



Official Standard for the Basenji

General Appearance: The Basenji is a small, short haired hunting dog from Africa. It is short backed and lightly built, appearing high on the leg compared to its length. The wrinkled head is proudly carried on a well arched neck and the tail is set high and curled. Elegant and graceful, the whole demeanor is one of poise and inquiring alertness. The balanced structure and the smooth musculature enable it to move with ease and agility. The Basenji hunts by both sight and scent. Characteristics-The Basenji should not bark but is not mute. The wrinkled forehead, tightly curled tail and swift, effortless gait (resembling a racehorse trotting full out) are typical of the breed. Faults-Any departure from the following points must be considered a fault, and the seriousness with which the fault is regarded is to be in exact proportion to its degree.

Size, Proportion, Substance: Ideal height for dogs is 17 inches and bitches 16 inches. Dogs 17 inches and bitches 16 inches from front of chest to point of buttocks. Approximate weight for dogs, 24 pounds and bitches, 22 pounds. Lightly built within this height to weight ratio.

Head: The *head* is proudly carried. **Eyes**-Dark hazel to dark brown, almond shaped, obliquely set and farseeing. Rims dark. **Ears**-Small, erect and slightly hooded, of fine texture and set well forward on top of head. The skull is flat, well chiseled and of medium width, tapering toward the eyes. The foreface tapers from eye to muzzle with a perceptible stop. **Muzzle** shorter than skull, neither coarse nor snipy, but with rounded cushions. Wrinkles appear upon the forehead when ears are erect, and are fine and profuse. Side wrinkles are desirable, but should never be exaggerated into dewlap. Wrinkles are most noticeable in puppies, and because of lack of shadowing, less noticeable in blacks, tricolors and brindles. **Nose**-Black greatly desired. **Teeth**-Evenly aligned with a scissors *bite*.

Neck, Topline, Body: **Neck** of good length, well crested and slightly full at base of throat. Well set into shoulders. **Topline**-Back level. **Body**-Balanced with a short back, short coupled and ending in a definite waist. Ribs moderately sprung, deep to elbows and oval. Slight forechest in front of point of shoulder. Chest of medium width. **Tail** is set high on topline, bends acutely forward and lies well curled over to either side.

Forequarters: Shoulders moderately laid back. Shoulder blade and upper arm of approximately equal length. Elbows tucked firmly against brisket. Legs straight with clean fine bone, long forearm and well defined sinews. Pasterns of good length, strong and flexible. **Feet**-Small, oval and compact with thick pads and well arched toes. Dewclaws are usually removed.

Hindquarters: Medium width, strong and muscular, hocks well let down and turned neither in nor out, with long second thighs and moderately bent stifles. **Feet**-Same as in "Forequarters."

Coat and Color: Coat short and fine. Skin very pliant. **Color**-Chestnut red; pure black; tricolor (pure black and chestnut red); or brindle (black stripes on a background of chestnut red); all with white feet, chest and tail tip. White legs, blaze and collar optional. The amount of white should never predominate over primary color. Color and markings should be rich, clear and well-defined, with a distinct line of demarcation between the black and red of tricolors and the stripes of brindles.

Gait: Swift, tireless trot. Stride is long, smooth, effortless and the topline remains level. Coming and going, the straight column of bones from shoulder joint to foot and from hip joint to pad remains unbroken, converging toward the centerline under the body. The faster the trot, the greater the convergence.



Temperament: An intelligent, independent, but affectionate and alert breed. Can be aloof with strangers.

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