

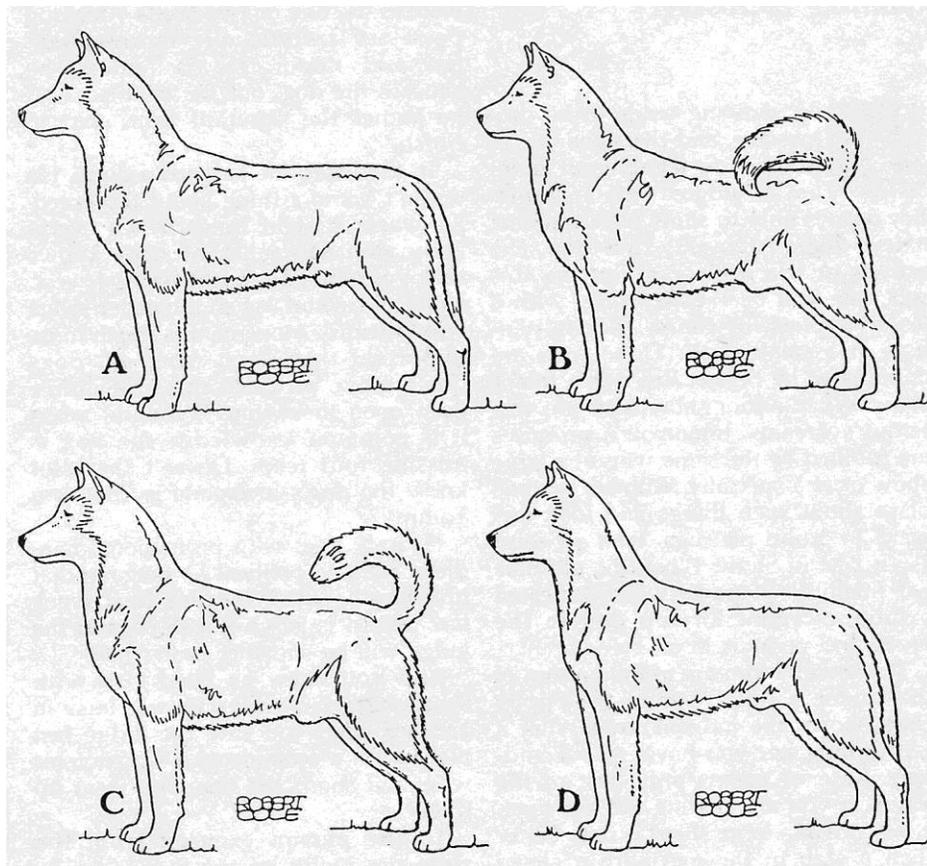
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, October 1989

THE SIBERIAN HUSKY

All four of these Canadian Siberian Husky examples are champions, however for this exercise place them in order of preference as if they were competing in an Open Dog class. In that way, these four dogs will generate discussion on a number of contentious features, some not mentioned in the Canadian Kennel Club Siberian Husky standard.



FEATURES

Colour has been downplayed in these drawings. However, all colours and white are allowed, and all markings. All four of these Siberian Husky examples have complete scissor bites, dark close-fitting lips, soft double coats of medium length, well angulated hindquarters and compact, oval feet.

The features most likely to influence your selection for first place among these four examples are: (1) body length; (2) leg length; (3) muzzle length; (4) forequarter angulation; and (5) tail carriage. In most other respects these four examples are similar.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

In Canada a dog over 60 lbs. (27 kg) or a bitch over 50 lb. (23 kg) must be disqualified. In the United States, dogs over 23 ½ inches (60 cm) and bitches over 22 inches (56 cm) must be disqualified. Both of these disqualifications describe the same large, heavy-boned departure.

FUNCTION

The Siberian Husky is neither a heavy freighting breed nor a sprint runner. His real forte lies in his ability to cover great distances, with a light load, at a moderate speed. The typical Siberian Husky must appear light, agile, graceful yet capable.

To excel as a long distance endurance trotter the Siberian must be longer than tall and must have a fair length of leg. Your opinion of how long the body should be and what length of leg is correct will influence your placements.

DOG A

Has a correct head, length of neck, depth of body, length of leg, set on of tail, amount of bone and angulation front and rear. He is impressive stacked and equally impressive moving in the short time he is in the show ring. In fact, this particular type could, with his long length of body, accommodate even greater angulation. But is his length of body functionally correct for a Siberian?

You have four Siberian Husky examples from which to choose; this sound example has many virtues. You must decide if his ratio of body length to height is or is not too long, then decide if you wish to place him first.

DOG B

There are two things wrong with this sound example's head and two things wrong with his tail. His neck is short. He is balanced front with rear; but not balanced as a Siberian Husky. Why? His legs are too short for an endurance trotting sled dog. I believe (the CKC Siberian standard is silent) the foreleg should be slightly longer from the elbow to ground than from the elbow to the top of the withers, the elbow level with the brisket. This example's shorter length of foreleg would reduce both reach and endurance.

The head is incorrect because this dog's muzzle is too short. On a pleasing head, the distance from the tip of the nose to the stop is equal to the distance from the stop to the occiput. The stop should also be well defined. The stop on this example's head is insufficient.

The dog's tail is set on correctly, just below the level of the topline. But the tail has two faults: it is snapped back and beginning to curl (a tightly curled tail, a snapped tail, or a highly plumed tail are faults.)

DOG C

In my opinion this illustrated example most closely approaches typical. His head is in proportion to his body. He has elegance, style and is pleasing overall. The top of the muzzle is straight and the stop is well defined. The triangular ears are set erect, high on the head and with slightly rounded tips, pointing straight up. The eyes are almond shaped, one eye is brown and one is blue (not preferable in Canada). They are set a trifle obliquely and moderately spaced. The expression is keen, but friendly, interested and even mischievous.

The nose may be flesh coloured, if this is a white dog; black if it's a grey, tan or black dog; brown or liver, if this is a copper dog.

I have given this competitive example a moderate length of neck, noticeable withers, level back, short loin, a body slightly longer than its height. His balanced angulation is moderate front and rear. Bone is substantial but not heavy. The foreleg is slightly longer than the depth of body and pasterns are slightly slanted. The correct tail is set on just below the level of the topline and is carried at attention (could also have been illustrated in repose).

The upper thighs are well muscled and powerful, the stifles well bent, the hock joint well defined and set low to the ground. Dewclaws, if there were any, have been removed. Feet are oval in shape, but not long.

The double coat is medium length, the guard hairs obvious. In the American standard, but not the Canadian, trimming of the fur on any part of the Siberian Husky other than the whiskers and between the toes is to be severely penalized.

DOG D

This Siberian Husky did not have a great deal of difficulty winning his championship. I selected him because at first glance he can appear impressive. He has a pleasing head, a good length of neck, a fairly level topline and correctly set and carried tail. Weight of bone is good and the length of leg is correct. There are, however, three areas where he is deficient – neck, forequarters and body.

The Canadian standard should mention that the neck must have an arch, as well as be carried proudly erect. This example's neck lacks arch, partly due to his shoulders being steep. The steep shoulders have forced the forequarters forward on the body, reducing forechest and creating a hollow between the front legs.

His body has less depth and length than desired. This may not be immediately observed because of the length of hair under the body and the illusion of a longer body length created by steep shoulders and low withers.

The hindquarters are excellent but this causes a locomotion imbalance, the forequarters being inferior. In the case of this particular dog his strong hindquarters compensate for his inferior forequarters. This creates an incorrect four-beat rather than a two-beat foot cadence. Coming and going away he crabs. The amount he crabs is reduced considerably by judiciously slowing his speed coming and going away.

IN MY OPINION

The selection for first place was between Dog A and Dog C. Both did well in the show ring. Based on the wording in the CKC standard which reads: "Siberians range in build from moderately compact (but never cobby) to moderately rangy," you could have selected either for first. I selected Dog C for first and Dog A for second place.

The only real difference between Dog A and Dog C is length of body. I selected the more compact Dog C on the basis of the more specific American standard which advises: "In profile, the length of the body from the point of the shoulder (front of dog) to the rear point of croup is slightly longer than the height of the body from the ground to the top of the withers." This amounts to about 10 percent when you include the 1 ½ in. of forechest in front of the point of a well-angled shoulder assembly.

Being confronted with Dog B and Dog D for third place puts you in a position, in the show ring, where you must weight the soundness and type of departures of Dog B against the type virtues and steep front of Dog D. You might choose Dog B's better balance, front with rear, but you must accept his short neck and leg. You also must live with his short muzzle and snapped tail.

The decision is an interesting one. I selected Dog D for third place and Dog B for fourth place. I did this because, aside from the obvious, short legs often go unnoticed and are a current breeder concern. Between the two dogs, I would rather take Dog D home. Confronted with a choice between these two Siberians in the show ring I would probably conclude that I could find a bitch with good shoulders to put to Dog D, but with Dog B I would be starting almost from square one.

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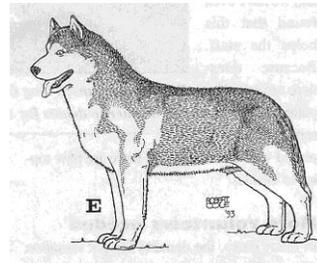
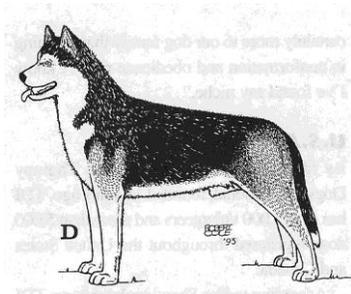
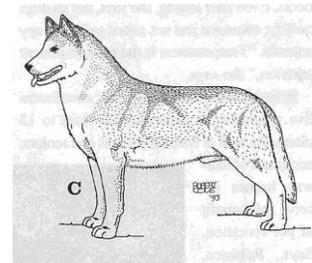
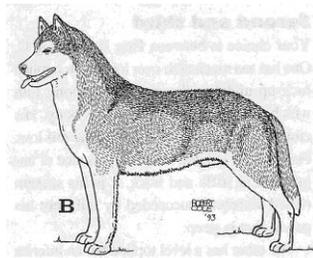
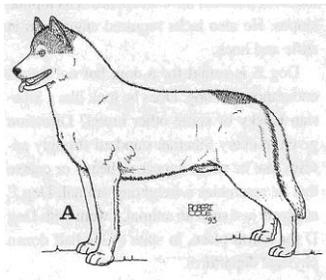
By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, December 1993

THE SIBERIAN HUSKY

HOW WOULD YOU RANK THESE FIVE SIBERIAN MALES?

Place these five male Siberian Huskies in order of merit, based on the presence of 12 physical characteristics in the profile drawings. Then read the paragraphs on function and the 12 required attributes, revising your placements if necessary.



FUNCTION

To place these Siberian Huskies in order of merit, you should be aware that the breed functions as a medium-sized working sled dog, is quick and light on its feet and free and graceful in action. The Siberian's proportions should reflect a basic balance of power, speed and endurance, never appearing so heavy or coarse as to suggest a freighting animal, nor so light as to suggest a sprint racing animal.

TWELVE REQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS

1) The stop (the step-down from skull to muzzle) is well defined; 2) the distance from tip of nose to the stop is equal to the distance from the stop to the occiput; 3) the neck is medium length and arched; 4) the body is slightly longer than high; 5) the topline is level; 6) the tuckup is slight; 7) the croup slopes but never so steeply as to restrict the rearward thrust of the hind legs; 8) the tail sets on just below the level of the topline; 9) the foreleg (the elbow level with the brisket) is longer than the body is deep (distance is greater from the elbow to the ground than from the elbow to the withers); 10) the hindquarters are well bent at stifle and the hock joint is well defined; 11) the feet are oval in shape and medium in size; 12) all colours and markings are allowed from black to pure white. Variety of markings includes many striking head and body patterns not found in other breeds.

FIRST PLACE

Considering these 12 Siberian Husky requirements and marking allowances, one dog is obviously the first place winner. He is the piebald dog – not the pet buying public's choice of markings. However, colour and markings are purely cosmetic considerations in this breed. Markings vary from blazed or open faces to smudged or dirty faces – all equally correct, as are piebalds and splash marked bodies. Conscientious breeders refuse to sacrifice functional soundness for popular markings.

Piebald Dog A conforms to all 12 requirements. Compared to the rest of the class, he most closely represents typical. Each of the other four Sibes departs in some way from his balanced type and structure.

SECOND AND THIRD

Your choice is between Dog B and Dog C. One has too much arch over loin and too much tuckup underneath, caused by a long loin which, in turn, has lengthened his body. His croup drops off abruptly, setting the tail low. Fortunately, judging from the presence of angulation at stifle and hock, it is his sacrum (fused vertebrae succeeded by tail), not his pelvis, that is steep.

The other has a level topline but an inferior head and short legs. Lack of a definite stop has altered his appearance and expression. I can forgive his inferior head more readily than his short legs. I have placed long bodied Dog B second and short legged Dog C third.

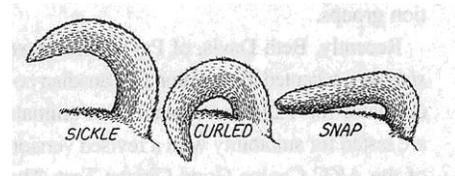
FOURTH AND FIFTH

Of the last two examples, one is unsound and the other is heavy. Which did you prefer? Did you notice that Dog D's muzzle is short? His neck is also short and lacks arch. The abrupt junction where neck meets withers suggests steep shoulder blades. Notice that his upper arm is also steep and the front assembly has been pushed forward on the body, reducing forechest. To compensate for this forward push and bring the front assembly back into balance, the front pasterns have steepened. His topline slopes. He also lacks required angulation at stifle and hock.

Dog E is sound for a dog, but not for an endurance sled dog. Does he look like a Siberian Husky or some other breed? Direction given in every Siberian standard strongly advises that he never appear so heavy or coarse that he resembles a freighting animal. Dog E suggests just such an animal. I went with Dog D for fourth place, in spite of his half dozen physical departures.

TAILS

Only one of these three well furred, fox brush shape tails is correct. The correct set on of the tail is just below the level of the topline, and is usually carried over the back in a graceful sickle curve when the dog is at attention or gaited. When carried up, the tail does not curl too tightly, nor curl to either side of the body, nor snap flat against the back.



EYES

Eyes are almond shaped, moderately spaced and set a trifle obliquely, the eyelids close fitting with pigment matching the lips. The Siberian Husky eye colour is any shade of blue or brown; they can be one of each colour or particolour (part blue, part brown). Decisions influenced by a preference for a certain eye colour or match does the breed a disservice.

STUDY GROUPS

Judges' study groups sometimes play 'what if' with examples like the fourth place dog. They might ask, "What if there was only one male class and Dog D is the best dog in that class? Would you award him first place, then Winners Dog, or would you withhold at some point? What point? What reason would you give if you did withhold?"