

204 *The Standard*



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Temperament

The Basenji Standard States:

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

The Basenji's temperament evolved with the breed's development over thousands of years as a hunting dog in central Africa. The Basenji had to be able to hunt, going out from the hunters to round up and drive game into the nets the people had strung through the forest. The Basenji's job was not to just follow instructions, but to be self-directed for the success of the dog-human team. This is the history behind the Standard's "**An intelligent, independent...alert breed**" description. The photo on the right shows a hunting team in Africa in 1987 with nets, spears, knives and the Basenji team member.

The innate intelligence also makes Basenjies successful in hunting in traditional gundog work, tracking and coursing. They are not specialists but they can do a good job in hunting situations. Their



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ability to course in a pack is good with their teamwork used to control and capture the prey.

Breeders should maintain that intelligence as an important breed characteristic. Basenjis should not become a fawning, submission type of dog. This would be untypical. However, this independence does not mean the dog is uninterested in the people on the team so the entire clause of the Standard is ***"An intelligent, independent, but affectionate and alert breed."***



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The photo above taken in Africa in 2010 demonstrates that Basenjis there, like Basenjis all around the globe, live with their team. They are affectionate to and appreciated by those who keep them.



Photo Joe and Lisa Stewart

"Can be aloof with strangers." is not always the case. They can be aloof and should not be penalized if they are. Aloof is something of a survival instinct: think before jumping in. It should never be exaggerated into shyness or aggression.



Some of the earliest breeding of Basenjis outside of Africa resulted in some unsavory temperaments. Breeders must always be alert for faulty temperament and keep in mind

that in this day and age, the majority of Basenjis live within families and while maintaining their temperament breed type, the dogs must be solid with people to continue to be successful in the today's world.

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