

Judging a Working Hound

Lorraine Gray

Dachshunds have been popular in Australia for many years and it is a Standard Smooth Dachshund, Leura Liberace, who still holds the record for the most all breeds best in shows.

This wonderful dog was shown by Tommy Knight and many of us who were showing at this time, found it easier to win a class in show than a challenge. In the days of Liberace, classes were large for Standard Smooths and I recall showing at a Sydney Royal in a puppy class of approximately 30. However other varieties were not so popular.

Nowadays, numbers in the Standard Smooths have dropped and other varieties, particularly the Miniature Long and the Miniature Smooth, have become more popular.

When judging the Dachshund, remember that you are judging a working Hound – all varieties should be able to do the job for which they were bred. The Standards were bred for hunting badger and small game and the Miniatures for hunting rabbit and small game.

The three different coat types – Smooth Haired, Long Haired and Wire Haired – all have their purpose. The Smooths for general hunting, the Longs can retrieve from the water and the Wires for dense or rough terrain.

When judging, I like to move the dogs around the ring before placing them on a table. This gives me an overall impression of the dog on the move – does it hold its topline, does it have reach and drive and is it in proportion?

In its form of hunting – going to ground – the digging action of the Dachshund means that the front is not the same as the norm. Most dogs require the chest to come to the elbows, but the Dachshund needs the elbow to be well above the deepest part of the chest. The dog has a pronounced forechest, well laid back shoulders and ideally, the upper arm and shoulder blades should be the same length. This enables the dog to 'fold down' when it is burrowing.

When viewed from the front, the shoulder blades fit closely and the dog should present an oval front – the elbow positioned well above the bottom of the chest and the forearm from elbow to wrist has a slight curve to support the low slung oval body. The foreleg should be straight from the wrist to the feet and the feet can turn out slightly.

It is important that the sternum be carried well back, as a good length of sternum is required for the dog to slide out of the hole backwards – carrying game in its mouth.

Dubrovnik and Lambrigg

Continued from page 26

A J (Jeanie) Sutton



All Dachshunds should look alike, except for the furnishings and Miniatures should look like a Standard in miniature. After moving the dog around the ring, they should be tabled for examination. Starting with the head, which should appear conical and the mouth, a scissor bite with strong jaws and some underjaw – this dog is expected to hunt and hold game.

Eyes should not be prominent – prominent eyes could easily be damaged in a hunt. It is not often you see a Standard with prominent eyes, but it has been a problem with Miniatures in the past. With careful selective breeding, many breeders have overcome this problem and Miniatures on the whole, have quite good shaped eyes.

Ears should be large, set low and well coated. Some Dachshunds have almost bald ears and this is not desirable. The neck should approximately equal the length of the head. A good length of neck comes from well laid shoulders. A slight arch in the neck is desirable.

The Dachshund should be well ribbed back, with a fairly short loin and a slight arch over the loin. The ribbing should be deep and oval, not slab sided or rounded, providing plenty of heart and lung room for the working dog.

Hindquarters should be well angulated to match the front and allow the dog to fold down in the burrow. A good rear end gives the appearance of an apple bottom with firm rounded muscles. The tail should be thick and strong and carried low. A gay, high set tail would not be an advantage to a dog coming out of a burrow backwards with game in its mouth. Do not penalise baby puppies for carrying their tail – mostly this is just a happy puppy having fun – but do check the position of the tail.

When viewing the Dachshund from the rear, hocks should stand straight and strong. Long hocks tend to incline inwards.

Finally, when you have gone over the dog, it is time to again move him. Now you can see all the things you examined on the table, falling into place. When a Dachshund is going away from you, the correct movement will show the rear pad. Some Dachshunds with wrongly constructed hindquarters or sickle hocks can show the pad when going away, but if you watch the dog on the side gait, you will see that this hind leg is not extended correctly and the dog seems to be giving the impression of running under itself and the foot almost touching the tummy as it moves. This, of course, is incorrect.

When finished examining the dog, and you have it standing for placement, please do not handle the dog on the ground. If you want to check a point, return it to the table. Exhibitors are happy to take the dog back to the table for another look.

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They had a lovely two story older home on acres, and there was even a outside room called the Old Age home where all the oldies lived in their retirement (dogs of course). I had become a friend of Ruth and Eileen whilst showing.

There was a Scottish Terrier breeder Mr Frank d'Harty, who had imported a lovely black and tan dog from England, Dachswan Phantom (e picture page 64 last month).

Mr d'Harty did not have any success showing Phantom and the dog went to a Mrs Cruikshank, a German Shepherd breeder. She did not have any success with him either, however most people in the Dachshund world liked the dog.



Photo by Dianne Copp

*Below left, Ch Mourilyn Zsa Zsa
foundation bitch of Lambrigg Kennels*



One day at a show Eileen came to me and said "I think we have done something you will like - we have acquired Phantom".

Needless to say there was a marked improvement in the dog. I used him at stud with my bitch Suzanne and produced Dacrickdale Dannielle, Challenge winner at Sydney Royal from the Junior Class of 16. entries. Her brother Ch Dino did well in the ring also. Ch Dachswan Phantom went on to be a prolific sire producing quality to almost any type of bitch the most famous being Tom Knight's Ch Leura Liberace, winner of 102 Best in All Breed Shows.

Unfortunately dogs and people are no longer with us, but it really was the time of the Standard Smooth Dachshund.

*Top left
Ch Dubrovnik Phanphare
a Phantom son,
winning BIS
at Blacktown K & T C 1971
and below left
Ch Aylestone Ambition
one of the stud dogs
from Dubrovnik Kennels,
a Best in Show winner in
NSW and Victoria*