep upper arm causing a dip behind the withers by raising the points of the shoulder blades above the level of the back.

Although steep shoulders are fifth under serious faults in our interpretive comments booklet, this fault does affect the neck, elbows, chest, and gait. Perhaps good fronts are the most difficult part to breed. We are seeing fronts typical of those found in terriers in our scent and sight hounds. If a judge puts up a straight front, he or she is not judging according to the Basset standard.

Tally-Ho Jan-Feb 1984

Article 12: "Deliberate" Movement In The Basset Hound

By Michael Sosne

The word "deliberate" appears in our standard regarding movement. Of late, there has been increasing discussion of this word, and its meaning, by many Basset breeders.

What does this mean as it relates to the movement of the Basset Hound? One word can be intentional or purposeful with the emphasis on purpose. I am sure there are other words that can describe the Basset's deliberate movement.

Do keep in mind before you attempt to define this term that there are other

preliminary concerns regarding movement that need consideration. Shoulder angulation and rear end angulatlon are two anatomical areas that produce movement.

If the animal is moving "deliberately", he/she will be covering ground with the least amount of steps and with little or no "overflow" of movement (with the latter most important). That is, there are no extra movements of limbs varying from efficient placement of the dog's feet. Wide in front varies from this efficient placement of limbs, hence, causing excessive "overflow" movement that could not be called or termed "deliberate". Other atypical modes of movement are not to be considered in the definition of deliberate. Cow-hocks, close in the rear, paddling, crossing over, etc., are some of these atypical forms of movement which do not constitute deliberate movement.

As breeders of the Basset Hound, function is of primary importance. He/she should be able to hunt and sustain a day's work. If the movement is to be deliberate, the animal is preserving as many steps as he/she can to prolong the work it is bred to do. This, then, would be deliberate, or as previously stated, purposeful or intentional. It is not a thought process, but a natural situation for sustained hunting.

The next time you observe a Basset, yours or others, view the movement and ask "Is that the proper deliberate movement for its function?".

Tally-Ho, March/April 1991

Article 13: Rib Cages In The Basset Hound

By Brenda Jubin

On the subject of ribs the basset hound standard is deceptively clear. It reads: "The rib structure is long, smooth, and extends well back. The ribs are well sprung, allowing adequate room for heart and lungs. Flatsidedness and flanged ribs are faults." The wording is simple enough. Yet many breeders and judges find it difficult to elaborate on these words in any coherent fashion. After a preliminary anatomical description of the rib cage and some considered expert opinions about the function of ribs. I would like to offer a few interpretive suggestions on the standard.

Normally there are 13 pairs of ribs in the basset hound. Each rib is comprised of a bony part and a cartilaginous part, the costal cartilage. The bony section articulates with a thoracic vertebra on the one end and costal cartilage on the other. The lowest point of the costal cartilage may have four different fates: (1) the first pair of ribs articulates with the first sternebra (manubrium - what breeders often incorrectly call the sternum); (2) the second through ninth ribs articulate with the sternum; (3) the costal cartilage of ribs ten through twelve unites with the cartilage of the rib in front of it to form the costal arch; and (4) the cartilage of the thirteenth rib (the floating rib) ends freely in the musculature.[1]

There can be congenital anomalies in this normal structure. First, though it is rare, a pair of ribs may be missing altogether. This defect appears not to give rise to medical problems. Second, and more common, the dog can suffer from vertebral anomalies which in turn cause anomalies in the rib structure. For instance, hemivertebrae or wedge-vertebrae (resulting from failure of the centers of ossification of the right and left halves of the vertebral bodies to fuse) are perhaps most familiar in cases of scoliosis. Hemivertebrae, "if present in the thoracic section, [are] invariably associated with faulty segmentation of the ribs." The ribs, for example, are often crowded.[2] Third - mentioned in no breed standard but that of the basset hound - one or more ribs may be flanged. That is, instead of the costal of the rib, it protrudes outward and upward. As one veterinarian described the phenomenon, "it looks like a flip hair-do." As with missing ribs, flanged ribs seem not to be a medical problem.

Ribs have a static function and a dynamic function: on the one hand, they house the heart and lungs, and, on the other, they influence breathing by causing a change in the capcity of the thoracic cavity when they pivot.

Viewed statically, the rib cage should provide maximum space for the heart and lungs. Since the heart normally extends back to the eighth rib, the brisket line should be relatively level up to this point and, ideally, to the ninth rib, which should be the longest rib. A herring-gutted dog whose brisket line starts sweeping up before the eighth or ninth rib does not have nearly enough room for the heart and lungs, and therefore does not have the stamina required of a basset hound bred to work in the field.

The same is true of a flatsided basset hound. His ribs have very little curvature at the mid-point, and the heart and lungs are squeezed. (Here, though, note that the third through fifth ribs should be somewhat flattened so as not to interfere with the action of the front legs. If these ribs have the same curvature as the ribs behind the front legs, they can cause the dog to have a wide front or to be out at the

elbows.) The basset hound standard explicitly calls for well sprung ribs and faults flatsidedness. Well sprung ribs, of course, are not barrel shaped. In faulting flatsidedness, the basset hound standard does not endorse its opposite. Barrel-shaped ribs do not give enough depth to the rib cage and therefore provide less space for heart and lungs than do well sprung ribs.

A smooth, well sprung rib cage also provides better housing for the heart and lungs than an uneven rib cage. A rib cage can be uneven in several ways. First, the ribs can be unevenly spaced, as in cases of hemivertebrae. Second, the ribs can be sprung differently, some being more flatsided or more barrel-shaped than others. Third, the costal cartilage, as it approaches the sternum, can change angles—for instance, can swing outward before proceeding downward - and disrupt the smooth flow of the rib. Fourth the ribs can be flanged. In the first two cases, at least, the heart and lungs have less space than they do in the smooth, well sprung rib structure.

A basset hound rib cage, then, viewed statically as a house for the heart and lungs, should be well sprung and smooth, with tuck-up starting only after the ninth rib. In some of its details, these requirements may be largely aesthetic - the basset hound's heart and lungs should have aesthetically pleasing housing. In general though, these requirements are functional, basset hounds should be able to work in the field without tiring out easily.

Viewed dynamically, the ribs should provide the greatest possible change in the volume of the thoracic cavity. To accomplish this, it is generally agreed that a dog should be well ribbed up. A dog who is well ribbed up has long ribs that angle back from the spinal column, ideally at 45 degrees, with a long floating rib.[3] Some standards call specifically for a well ribbed up dog, for example, those of the clumber spaniel, dachshund, fox terrier, Scottish terrier, and bulldog. The basset hound standard does not use this terminology, but, as we shall see, approximates it in referring to a rib structure which extends well back.

A dog who is well ribbed up gets the maximum amount of work from his ribs in aiding breathing. The 45-degree angling of the ribs from the spinal column gives the dog the longest possible ribs for his body size. Long ribs—more accurately, long bony parts of the ribs—enable the dog to have the greatest depth of rotation. Since it is the bony part which pivots, not the costal cartilage, the longer the bony part of the rib—all other things being equal—the greater the change in volume of the thoracic cavity when the dog breathes.

Another requirement for the dynamically effective rib structure is that the ribs should have a good initial curve outward from the thoracic vertebrae. This requirement is often brought under the heading "well sprung," but the two are not really synonymous. A dog can be flatsided, have good spring in the initial curve of the ribs, and have a dynamically sound rib structure. A dog can have barrel-shaped ribs (that is, with a moderate curve at the mid-point of the rib) has very little initial curve outward from the vertebrae, he will not have a rib structure that contributes as much as it could to breathing. It is therefore probably wise either to distinguish between the curve at the mid-point of the rib and the initial curve by using two different terms or to be sure that, when we use the term "well sprung," we are referring both to the mid-point curve and to the initial curve. (For diagrams that make the physics of the ribs "spring" clear, see McDowell Lyon, ***The Dog in Action***, p. 232.)

This discussion of terminology leads to another, potentially thornier, one. The basset hound standard states that "the rib structure is long . . . and extends well back." Although I think that length of the rib structure and backward extension of the ribs are two sides of the same coin, let me try to separate the two ideas. First, the term "extends well back." This term would seem to emphasize the backward angle of the ribs—particularly the back ribs—from the spinal column. Compare, for instance, the English cocker spaniel standard: "Ribs should spring gradually to middle of the body, tapering to back ribs which should be of good depth and extend well back." If this interpretation is correct, I have already covered this requirement of a good rib cage under the broader heading "well ribbed up."

What constitutes a long basset rib cage is a trickier matter. Anatomically, it would seem that, with the exception of dogs with congenital vertebral anomalies such as scoliosis, the ratio of the length of the rib cage to the length of the loin as measured along the top line will be very similar in all basset hounds. The length of the rib cage, measured in this way, is determined by the combined ligaments; the length of the loin by the combined length of the seven lumbar vertebrae and their connecting ligaments. Since "the thoracic region is slightly less than a third longer than the lumbar region,"[4] the rib cage of any normally formed basset hound, measured along the vertebrae, will be slightly less than a third longer than its loin. In ratio of rib cage to loin, in short, all basset hounds will be more or less the same if the rib cage and loin are measured along the spinal column. All other things being equal, anatomists would be inclined to say that a longer rib cage will mean a longer loin; a shorter rib cage, a shorter loin.

Clearly, breeders do not share this point of view. Breeders claim that a longer rib cage will mean a shorter loin; a shorter rib cage, a longer loin. What accounts for the difference in vantage point?

First and foremost, breeders are inclined to measure a rib cage not along the top line but along the side of the dog—most accurately, from the lowermost point of the last, floating rib to the point at which the first rib meets the manubrium. Here real variations can be seen from dog to dog. The length of the last rib can vary, as can its angle backward from the spinal column. In a normally formed basset, a dog with a three-inch floating rib angled back at 45 degrees has a proportionally longer rib cage than a dog with a two-inch, 45-degree floating rib or a three-inch, 60 degree floating rib. The floating rib is definitely a rib to reckon with, both in breeding and in judging: "If this last rib springs out well from the spinal column, is of good size and not just a bone splinter, angles backward at 45 degrees, and has good length, the remainder of the ribs will likely follow the same pattern."[5]

If this interpretation is correct, then it is not surprising that writers often equate a long rib structure with one which extends well back or which is well ribbed up. For example, Leon Hollenbeck claims that the notion of being well ribbed up "usually applies to those dogs that are maximum in thorax or dorsal length" with minimal length of loin.[6] And Harold Spira equates ribs carried well back with a long rib cage.[7] Whatever expression one prefers—"well ribbed up" seems to me the clearest—the fact is that a long rib cage must be one that has long individual ribs that angle back at approximately 45 degrees.

Anatomical problems, of course, also affect the length of the rib cage. For instances, a dog who is roached will have a shorter rib cage than a dog with a level top line since the individual ribs will be spaced more closely to compensate for the rise in the vertebral column. Conversely, a dog with a slightly arched loin will have a proportionately longer rib cage than one with an absolutely flat loin.

From this discussion it should be evident that a proper examination of a basset hound rib cage is a relatively lengthy operation. It is necessary (1) to go down the topline to feel the initial spring of the ribs, (2) to feel the ribs at their mid-point for smoothness and being well sprung, (3) to examine the costal cartilage for flanged ribs, and (4) to go over the back ribs, particularly the floating rib, for length and angulation. Few judges can be so thorough; conscientious breeders must be.

References for Article #13: Rib Cages In The Basset Hound

1.Malcome E. Miller, *Anatomy of the Dog* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1964), pp. 61-64.

2.H. Preston Hoskins, J. V. Lacroix, and Karl Mayer, eds., Canine Medicine, 2nd rev. ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: American Veterinary Publications, Inc., 1966; pp. 464-65.

3.The American Kennel Club, The Complete Dog Book (New York: Howell Book House Inc., 1979). P. 755.

4.Miller, p. 54.

5.McDowell Lyon, The Dog in Action (New York: Howell Book House Inc., 1981), p. 234.

6.Leon Hollenbeck, The Dynamics of Canine Gait (Fairfax: Delinger's Publishers LTD, 1981), p. 25.

7.Harold Spira, Canine Terminology (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p. 114.

Brenda Jubin has been a member of the BHCA Education Committee for which she wrote the above article.

Tally-Ho, March/April 1983

Article 14: So What Is Any Recognized Color in the Basset Hound

By Professor Douglas Taylor

Many judges of Basset Hounds have difficulty with the description of correct Basset color, which is stated as follows in our standard: "Any recognized hound color is acceptable and the distribution of color and markings is of no importance." When one reads about the wide range of recognized hound colors in the breeds that comprise the hound group, it becomes very clear that if a Basset Hound appears in your ring, and is not colored green, violet or purple, it must be judged on it other merits. Having said this, many of the colors and color patterns expressed in the Hound standards would be highly unusual in the Basset. If one goes back to the pre-Basset Hound Club of America standard of 1936, as written in the ***Dog Owners Manual,*** we find the statement: "No good hound is a bad color so that any recognized foxhound color should be acceptable to the judge's eye, and in only the very closest competition should the color of the hound have any weight with a judge's decision." And on its 100 points of judging a (smooth) Basset Hound, color is only given 5 points. Standards that followed deleted the Foxhound reference (under AKC's suggestion that Standards not use other breeds as examples, and ceased to give any weight to color in the judge's decision.

The fact does remain, however, that most Basset Hound colors are similar to those of the Foxhound. This narrows down the selection to black, tan and white, in any amount, combination or pattern. Tan can morph into a range of colors from lemon through reds and into browns. Usual patterns can be the solid colored blankets, open-marked coats in an infinite mosaic of colors and patterns, to the coats of combined colors, as in the grizzle or badger-colored hounds. Ticking or speckling of color is also allowed, even in unusual patterns, including being on the ears (the so-called lace or broken ear). Rarer colors might be a chocolate or a blue (a gray or black with a distinctly dark blue cast) as in the Beagle. And remember, although a white tail tip is desired for spotting the Basset in tall grass, it is not called for nor mentioned in our present standard.

I doubt that you will ever find a brindle patterned Basset Hound in your ring, but if you do, you must consider it for a placement if all other aspects of its conformation are correct. Remember, in the final analysis, there are no disqualifications for color or color patterns in the Basset Hound.

Concerning eye color, the present standard call for a brown eye, with dark

brown preferred. Allowance is made for a lighter color eye in lighter colored Basset. Eyes of other colors are not a disqualification but rather a fault. As a judge, you will have to decide how severe a fault these are. A Basset with one blue eye and the other a light brown would require superb other qualities to be placed over more typical specimens. As a rule, blue eyed Bassets are rarely seen in the ring.

(Urban, p 1)

Article 15: The Basset Hound: A "Different Sort of Dog"

By Joan Urban With An Introduction By Mary Louise Bergishagen

---

INTRODUCTION

The Basset Hound, as you can readily see is a very different sort of dog. While he is so often referred to as the clown of the canine world, the reasons for this strange, distorted frame are the very reasons why soundness is so important to his very survival.

The French word "Basset" means low-set or dwarfed, and it is difficult to trace the origins of such dogs. Dandie Dinmonts, Skye Terriers and Dachshunds have a similar long, low structure. Reports of low-slung, long-eared hounds can be found in the literature a early as 1576. Whether they can be traced back to the St. Hubert hounds of 700 AD is a good question, but it is generally accepted that all the French hounds came from that same early stock and gradually evolved into various types as were required to hunt over the terrain in the particular local area. The early ancestors of our Bassets probably were used in a manner similar to terriers.

The most logical argument is that they came about by breeding only those with short legs so as to slow them down enough to follow on foot. That would shorten the leg without altering other features such as length of body and shape of head. Also, as they selected for shortness of leg and greater weight of body, you would see the curvature of the front legs to compensate, and forefeet would begin to turn out to aid balance.

Being short legged with a thick, elastic coat, the Basset was able to go into dense cover and underbrush and flush out the game to the waiting guns. There were many strains of these early Basset breeds with varying markings, color and body characteristics, again depending on the terrain in which they were used. We feel that the Basset d'Artois was the forerunner of the English Bassets and later the first American Bassets.

The first mention of the words Basset Hound in British literature appeared in 1866 and it was in that year that the introduction and their continued breeding on a scientific basis began. Drawings of some of these early dogs can be found in the literature, and while the structures today are considerably sounder, the body proportions are remarkably similar.

Since stock was scarce in those early days, much inbreeding was done and eventually it became evident that new blood was needed. The English had by then what they considered better characteristics in their dogs than they could import from France, and because size and substance were qualities most lacking, a Bloodhound cross was made, thus introducing, along with other features, new colors into the breed.

The first official registrations of Basset Hounds in this country were made in 1855 and it is felt by some that they were known in America before that. George Washington's diary reveals that he had Bassets. The breed, however remained virtually unknown until 1920, when several eastern gentlemen seemed to discover the breed at nearly the same time and imported outstanding hounds from leading packs. Mr. Gerald Livingston of Long Island founded the Kilsyth Pack, and several others followed in the ensuing few years. The basis for today's American dogs is primarily those early dogs with a strong Walhampton influence from England, although importers did use stock from France and a few other European countries, including Russia. Very few European Basset Hounds have been imported since that time. In fact, quite the reverse is now true. We have developed a deeper-chested, heavier hound than that normally found in Europe.

JOAN URBAN

Now that you have some background on the history of the breed, it will be easier for you to translate the written standard into a visual concept. What I would like to accomplish is to cause you to weigh some ideas in your mind. There are several items which I think give problems to aspiring judges as well as to newcomers to the breed.

I am *not* going to discuss physical features or structures which I believe are common to other breeds or which I think most people have no trouble understanding. Rather, I will talk about the unusual features which make the Basset the unique hound he is – the loose skin, length of ear, size of bone, length of body vs. height, and the most difficult feature (in judging or breeding) – the correct Basset front.

First and foremost, you should remember that the Basset Hound was bred to be a slow, deliberate trailer, endowed with great physical stamina. In *The New Complete Basset Hound,* Mercedes Braun has said, "The standard describes such a dog if and only if each point is carefully considered. Once his loose skin, heavy bone, long ears, etc., become so exaggerated that they interfere with his work in the field he is no more Basset type than his light-boned, longer legged counterpart" pp 151-152.

To put it another way, it *is* desirable for a Basset Hound to possess all the characteristics consistent with 'breed type" as described in the standard without *over* or *under* exaggeration of the features which set him apart from other breeds – and that with the characteristics (or because of them) he is a strong and able scent hound.

To begin with, the standard does not call for *unlimited* or *superabundant* amounts of loose skin, heavy bone or ear length. Compare the wording in the standard description of the Bloodhound with that of the Basset: "The Bloodhound head is furnished with an amount of loose skin which in nearly every position appears superabundant, but more particularly when the head is carried low, the skin then falls in loose, *pendulous* ridges and folds, especially over the forehead and the side of the face." (2 p 177)

The Basset standard calls for loose skin too, but compare this wording: "The skin over the whole heads is loose falling in distinct wrinkles over the brow when the head is lowered." (2 p 163)

Let me interject this definition for haw, as taken from the glossary of terms in *The AKC Complete Dog Book.* "Haw: A third eyelid or membrane in the inside corner of the eye (p 750). Or, according to Webster, "A thin membrane or inner or third eyelid present in many animals capable of being drawn across the eyeball for protection." (3 p. 607) For some reason, it has been a misconception that a prominent haw means that a Basset should have a droopy, protruding lower eyelid. Not so. This could be a hazard in the field, although the lower lid is somewhat looser than most breeds due to the *slightly* sunken eyes and loose skin on the head.

The bottom line is that the standard calls for wrinkling in two areas – number one – over the brow when the head is lowered, and – number two – on the forelegs. On the remainder of the body, the skin is described as "loose and elastic." In examining the breed, it is perfectly acceptable to gently lift the skin to test for looseness and elasticity.

The exaggerated features of *pendulous lips, loose hanging flews* and a *very pronounced dewlap* are desired – as are extremely long, low set ears. The standard calls for the ears to fold well over the end of the nose when drawn forward, but remember – this is a hunting dog and it might be possible to have too much of a good thing. Keep balance in mind with the purpose of the breed. The quality of ear is important – the Basset should have the beautifully low-set, velvety-textured ears "hanging in loose folds with the ends curling slightly inward" (breed standard). We don't want the high-set, pancake ear that does so much to take away from breed type. As the noted English authority, George Johnston said, "Thick and flat hanging ears are ugly and can spoil the appearance of an otherwise good head." (4 p 90)

Now I would like you to help me do an experiment. Close your eyes and picture the silhouette (side view) of a Basset Hound. What do you see? The classic Basset headpiece, the strong arched neck, a short-legged scent hound heavier in bone, size considered , than any other breed of dog; one that does not exceed 14" at the withers (or 15" at most), whose forechest is deep and full with a prominent sternum, but not off the ground more than the one-third the total height at the withers with full, well angulated hindquarters and a good topline connecting the two ends. Tell me, *how long is that Basset, and what is your source?*

The Basset standard gives us the height at the withers, and it does say that the rib structure extends well back. It does not use the term "long-bodied" to describe the breed as the Dachshund standard does, nor is direct reference made elsewhere in the Basset standard to the breed being a long-bodied dog.

Yet we know that a Basset is a long, low scent hound.

The relationship of length of body to height of a dog at the withers has *great* bearing on "breed type" - in *any* breed! It is also a yardstick for determining other factors such as amount of bone for the size of dog, length of neck, size of head, etc. But what is the correct proportion of his height to his length?

Mercedes Braun has said, "A well-proportioned Basset is built in a four-to-three ratio: The height at the withers is approximately three-fourths of the measurement from wither to tail." (1 p 166) My yardstick is very similar to Mercedes' – or, I should say – our conclusions are not too far apart, but I measure the lazy way. Because the withers and tail set can vary on individual Bassets (and because it is more natural for my eye to see in this manner), my

method is to visually measure the length from sternum to rump as compared to the height where the withers should be to the ground.

My well-proportioned Basset is approximately twice as long as tall. I would like to go "on record" as having said so. I would like to point out that the Basset's length of body should not come at the expense of losing length of rib and gaining length of loin. What is desired is a long, well-sprung rib cage that is as deep as possible all the way back to a short, broad loin. I believe that through the years, breeders and judges alike have had conflicting views on height vs. length of a Basset. Studying pictures of some of the top winning Bassets over the years could only strengthen my position.

And now let's talk about that troublesome Basset front.

In my opinion, one of the greatest dilemmas facing Basset breeders today is the alarming number of unsound fronts within the breed – and to carry that further – one of the central causes of those poor fronts is the too-short upper arm. The fact that there are few Bassets with the desired 45 degree shoulder layback is a BIG problem also, but *that* problem is not unique to this breed.

George Johnston's comments and description of the Basset front would be difficult to improve on. Mr. Johnston says, "Most of the body weight is concentrated in the front, and in view of the stress this places on the short forelegs it is small wonder that they are often unsound. The cause of poor feet, knuckled fronts and out at elbows can usually be found at the shoulder. When the shoulder is well laid back and forms a right angle with the humerus, and the humerus and radius and shoulder equal each other in length, the front will be correct; the forelegs will support the heaviest part of the hound and the deepest point of the chest will be immediately between the front legs. If however, the humerus is shorter than the radius and the shoulder [blade], the legs are automatically brought forward, and therefore the bulk of weight is behind – not between – the legs, causing the knees to knuckle forward, the elbows to come out and the pasterns to bend, making a very deformed and incorrect front assembly" (4 p. 92).

Another front problem you will see in the Basset stems from a barrel-shaped rib cage or too round a rib cage. McDowell Lyon has said that the danger in this rib shape is that the shoulder blade tends to "slide forward on the rib structure – become more vertical (from the side view) and to set in front of, rather than beside the dog's rib cage. Leg action then is along a bias to the spinal column rather than parallel to the line of progress." (5 pp 166-167)

In writing about the shoulder placement not being too far forward, Curtis and Thelma Brown have noted that "This fault more frequently occurs in the short-legged breeds wherein all the leg bones have been reduced in (length.: It causes "toeing in,…out at the elbows…and paddling" (6 pp 103-107)

In the Basset, we have less "toeing in" as a result of the shoulder being placed too far forward than we have of the both-legs-coming-out-of-the-same-hole syndrome. That is, the pasterns actually touch since the widest part of the ribcage is behind the front legs instead of between them. We can also have this same effect when the chest is too narrow, the leg is too long and curved, or when the chest is too shallow – that is, anytime the elbows fall below or in front of the brisket instead of being correctly placed on the side of the thorax.

While we are in the brisket area, I would like to make this point: the distance from the brisket to the ground should not be more than one-third the Basset's height at the withers – *but the deeper is not the better*! The standard clearly states that the chest must be off the ground enough to "allow free movement when working in the field." *A Basset should not look and move like a seal.*

I have saved the best for last. Picture all the front problems I have talked about: the too short upper arm, the too straight, too far forward shoulder blade, the barrel rib cage, the too narrow, too shallow chest, and the too long, too curved leg. One would think all those problems quite enough for one breed to grapple with, but there is a plague we Basset breeders deal with which we call the mismatched front, i.e., one front leg grotesquely bent with extreme outward turn of the foot, (or a half fiddle front, if you will). It occurs very frequently and seems to occur more often in the heavier boned Bassets we all desire. Many breeders have attributed the mismatched front to the fact that the Basset is an Achondroplastic Dwarf. Achondroplasia is a defective conversion of cartilage into bone which produces the dwarfism. (3 p. 11)

It has been said also that the difficulty in breeding sound Bassets is due at least partly to this condition. Many times in the ring, you will find yourself faced with the choice of a sounder Basset with finer bone vs. a heavier boned Basset which is unsound, or you might say, breed type vs. unsoundness.

Now to sum up, I would like to describe the correct Basset front as I se it: The rib cage is oval, not round nor a tapered oval). (6 p 109) The shoulder blade lies at a 45-degree angle to the ground and at a 90 degree angle to the

upper arm. The shoulder blade, upper arm and forearm are of as nearly equal length as possible (wrist and foot not included in this measurement). When viewed from the side, the sternum is prominent in front of the legs. The whole shoulder assembly is set back far enough on the rib structure so that the deepest point of the chest is between the front legs.

The pasterns are slightly sloping, allowing the heel pad of the massive front foot to fall directly under the withers. When viewed from the front, the foreleg follows the curve of the oval rib until it curves slightly under the brisket, putting the pastern joints closer together than the elbows (but not too close together). The pastern joints and pastern are straight, the toes of each foot are equally inclined outward but very little. The deepest point of the chest is approximately at the midpoint of the forearm – it is below the elbow and above the wrist.

In examining the Basset Hound, you should run your hands down the shoulder, over the point of the shoulder, the elbows and the upper forearm. The whole assembly should feel and look smooth without excessive boney protrusions at or below the connecting points.

One last word – any hound, in the field or in the show ring, *should not carry an excessive amount of weight and should have excellent muscle tone.* The appearance of the Basset Hound to me should reflect that of a ruggedly elegant hound in top physical condition.

References:

1. ***The New Complete Basset Hound***, New 4th Edition, Mercedes Braun, New York; Howell Book House, Inc., 1979
2. ***The Complete Dog Book***, 16th Edition, Howell Book House, Inc., 1979
3. ***The Random House College Dictionary***, New York; Random House, Inc., 1973
4. ***The Basset Hound***, George Johnston, London; Popular Dogs Publishing Co., Ltd., 1968
6. ***The Art and Science of Judging Dogs***, Curtis M. & Thelma R. Brown, Hollywood, CA.; B & E Publications, Inc., 1976