

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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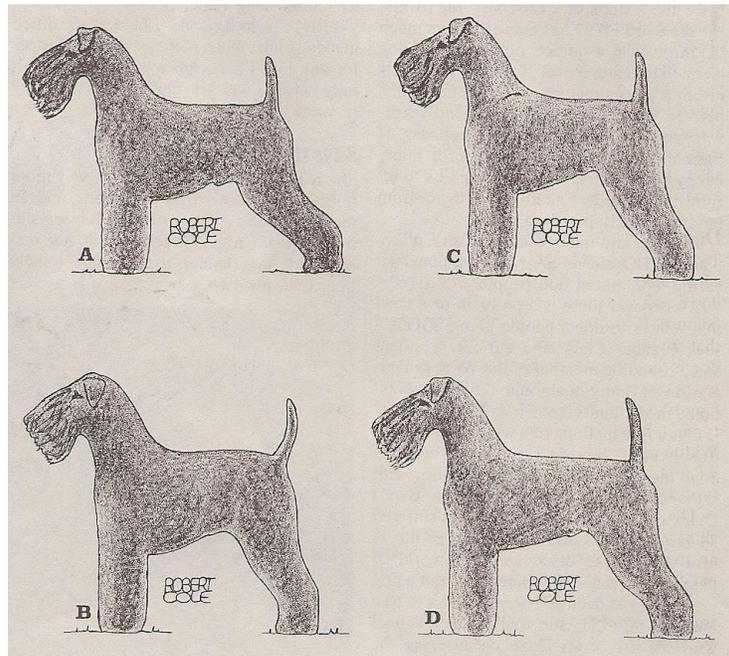
KERRY BLUE TERRIER

One of the four Kerry Blue Terriers in this Open Male class represents typical and is deserving of the first place ribbon. One of these four departs from typical to such a degree that it cannot be considered for a high award. The remaining two possess many virtues but they also possess certain faults. It is the weighing of these virtues and the effect of these faults that will probably most influence your placement for second and third.

None of these four males can be disqualified for being faked or dyed, for having dewclaws on the hind legs, or for being solid black. As for dewclaws, Kerry Blue breeders do not seem as concerned about dewclaws as they are about solid black. If Kerry Blues are born with hind dewclaws the claws are removed soon after birth; the fact that the dog was born with a disqualification does not appear to cause breeders any further concern.

Solid black coat colour is the second disqualification. Solid black is never permissible in the show ring. Up to 18 months any doubt as to whether a dog is black or very dark blue should be resolved in favour of the dog, particularly in the case of a puppy.

The correct mature Kerry Blue colour is any shade of blue grey or grey blue, from deep slate to light blue grey, of fairly uniform colour throughout except that distinctly darker to black parts may appear on the muzzle, head, ears, tail and feet. It helps to know that in its process of 'clearing' from an apparent black at birth to the mature grey blue or blue grey, the colour passes through one or more transitions, including very dark blue and shades or tinges of brown.



FIRST PLACE

First goes to Dog C. This example represent typical. He stands 18 ½ in. and weighs 37 lbs. He is of sufficient quality that you might accept him up to 20 in. if necessary, but no taller, regardless of quality. He is not square; nowhere in the standard does it say the Kerry should be square. He is slightly longer than tall; up to two inches longer is considered acceptable. His forechest can be felt to project slightly in front of the point of shoulder, ensuring a hole is not to be found between the front legs where the chest should be.

His head is long (about 8 ½ in.), the length of muzzle and skull about equal, the muzzle never shorter, the planes parallel. The stop is slight (1/2 in.) and sloping, with a minimum of fallaway below the eye. His ears are set high, folding forward above the skull, and pointing to the side of the eye, not toward the eye as in the Fox Terrier. The teeth can be pincer or scissors, here they are scissors.

The neck is about an inch longer than the head; it arches, widens and fits smoothly into the shoulders. Shoulders are long, fine, flat and fit neatly to the rib cage, which is well-sprung, deep and carried back. The elbows are well tucked-in and the forelegs “moderately long”. Moderately long for the typical Kerry is one inch to two inches longer than the body is deep, the brisket level, or up to half inch lower than elbow. The forelegs are straight and the slope to the pastern is barely discernible. The moderately small feet are compact and round, the toenails black.

High withers compliment the short back. The tail sets high with a croup as wide as the body. The hams are broad and stifles well-turned. Stacked in profile with the rear pasterns vertical, a line dropped directly down from the pinbones would intersect with the arched toes.

The single, wavy, dense and weather-resistant coat is non-shedding. The texture is soft and silky. Skin colour ranges from light to dark blue. Trimming was done with scissors to give a well-groomed, snug, shaped-to-the-dog appearance.

SECOND PLACE

You have, in my opinion, a choice between Dog A and Dog D. Which one do you prefer? As mentioned earlier, they possess the same length to height ratio. One is an inch taller and an inch longer than the other. The shorter one is within the 17 ½ in. minimum for males. They have similar heads, necks, shoulders, pelvis, coat colour, texture and feet. They differ in body length and leg length.

DOG D

This Kerry has two recognizable faults which depart from typical. The first is a long body, just a little longer than one might wish for. This example is three inches longer than it is high. More than three inches and balance becomes difficult to achieve even with excellent grooming.

The second departure from typical is a tail a little longer than average. The three-quarter dock is said to be the smartest – about 1 ½ in. shorter than this dog’s. However, tail length is man-made; the Standard says nothing about tail length. I would award this dog second place.

DOG A

This male’s lesser height of 17 ½ in. is still acceptable and is not directly one of this dog’s two apparent departures from typical balance. It is interesting in terms of balance that the length to height ratio of this shorter dog is the same as for the taller, longer bodied example. They both have the same length to height ratio but each departs from typical balance in a different direction. With a picture of ideal balance in mind, in what direction does this dog depart from typical?

The direction of departure is toward too short a foreleg for a Kerry – not much, only an inch, but enough to present a different balance. What about the second departure?

The second departure is too long a second thigh, a departure towards exaggerated angulation that is becoming more and more prevalent among Kerry Blues. This form of hind leg exaggerated angulation has found great appeal in some quarters, both here and in the United States and, more recently, in Britain. Its appeal lies in impressive appearance stacked, and dramatic over-extension seen in profile at the trot. What is sometimes forgotten is that, to be balanced, the hind leg should at the trot reach as far under the body as its continued propulsion rearward./ I would award this dog third place.

DOG B

Four features disturb the eye. The most apparent is probably the low set tail, made to set low by a steep pelvis that forces the bones of the hind leg to steepen and the croup to raise up. Second is that this example is thickish – not coat thickish – dog thickish. Third, the dead, hound-like ears (as undesirable as yellow eyes). Fourth is the short muzzle. Faced with these serious departures and few redeeming features, I would not award higher than a fourth place ribbon.