

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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IBIZAN HOUND

Relatively new to licensed competition in Canada (and USA) the Ibizan Hound is a hunting dog of great antiquity tracing its ancestry back to ancient Egypt. Bred almost in total isolation on a few small islands in the Mediterranean for the past 2,000 years, it is only in this century this dedicated hunter has come to our attention.

The Ibizan is classified a sighthound by the CKC, competes as such in field trials and this hunting purpose serves as a backdrop against which the breed can be judged. However, I would be remiss if I did not also mention that this is a versatile breed and in addition to hunting by sight also has a keen sense of hearing, a keen sense of smell and retrieves to hand; attributes which have placed him in the Gundog Group in some European countries.

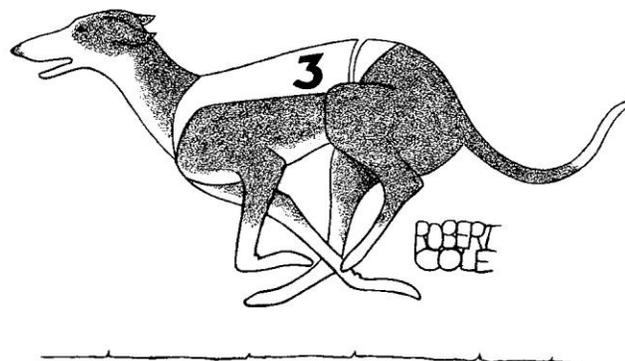
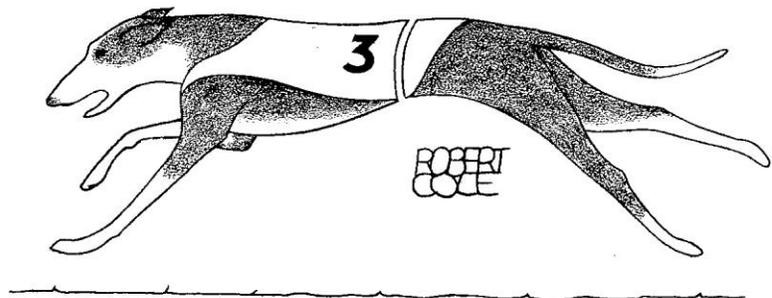
Seen as a sighthound, the Ibizan is required to hunt primarily by sight, the main points being the dog has to be keen eyed enough to sight the prey and clever enough to work and turn it with one or more hunting partners, fast enough to catch up with it, and strong enough to kill or hold it down. The Ibizan has proven its ability to surpass others in fulfilling this requirement, thanks in part to its ability to reach speeds where it utilizes the fast, specialized double-suspension sighthound gallop.

DOUBLE-SUSPENSION GALLOP

All breeds of dogs exhibit one period of suspension at the gallop. Sighthounds, because of their greater speed, exhibit two. *You be the judge.* The Ibizan I have illustrated galloping is shown exhibiting the two free flight periods where all four feet are free of contact with the ground. One of these two periods is common to all breeds at the gallop. Which one is attributed only to extremely fast gallopers?

All breeds are capable of the period of suspension at the gallop where all four legs fold under the body, the degree of fold varying from breed to breed, sighthounds exhibiting the maximum. Sighthounds, because

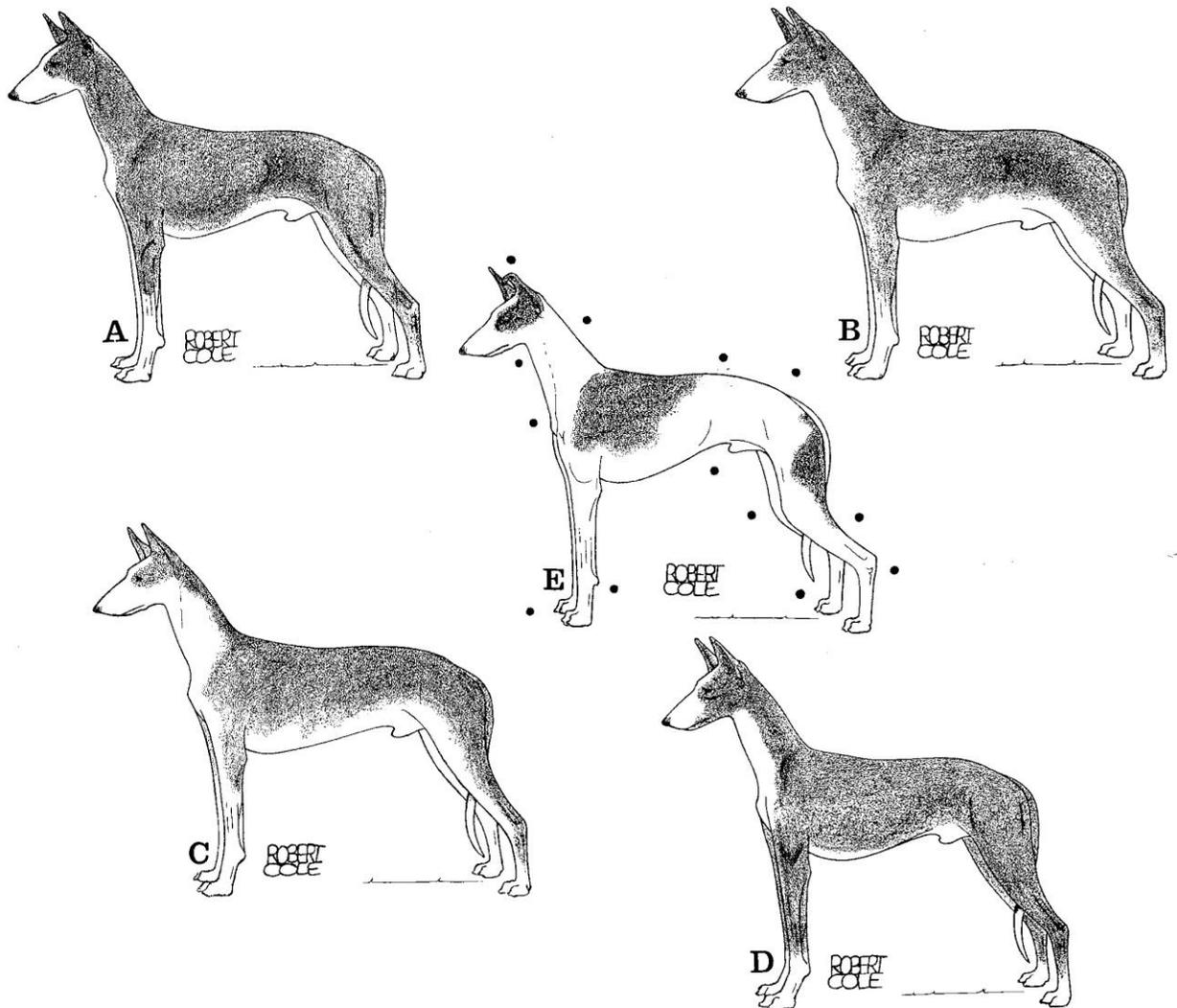
of the manner in which they are built, gallop faster and produce a second period of suspension



where the front legs reach forward and the hind legs extend rearward, all four free of any contact with the ground. Horses were traditionally depicted galloping in this impossible-for-a-horse manner until freeze-frame photography proved that only certain animals and only certain breeds of dogs are capable of this special air-borne action.

COMPARE

With functional sighthound double suspension gallop capability in mind, *you be the judge*. Compare Ibizan A, B, C and D. Which one of the four is more capable of combining speed and endurance at the gallop? Why? What is it about the others that causes you to think they might tire faster?



DOG A

This example represents typical. Its skull is flat. The muzzle from nose to eye is the same length as skull from eyes to prominent occipital bone. The plane of the muzzle is parallel with that of the skull and is also very light Roman convex. (I disagree with head-on “sometimes snipey”). I would describe the typical Ibizan head as long and narrow, dry fleshed and nicely chiseled. I call the

colour of the prominent nose extending beyond the lower jaw “rosy” and accept a dudley or butterfly nose. The eyes are “oblique and rather small”, the colour “amber to caramel” (don’t be disturbed by a sometimes dark rim around the iris).

The neck is long and slender, slightly arched yet flat muscled. The chest is deep and long. The breastbone is sharply angled and very prominent. The ribs are flat. Shoulder angulation is moderate, the upper arm is long, the angle is open.

The foreleg from elbow to ground is “long”, sighthound-long, longer than the body from withers to the deepest part of the chest is deep. No controversy there – a long leg is a sighthound necessity. The controversy is where the Ibizan’s elbow should position. The CKC Standard is silent in regard to elbow position. The British Standard is not. The British Standard advises that the Ibizan’s elbow positions 2 ½” to 3” below the ribcage. Few Canadians have ever agreed with this much distance between the bottom of the deepest part of the ribcage and the elbow. I don’t.

I have drawn the position of the elbow *in front* of the deepest part of the bottom of the chest *below the upward curve* of the ribcage. This unorthodox elbow position is due to: (a) an open sighthound forequarter assembly; (b) a very long upper arm; (c) a prominent forechest; (d) and seen at field trials, an extremely supple front.

The Ibizan has a ‘hare foot’ and to bring this foot into static balance I have given the “straight and flexible” front pasterns a slight slope.

Moving rearward there is a slight arch over the loin, under the loin the belly is retracted “but not so deeply as the Greyhound”. The rump is “very gently sloping,” the tail “sets rather low.” The hind legs are “rather vertical” which, in my opinion, means moderately angulated, and to balance with the front this is the way I have drawn them.

DOG B

This example is too heavy for an Ibizan beginning with its neck. From there bone is too heavy, the body is too deep and the dog lacks the desired tuck-up. This example is however sound and could move well as a sound dog at the trot but not with the grace of a typical Ibizan. With its correct length of leg and being only slightly longer in body than desirable this example might exhibit a second period of suspension – but not for long.

DOG C

This too-long-in-the-body example is long in both ribcage and loin. The Ibizan is a fast, long-legged, level-topped, endurance galloper with the emphasis here on departure from endurance. The body should only be slightly longer than height; when the body is this long a great deal of energy must be expended at the gallop, more than is functionally efficient.

The Standard makes no mention of body length in ratio to height. I understand there are three working types in Spain and ratios vary. I am basing my opinion in regard to length on the image of typical that I have formulated in the show ring and at sighthound field trials. I see the typical Ibizan as slightly longer than high.

DOG D

This Ibizan example is steep in shoulder. This fault brings the forequarters forward reducing forechest and forcing the front pasterns to adopt a vertical position to bring the front into static balance (this does not appear always to be the case in many of the Ibizans that have this problem, instead the pasterns often slope too much, many breaking down).

DOG E

This drawing illustrates 12 departures from Ibizan type not yet depicted. *You be the judge.* I have placed a bullet near each of the dozen departures. What are they?

Beginning with the head, one ear is not prick. The second is a neck lacking arch and third is a neck lacking length. Four is the absence of a prominent breastbone. Fifth is a cat foot (front and rear) rather than a hare-foot. Sixth is a front pastern lacking slight slope. Seventh is too much tuck-up and above it too much arch over the loin. Ninth is a tail which is set high instead of rather low. Tenth is too much angulation at stifle. Eleventh is too long a second thigh, and twelfth is hocks that are not low enough.

COLOUR AND COAT

The colours are red, lion, white or any mixture of red and white or lion and white. Colour patterns are of no significance in terms of preference. In their country of origin, the majority are said to be pinto. All other colours than those mentioned are excluded.

In addition to short coat, there is a Wire-haired variety. The hair on the Wire-haired can be from one to three inches in length with a possible generous moustache, more hair on back, back thighs and tail. Both types of coat are harsh; neither is preferable to the other.