

G7 BREED COLUMNS

hounds

Judging a single Ibizan hunting would be like judging a single soccer player's talents.

The same even temper that serves the hunter makes the Ibizan a fine companion.

The attributes that set the Ibizan apart are large, high-set, rhomboid ears for hearing the rabbit in the brush and for cooling the body; the long, straighter upper arm that allows for higher action when needed; and the beautiful combination of red and white that declares his breed and shows up so well in the hunt. It is our endeavor as breeders to retain these qualities and preserve this bit of history for the ages.

There has always been a respective range of type within these parameters, but the Ibizan is a unique and functional breed and must remain so. —*Nan Kilgore Little*; NanKilgore@amberlithe.com; *Ibizan Hound Club of the United States website: ihcus.org*

Irish Wolfhounds

By the Numbers

Throughout the history of dog shows there have been occasional attempts to judge competing Irish Wolfhounds by a point system. Although this method was found to be cumbersome, and the hound eventually awarded the top prize through such a system was not always necessarily the most typical animal, these point scales are worth noting because they were drawn up by some of the leading stalwarts in the breed.

Unlike the extremely important "List of Points in Order of Merit" that appears at the end of our standard drafted by Captain Graham, I can find no disclaimer where judges were instructed that in case this scale of points appeared at variance with the standard, it was the latter document which is always correct.

The merit point system first appeared in the book *Dogs* published in England in 1906, 20 years after the standard was written. Judges of Irish Wolfhounds were told they should never approach their work without a

copy of these comparative values, which added up to 100 for the perfect specimen.

The point scale was as follows:

12 points for head; seven for ears; three for beard and brows, and three for eyes—for a total of 25 points;

12 points for height at shoulder; 12 for substance and girth; and six for length of body and symmetry—for a total of 25 points;

Nine points for loin and hocks; nine for forelegs; and seven for feet—for a total of 25 points;

10 points for coat; seven for neck; five for tail; one for nails; and two for teeth—for a total of 25 points.

As you can imagine, while the system was in use there were a number of comments regarding it, such as those of well-known breeder and author A.J. Dawson, who wrote at the time:

"There are probably some judges and breeders who would like to see a couple of points taken from coat and given to height, and a couple taken from ears to give to substance and girth, with possibly a couple each from feet and tail to be given to length of body and symmetry.

"But there is no double that this scale of point values has been carefully thought out by those who really have made a careful study of the Irish Wolfhound; and it is probable that no conceivable scale would appear perfect in all eyes. This writer has bred a number of Wolfhounds, including the biggest of living dogs, and he would always be prepared to accept and abide by the scale given above."

In a footnote the editor, Harding Cox, lamented that more points were not given to the chest, ribs, and shoulders, and he went on to write how he would have described those points:

"Chest very deep and not too broad; fore-ribs long and comparatively flat, allowing free action to elbows; shoulders lying well back to the withers, flat in position, but showing hard muscle in action; back ribs fairly well sprung, giving free play to lung and heart power, and so well contained as to preclude

any inordinate length or weakness in couplings."

Then, in a very telling sentence that demonstrated his knowledge of the breed, he goes on to say:

"The Irish Wolfhound is much vaunted for his activity, sweeping action, and stamina; but such could not exist in the case of a specimen lacking the conformation which we have described and what has been so unaccountably neglected in the Club scale."

In today's ring it would be rare for judges to allot one quarter of their selection to the headpiece, and more often than not there is only a cursory examination of the bite. Few judges spend any time examining the planes of the skull and the strength of the jaw, which are key points in the hound's function in life.

The merit point system for judging Irish Wolfhounds remained in place only a few years at the turn of the last century, but the comments regarding it at the time make for fascinating reading, as the writers were well versed in the breed's purpose as an outstanding hunter of large game. —*Lois J. Thomasson*; Fleetwind@aol.com; *Irish Wolfhound Club of America website: iwclubofamerica.org*

Norwegian Elkhounds

Personality Plus

The official standard for the Norwegian Elkhound describes his temperament as *bold and energetic, an effective guardian yet normally friendly, with great dignity and independence of character.*

Bred to hunt moose in the steep, rocky terrain of Norway, a well-bred Elkhound has the intelligence to make decisions when on the hunt, giving him the air of independence, pride, and self-assurance. This characteristic may seem like stubbornness to those unfamiliar with the breed.

In summary, the standard says that the Elkhound's stable disposition makes him an ideal multi-purpose dog at work or at play.

As in any dog, inherited traits of aggression or shyness can sometimes