

Although great size, including height at the shoulder and proportionate length of body is to be desired, it is not to come at the expense of balance and symmetry. Some judges equate great size with height alone and reward tall, finely boned and narrow bodied animals, but height is only one component in great size.

Great size should be synonymous with the substance and power necessary in a dog that is to hunt large and formidable prey, and this size does not come from bulk weight nor mere inches at the shoulder, but from great depth of body, spring of rib, strong muscular structure and good bone.

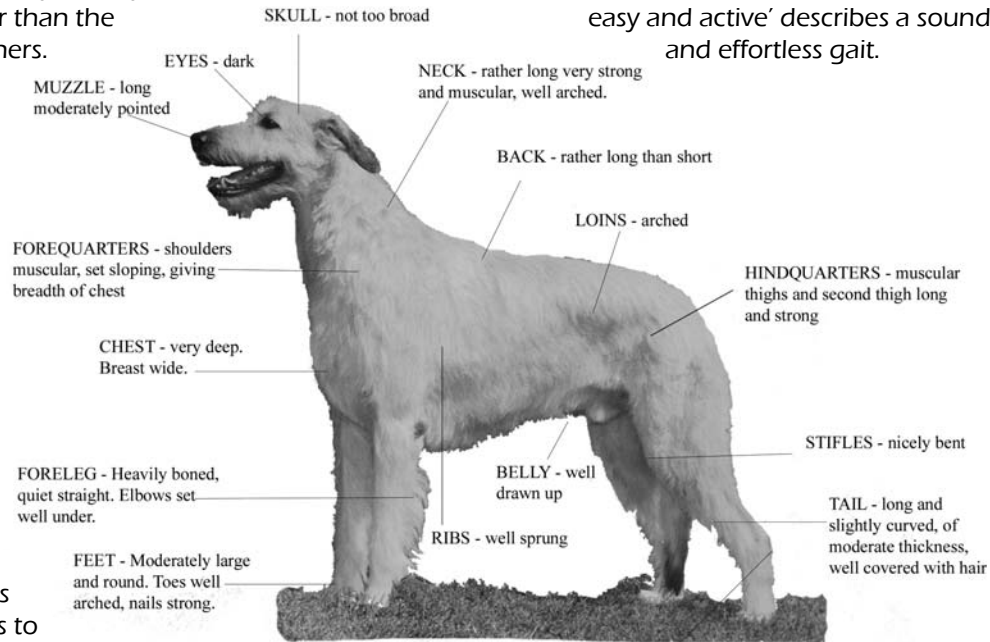
The Irish Wolfhound is longer than he is tall. The proportions of all of the early dogs seem to show a beautiful symmetry being slightly longer than the height at the withers.

Type calls for a rough-coated Greyhound-like breed; very muscular, strong though gracefully built, showing the requisite power, activity, courage and symmetry. Understanding the balance of power and swiftness in the Irish Wolfhound is necessary if one is to evaluate the breed. The Irish Wolfhound should not be Mastiff-like nor should it have a Deerhound appearance. It should never suggest

frailty or weakness. The breed should exude strength and power with commanding appearance and still maintain the graceful Greyhound-like image. It is important to remember the original purpose of the Irish Wolfhound as a powerful hunter of big game.

In order to have the "commanding appearance" called for by the Standard, an Irish Wolfhound should have an intelligent expression and imposing bearing. The old coat of arms "gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked" typifies the range of expression.

The Irish Wolfhound should not move wide in front or rear but rather converge or single track. The stride is long and smooth with great reach and a strong, powerful drive. The Standard's reference to "movements easy and active" describes a sound and effortless gait.



Minimum height and weight of dogs should be 32 inches and 120 pounds; of bitches, 30 inches and 105 pounds.



THE IRISH WOLFHOUND CLUB OF AMERICA



POCKET GUIDE FOR JUDGES

October 2007
Education Committee

The Irish Wolfhound Club of America considers those factors set forth in the Standard of Excellence and Points in Order of Merit to be the blueprint by which the Irish Wolfhound is to be bred and judged. It is the mission of all who breed or judge the Irish Wolfhound to give full consideration to those specifications, regardless of personal preferences or interpretations. This consistency is essential if the Irish Wolfhound is to march into the future retaining all of its majesty and grandeur. The italicized words are from the standard and block letters commentary.

General Appearance: Of great size and commanding appearance, the Irish Wolfhound is remarkable in combining power and swiftness with keen sight. The largest and tallest of the galloping hounds, in general type he is a rough coated, Greyhound-like breed; very muscular; strong through gracefully built; movements easy and active; head and neck carried high, tail carried with an upward sweep with a slight curve towards the extremity. The minimum height and weight of dogs should be 32 inches and 120 pounds; of bitches, 30 inches and 105 pounds; these apply only to hounds over 18 months of age. Anything below this should be debarred from competition. Great size, including height at shoulder and proportionate length of body, is the desideratum to be aimed at, and it is desired to firmly establish a race that shall average from 32 to 34 inches in dogs, showing the requisite power; activity, courage and symmetry.

HEAD and NECK

HEAD - Long, the frontal bones of the forehead very slightly raised and very little indentation between the eyes. Skull not too broad. Muzzle, long and moderately pointed. Ears, small and Greyhound-like in carriage. Faults listed: too light or heavy a head, too highly arched frontal bone; large ears and hanging flat to the face.

As a hunter of large and fierce prey, the Irish Wolfhound needs jaws of sufficient length and strength to cope with his quarry when he overtakes it. He is an “in and out” fighter, a slasher in battle. He needs plenty of muzzle before his eyes. Any tendency to a weak or snipey muzzle is a serious fault. The head should show strength, with good fill in front of the eyes to give strength to the Jaw. It should have a slight even tapering from the backskull to the nose. The skull should not be broad with a mastiff-like look and there should not be an exaggerated zygomatic arch (not a bulbous look on the side of the skull). The distance from the occiput to the frontal bones should approximate the distance from the frontal bones to the end of the muzzle. There should be very little stop. While the occiput may be prominent, the skull should not be rounded. His ears should be carried in repose tucked tightly to the side of the head, as in a Greyhound’s, and when looking at objects in the distance should be semi-erect. The ears are most desirable when small and Greyhound-like. A flat ear is not desirable and detracts from the overall appearance.

NECK - Rather long, very strong and muscular well arched, without dewlap or loose skin about the throat. Faults listed: short neck; full dewlap. The neck must be strong where it attaches to the head and flare to breadth and width where it joins the chest and shoulder. It must fit smoothly into the withers. The neck should be strong with well developed muscles. The Irish Wolfhound cannot function in his role as a hunter of large game without the strength of jaw and neck to bring down its quarry. Captain Graham called for “a neck thick in comparison to his form, and very muscular”. It should be well arched and powerful.

FRONT ASSEMBLY

FOREQUARTERS - Shoulders, muscular; giving breadth of chest, set sloping. Elbows well under neither turned inwards nor outwards.

The scapula should be well laid back into the topline and the upper arm should be set back under the dog. In addition to the angular relationship of scapula and humerus as viewed from the side, the elbow should be set well under the dog fitting closely to the chest wall. This is clearly described in the Standard when it states that the elbows should turn neither inwards nor outwards. The shoulders should be well tied in with

smooth muscles, not heavy or bulky over the shoulder blades.

LEG - Forearms muscular; and the whole leg strong and quite straight. Faults listed: bent forelegs; Overbent fetlocks.

The legs should be heavily boned with well developed muscling, conveying an appearance of strength and power. Pasterns should be set slightly sloping to create a cushioning effect in the gait. Pasterns too straight can cause a dog to knuckle over.

BODY

CHEST - Very deep. Breast wide. Faults listed: too narrow or too broad a chest.

The chest should be deep with the lowest point at or just below the elbow. The brisket and forechest are well filled and rounded, never hollow. There should be depth and breath of chest to allow lung and heart room. Chest capacity depends on long ribs which should be well-sprung, but should never approach a barrel-shape.

BACK - Rather long than short. Loins, arched. Faults listed: sunken or hollow or quite straight back; too short in body.

In the topline, the slight rise over the loin is a critical part of the gazehound structure. The entire back is not arched, nor does the topline fall away. The topline should not dip behind the shoulders nor be roached, flat, sagging or sloping. Incorrect shoulders, rear assembly, short ribcage and lack of muscling in the loin area can all contribute to a poor topline. This is a very serious fault in a coursing dog whose loin must have the strength and musculature to extend and contract at a gallop. The loin should be broad, powerful, well muscled, linking the moderately sloping croup and tail. Length of ribcage is very important as it contributes to the support of the spine as well as the proper belly tuck up and topline. In addition, chest capacity depends on long ribs, which should be well sprung, and neither barrel shaped nor flat. The body should be long, well ribbed up, with ribs well sprung and great breadth across the hips

BELLY - Well drawn up.

The underline is affected by the rib cage which should extend well back before it curves upward to the tuck-up or drawn up belly. The Greyhound outline in all sighthounds call for a deep chest to give heart and lung room. This must be combined with the correct tuck-up, without which the dog cannot gallop correctly.

REAR ASSEMBLY

HINDQUARTERS - Muscular thighs and second thigh, long and strong as in the Greyhound, and hocks well

let down and turning neither in nor out. Faults listed: weak hindquarters and a general want of muscle.

As in any galloping hound, the pelvis should be broad and powerful, with long, strong and muscular thighs and second thighs. A well-muscled second thigh is needed if the hocks are to be strong and flexible to give proper drive in motion. Hocks will be low and well let down when there is good angulation above the hock. There should be good breadth of stifle, and the List of Points in Order of Merit call for the stifles to be ‘nicely bent’. Over-angulation is not desirable in the Irish Wolfhound and serves no purpose in the hunt. Hindquarters should be balanced in relationship to the forequarters.

TAIL - Long and slightly curved, of moderate thickness, and well covered with hair. Faults listed: too curly a tail. The hair cover gives protection to the tail. The tail when carried correctly in the gallop, acts as a rudder, moving constantly to enable fast turns. When trotting, the tail should not be carried above the topline, but rather down with a slight curve at the end. The Irish Wolfhound alert in the ring with other dogs may carry his tail up, but it should drop to an ideal position when he is calmer.

FEET

Moderately large and round, neither turned inwards nor outwards. Toes, well-arched and closed. Nails, very strong and curved. Faults listed: twisted feet, spreading toes.

Moderately large refers to both bone and a large, well cushioned pad. Round indicates a hare foot is not desirable. The toes should be tight, close and well arched. Such a foot will have spring and give as it hits the ground, absorbing the shock of movement.

TEMPERAMENT

In order to have the “commanding appearance” called for by the Standard, an Irish Wolfhound should have an intelligent expression and imposing bearing. The old coat of arms “gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked” typifies the range of expression

COAT & COLOR

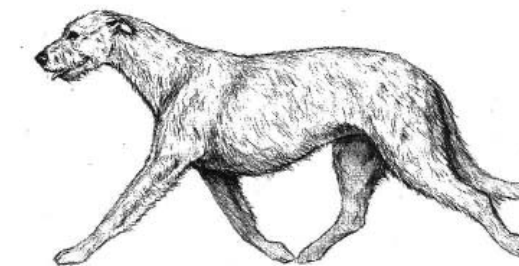
HAIR - Rough and hard on body, legs and head; especially wiry and long over eyes and under jaw. The Irish Wolfhound is a rough-coated breed, with a dense, soft undercoat, and a hard, wiry outer coat, which makes him impervious to all types of weather. A woolly or silky coat is out of character and incorrect.

COLOR AND MARKING - The recognized colors are gray, brindle, red, black, pure white, fawn or any color that appears in the Deerhound. Faults: lip or nose liver-colored or lacking pigmentation.

MOVEMENT

From List of Points in order of merit:

#3 Movement easy and active
The Irish Wolfhound should not move wide in front or rear but rather converge or single track. The stride is long and smooth, with great reach and a strong powerful drive. The Standard’s reference to “movements easy and active” describes a sound and effortless gait.



List of Points in Order of Merit

1. Typical. The Irish Wolfhound is a rough-coated Greyhound-like breed, the tallest of the coursing Hounds and remarkable in combining power and swiftness.
2. Great size and commanding appearance.
3. Movements easy and active.
4. Head, long and level, carried high.
5. Forelegs, heavily boned, quite straight, elbows well set under.
6. Thighs long and muscular; second thighs, well muscled, stifles nicely bent.
7. Coat, rough and hard, specially wiry and long over eyes and under jaw.
8. Body, long, well ribbed up, with ribs well sprung, and great breadth across hips.
9. Loins arched, belly well drawn up.
10. Ears, small with Greyhound-like carriage.
11. Feet, moderately large and round; toes, close, well arched.
12. Neck, long, well arched and very strong.
13. Chest, very deep, moderately broad.
14. Shoulders, muscular, set sloping.
15. Tail, long and slightly curved.
16. Eyes, dark.

Note - The above in no way alters the Standard of Excellence, which must in all cases be rigidly adhered to; they simply give the various points in order of merit. If in any case they appear at variance with the Standard of Excellence, it is the latter which is correct. The Irish Wolfhound Standard was written in England in 1885. It was adopted by the Irish Wolfhound Club of America at its formation in 1926. Since that time it has only been revised twice, in 1947 when the minimum heights and weights were increased, and in 1950 when the reference to the Great Dane and Deerhound were eliminated. That this Standard that remains essentially unchanged from the original of 1885 can continue to produce the quality animals seen today, as well as allow historical Irish Wolfhounds to illustrate these pages, is a tribute to its writer, Captain George Augustus Graham.