

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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THE ROTTWEILER

THE SUCCESS OF THE ROTTWEILER AS A WORKING DOG HANGS IN THE BALANCE

Balance is important to Rottweiler type, because a working dog cannot perform properly if is not correctly balanced. I have drawn eight variations of balance and added some differences in heads and structure. The eight examples have been divided into two classes: four in Bred by Exhibitor class and four in Open class. In addition to four placements in each class, select a Winner's Dog and a Reserve Winner. I will inform you as to the order and reasons for my 10 decisions after you have made yours.

TYPICAL

The ideal Rottweiler is a medium-large, robust and powerful dog. His compact and substantial build denotes great strength, agility and endurance. Dogs are 24-27 inches in height; bitches 22 inches to 25 inches. Dogs are characteristically more massive throughout, with a larger frame and heavier bone than bitches. Bitches are distinctly feminine, but without weakness of substance or structure.

Proportion should always be considered, rather than height alone. The length of body, from foremost to rearmost projection of the rump, is slightly longer than the height of the dog, the most desirable proportion of height to length being 9 to 10. Depth of chest (level with elbow) is approximately 50 per cent of the height of the dog.

The head is medium length, broad between the ears; the forehead, seen in profile, is moderately arched. Cheeks are well boned and muscled but not prominent. Skin on the head is not loose; it may form a moderate wrinkle when the dog is alert. The level muzzle is fairly deep and has a ratio to backskull of two to three. The nose and lips are black, the mouth pigment is dark. The bite is a complete scissor.

Eyes are medium size, almond shape, dark brown in colour with close fitting eyelids. Ears are small in proportion, pendant, triangular in shape; when the Rottie is alert, the ears are level with the skull and appear to broaden it. Ears are set well apart and hang forward, with the inner edge lying tightly against the head.

The powerful, well muscled neck is without loose skin. The back is firm and level, extending in a straight line from behind the withers to the croup. The loin is short, deep and well-muscled. The croup is broad, of medium length, and only slightly sloping. The short, docked tail gives the impression of elongation of the topline. Tuck up is slight. Good angulation of forequarters balances with hindquarters. The compact feet have well arched toes and thick pads. The front pasterns slope slightly forward and the rear pasterns are perpendicular to the ground. There are no rear dewclaws.

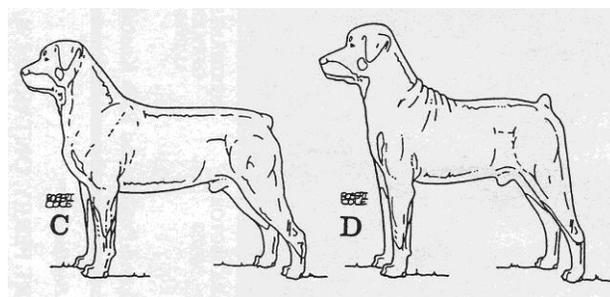
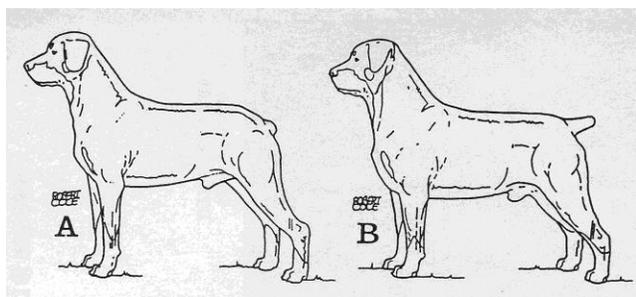
A,B,C,D

The best balanced dog (height to length), but not the best Rottweiler, in this Bred by Exhibitor class is Dog A. Dogs B and C are better Rottweilers, even though they depart from typical balance. Dog D serves to illustrate 12 head and structural faults.

First place is between Dogs B and C. Both are competitive. I have not taken their separate departures from typical balance to an unacceptable degree. Dog B's legs are short – they should be the same length as the body is deep. Dog C's body is longer than the ideal height-to-length ratio of 9 to 10. Dog B's tail could have been docked shorter; however, his correct tail set is more important than length.

Best height-to-length balanced Dog A is lighter boned than desired. Like Dogs B and C, he is sound, but lacks the full compactness and substance required in guarding and police work – but again, not to an

unacceptable degree. His large (rather than small), round (rather than triangular) and how (rather than high) ears detract from an otherwise good head. In the rear, his croup slopes down more than desired, and his hocks could be lower.



Dog D departs from typical in 12 visible ways: 1) the forehead is too pronounced; 2) the muzzle is long; 3) the ears are set on low; 4) the neck lacks fullness, strength and arch; 5) the skin is loose at the junction of neck and withers; 6) the shoulders are steep; 7) the upper arm is equally steep and; 8) hides forechest and; 9) in conjunction with steep pasterns, forces the body to rise above the elbow; 10) the rear is raised up higher than the withers due to; 11) the steep hind leg lacking the required angulation at stifle and hock; 12) the tail is incorrectly set on high (it should be slightly above the horizontal only when the dog is excited or moving).

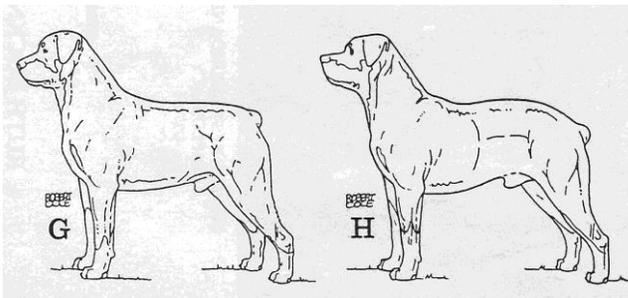
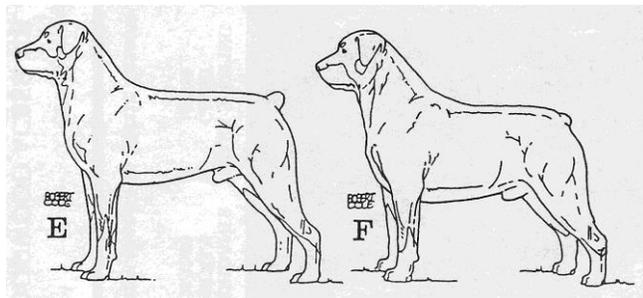
1, 2, 3, 4

Dog C is long in body but not long in loin. He is my choice for first place. He is alert but calm, and has a high degree of the self-confidence necessary in dogs bred for working, guarding and tracking.

Looking at the whole dog, my choice for second is short legged Dog B. I award third to Dog A and fourth to Dog D.

E,F,G,H

Finding the best Rottweiler in this class is not too difficult. Dog G represents my description of typical. Second and third place is between long legged Dog E and heavy-but-sound Dog F. The intent, by contrasting these two types, is to reinforce appreciation for Rottweiler balance. Fourth place Dog H's six visible faults are interesting.



Dog E's body and legs are incorrectly long, yet he presents an impressive picture. He also lacks stop (step up from muzzle to skull), has a high tail set and poor feet. Sound-but-heavy Dog F's deeper-than-normal body drops below elbow, creating an interesting departure from typical balance (different again from the balance created by the short legs of Dog B). Dog F's legs are the correct length – he is just very heavy. The Rottweiler should exemplify sturdiness, stoutness and substance without being fat or overpowering. The seven faults possessed by Dog H are: a shallow stop; a flat skull; round eyes; a short ribcage/long loin; roached topline; low set tail; and pronounced tuck up.

1,2,3,4 IN OPEN

First place is awarded to Dog G, second place to heavy Dog F, third place to long legged Dog E, fourth place to interesting Dog H.

WINNER AND RESERVE

Winner is between first place Dog C and first place Dog G. My choice for Winner is Dog G. Reserve is between first place Dog C and second place Dog F (who has only been defeated by Winner Dog G). My choice is Dog C.

LET'S SUPPOSE

Consider Dog G and Dog F again at the Open class level. If Dog G had any one of the following serious faults – yellow eyes, eyes of a different size, or hairless eye rim; total lack of mouth pigment (pink mouth); a level bite; an open, excessively short, or curly coat; straw coloured, excessive, insufficient or sooty markings – would you forgive it or would you award Dog F first place? Which of these faults (if any) can you forgive?

Suppose you had forgiven one of these faults and Dog G was your Open class first place. Could you then award him Winner over long bodied, Bred by Exhibitor first place Dog C?