

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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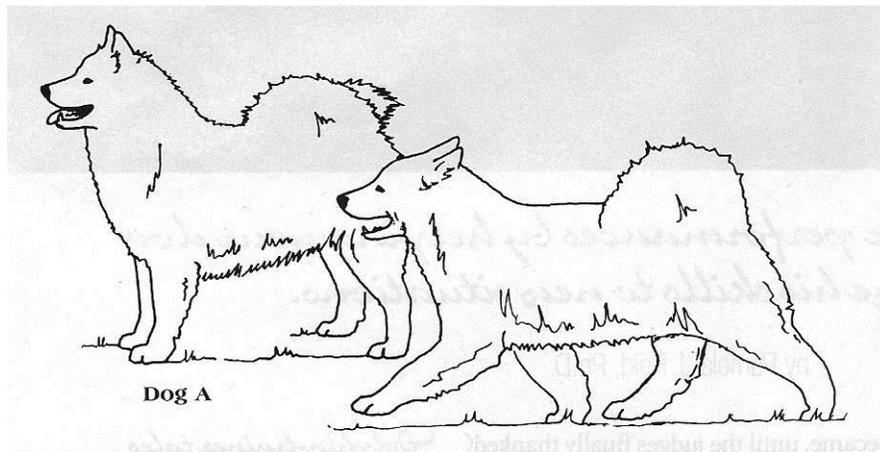
THE SAMOYED

Based on the AKC standard approved April 9, 1963

DOG A, STACKED AND MOVING

This sound, well angulated, smooth moving bitch exhibits one major fault. What is it?

The AKC standard reminds us (twice) that “a very short-legged dog is to be deprecated,” which, according to the *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (1994) means “to express disapproval”. Modified and the word becomes “depreciated”, which means “to lessen in value”. Many breeders believe either word is a weak way of voicing a concern for the danger of dwarfism.



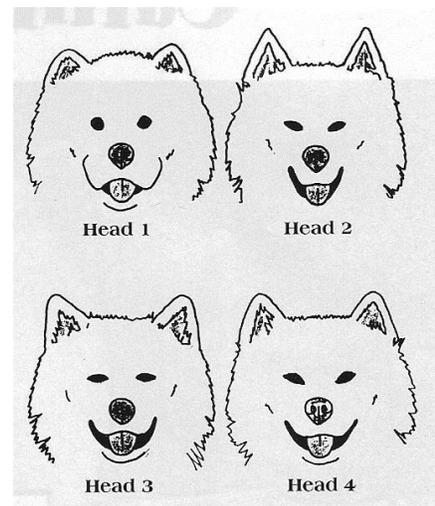
Canadian Kerry Meydam, a long-time Samoyed breeder, maintains that a very short-legged Samoyed is to be regarded as extremely undesirable. She is concerned that many Samoyeds are becoming extremely short on leg, mainly through selection, and that dwarfism is now becoming a serious problem in the breed.

FOUR HEADS

Place these four heads in order of merit. With the help of *The Samoyed Illustrated Standard* by Gertrude Adams – published in 1982 by the Samoyed Club of America – and the New Zealand Samoyed Association’s *The Samoyed*, we can discuss the head in detail.

My preference is to reverse their existing order, making Head 4 first, Head 3 second, Head 2 third and Head 1 fourth.

My choosing Head 4 over Head 3 for first place was primarily due to Head 4’s correct eye position. Note the difference the desired slanting lower eyelid has in producing the correct Samoyed expression. The eyes “should be dark for preference; should be placed well apart and deep-set; almond shaped with lower lid slanting toward an imaginary point approximately the base of ears. Dark eye rims for preference. Round or protruding eyes penalized. Blue eyes disqualifying.”



I believe the ears on Head 4 are more correct than those on Head 3; however, the latter's ear position is promoted as correct in the New Zealand publication. I placed them side by side so you can compare the subtlety involved. Both conform to the standard, which describes the ears as "strong and thick, erect, triangular and slightly rounded at the tips; should not be large or pointed (Head 2), nor should they be small and 'bear-eared' (Head 1) ... they should be set well apart but be within the border of the outer edge of the head." The choice is yours.

The nose on Head 4 is called a 'snow nose'. It could be 'Dudley' (flesh coloured) as the AKC standard allows the nose to be "black for preference but brown, liver or Dudley nose not penalized".

Elizabeth Lockman Hooymann warns to be wary of jet-black noses, when judging the Samoyed, for many have been treated or coloured. She points out that a natural nose next to all the treated noses can confuse judges who are not familiar with the breed and wonder which is natural. She advises judges to check for pigment on lip rims and inside the mouth – a dog with truly superior pigment always has jet-black mouth rims, and a jet-black mouth, right down to the tonsils.

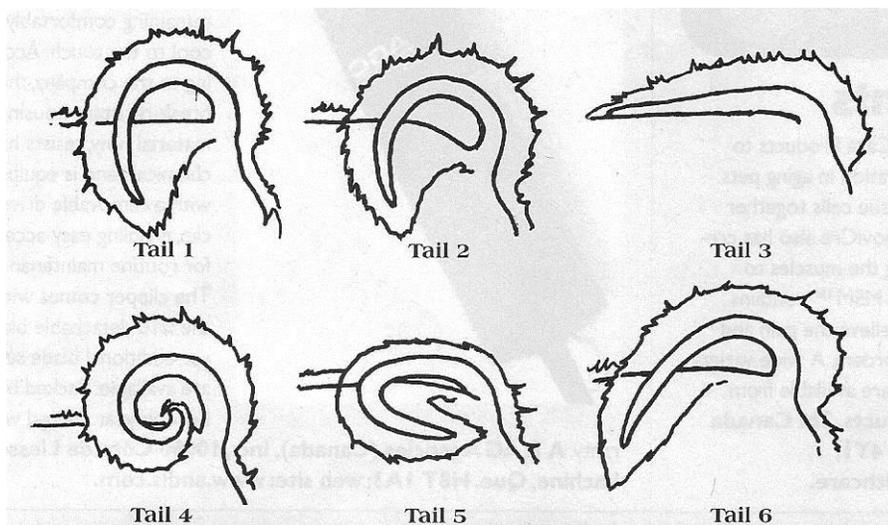
The skull should be wedge shaped, broad and slightly crowned – not round or apple-headed (Head 1). The muzzle should be of "medium" length. Most people prefer medium as being equal to the length of the skull.

SIX TAILS

Which tail is correct? One of this breed's crowning glories is its tail. Since it is such an important part of the balanced outline, the rule is, "The judge should see the tail over the back once when judging."

But there is more to the Samoyed's tail than looks. To be functional in the Arctic, the tail must be mobile and loose. The disastrous effect on dogs in the Arctic that did not have the proper loose tail to cover the nose while sleeping is the reason for the mobile and loose requirement. By covering its nose, the Samoyed filters the harsh Arctic cold and thus breathes air, not frost.

The tail must also be of sufficient length that "the tail bone terminates approximately at the hock when down. It should be profusely covered ... and carried forward over the back or side ... It should not be high or low set ... (or) tight over the back. A double hook is a fault."



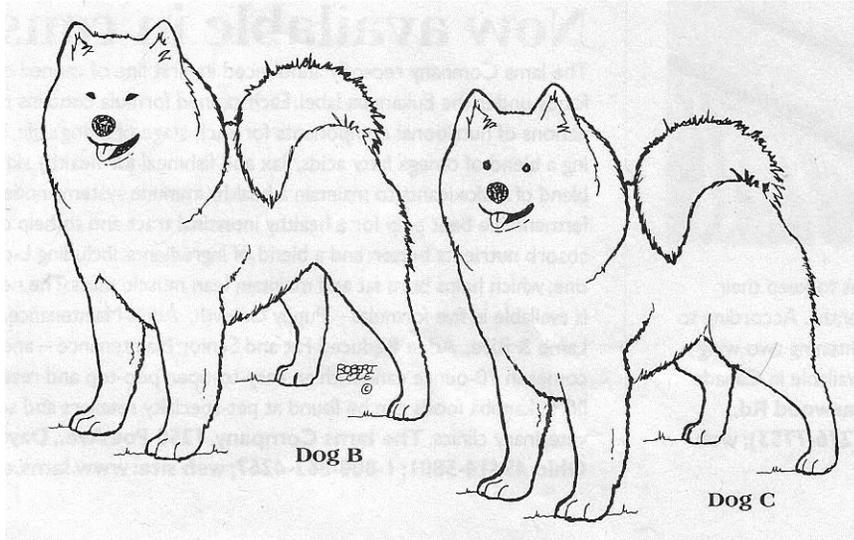
THE CORRECT TAIL

There is a further hint to which of these six examples is correct and this hint is found in the 'Loin and Back' paragraph. It reads, "Croup must be full, slightly sloping ..." In their book *The Complete Samoyed* (Howell Book House), Bob and Dolly Ward advise that "one should be able to slide a hand between the tail and the topline at the root when judging, to ensure that it is not a 'snap tail', which could indicate a flat croup and straight stifles." That eliminates snap Tail 3. The next four are also eliminated because Tail 2 is set on too low, Tail 4 is a double hook, and Tail 5 is tight over the back. Tail 6 is the correct Samoyed tail.

DOG B OR DOG C?

The first impression of these two dogs standing is that Dog B has a typier head. However, let us say that hidden under that profuse double coat he is steep in shoulder and upper arm, with very little forechest in front of the point of shoulder. His poor movement at the trot isn't helped by having inadequate hindquarter angulation.

Dog C is sound and a very good mover – down, back and in profile. However, compared to Dog B, his eyes are a little round and his ears are a little large.



In the April 1990 breed column of the AKC Gazette, Judy Mears remarks, "I have never seen so many bad moving dogs in one place as I saw at our Samoyed National specialty in Detroit last fall." She then goes on to describe the many structural faults that were observed.

Eight years later, Jeanne Nonhof writes in the July 1998 issue of the AKC Gazette that three judges have recently come to her to ask, "What is happening to your breed?" They complain of

Samoyeds with a lack of quality, poor necks, shoulders and the inability to move correctly."

I don't know if these published comments from south of the border have influenced your decision in regard to these two examples of a breed in the Working Group (a designation that breeders continue to remind judges about), but they influenced me. I went with Dog C.