



Rat Terrier Standard

Recognized by the AMA in 2018

Background: The Rat Terrier was originally bred for ridding and farm work. A multipurpose companion dog that is capable of hunting rodents and vermin above and below ground, and to course small game. He is a sturdy, compact, small-to-medium sized parti-colored dog giving the appearance of elegance and fitness, denoting speed, power and balance. Honorable scars or a couple of broken or missing (canines or incisors) teeth are not to be faulted. The following is a description of the ideal Rat Terrier. Variations are to be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

General Appearance: The Rat Terrier is just slightly longer than tall. The height, measured vertically from the ground to the highest point of the withers, is slightly less than the length, measured horizontally from the point of the shoulders to the point of the buttocks. Shortness in leg is a serious fault. The Rat Terrier has moderate bone in proportion to size. A well-balanced, hard muscled dog with smooth lines under taut skin. This dog should not be rangy nor fine boned and toyish, and never bulky or coarse. They are shown in good, hard physical working condition.
Disqualifications: unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism

Disposition: Keenly observant, devoted, full of energy, yet easily trained and obedient to command. The Rat Terrier is a non-sparling breed and generally friendly with other dogs but may be reserved with strangers. Submissiveness is not a fault.
Disqualifications: viciousness or extreme shyness

Size: There are two separate size divisions:

MINIATURE – At least 10 inches, not to exceed 13 inches.

STANDARD – over 13 inches, and up to and including 18 inches in height measured at the withers.

Disqualifications: Any dog six months of age or older measuring less than 10 inches, any dog over 18 inches

Head: The head resembles a smooth, blunt wedge from the front or profile view. When seen from the front, the head widens gradually towards the base of the ears in an unbroken line and is well filled up under the eyes. When viewed from the front the skull is moderate in width, relatively flat on top, and rounded at the crown and sides as it widens smoothly from the corner of the eyes to the base of the ears. The occiput is not prominent. The cheeks are flat and well-muscled, but never bulging. The STOP is moderate but distinct. The expression is intelligent, alert and full of interest.

Eyes: The eyes are not large. They are obliquely set wide apart and are oval. Eye color varies with coat color from darkest brown to hazel. Eye rim pigmentation corresponds with the nose color and facial markings. Grey eyes are acceptable in blue or blue-fawn dogs only, being a serious fault in all other colorations.
Disqualifications: Any blue in the eye(s), crossed eyes, divergent strabismus (wall-eyed)

Muzzle/Bite: The muzzle is strong, just slightly shorter in length than the skull and tapers smoothly along the sides to the nose. The lips are clean and tight, and correspond with the nose leather or may be pink; either solid or spotted is acceptable. The lower jaw and teeth are strong and well developed with no sign of being snipey or weak. A scissor bite is preferred. A level bite is acceptable

Nose: color corresponds with the body color and is entirely pigmented. Flesh-colored noses are considered a fault in lemon or light apricot

colorations while being a serious fault in other colorations. Seasonal fading is permitted.

Ears: Set on the top outer edge of the skull, V-shaped, with the length in proportion to the head, moderately pointed at the tip. When viewed from the side, the base of the ear is on line with the outer corner of the eye. Ears should match in shape and carriage when alert. The ears can be carried erect, semi-erect and tipped, or button without preference. When alert, a rose ear is a fault.

Disqualifications: cropped, unilateral or bilateral deafness

Neck: Length of the neck is in proportion to the head. Strong, arched along the crest and dry, the neck blends smoothly into the flat shoulders blades.

Shoulders: The shoulder blades are well laid back with flat muscles providing enough space between the shoulder blades to allow for free movement. The shoulder blades and the upper arms are nearly equal in length and well set back so that the elbows fall directly under the highest point of the shoulder blade. The depth of the body at the elbow is the same distance as from the elbow to the ground.

Chest, Back, Loin and Body: The Chest is moderately wide and well filled with a discernible fore chest. The underline ascends gradually with the ribs extending well back to a moderate tuck-up. The back is level and firm from the withers to the loin. The short loin has a slight muscular arch blending into the gently rounded croup. The topline is Smooth and blending from the back through the loin and set of the tail. The body is compact, strong and flexible with well sprung ribs. The brisket extends to the elbow. When viewed from the front, the ribs appear to be oval. The Rat Terrier, while muscled and fit, has flat muscles that blend into the body.

Hindquarters: The hindquarters are muscular but smooth and in balance with the forequarters. They should not be bulging or coarse. The Stifles are well-bent with short Hocks that are parallel and perpendicular to the ground.

Legs: The forelegs stand straight and parallel with the elbows turning neither in nor out. The pasterns are slightly sloping when viewed from the side.

Feet: The feet are oval in shape. The toes turn neither in nor out, are compact, moderately arched, with thick pads and strong nails. The front dewclaws may be removed.

Tail: The tail set is a continuation of the spine. Tails are customarily docked between the second and third joint, or can be a natural bobtail or left naturally long and tapering to the hock joint. Length is unimportant. The carriage is variable depending on attitude, carried from slightly below horizontal to almost erect, but not over the back or a ring tail.

Coat: Short, close lying, smooth and shiny coat. Texture varies; a very slight ruff or wave along the back is allowed, but undesirable. Whiskers must not be removed.

Disqualifications: any suggestion of kink or curl is cause for disqualification, absence of coat (total genetic hairlessness)

Color: Any variation of pied patterning is acceptable. Pied is described as comparatively large patches of one or more colors in combination with white. Except for the “solid white” extreme piebald dog with only mottled/spotted skin; Rat Terriers are never a solid ground color without white markings, or bi-colored without one color being white. Acceptable colors with or without “tan points”, include the predominate Black; or Chocolate, Red, Apricot, Blue, Fawn, Tan, Lemon or White. Intense, dark shades of color with clearly defined and delineated coloration is preferred. White on the body is preferred to be between 10% and 90%, but all Patterns: spotted, patched or splashed with white in conjunction with (or without) any combination of white on the face, head or ears are equally acceptable without prejudice. “Tan Points” are common and vary in shades of cream to rust. Badger markings are acceptable. Speckling, mottling and ticking is common, but heavy ticking is undesirable. Sabbling is permitted in the coat or as shading on the head or penciling on the toes. A “black

mask/black muzzle”, on a dog not having black as a coloration is to be seriously faulted. A “few white hairs” do not constitute an acceptable marking. A minimum white marking consists of a patch or strip of white with underlying white/pink skin on the fore chest or body that exceeds one inch.

Disqualifications: less than one inch of white at its widest dimension, Brindle or Merle color patterns

Coat Patterns: Bi-color where neither color is white. 9 different types:

Badger Markings

Calico: tan face/broad creeping tan markings and/or darker back and top-skull. MUST have tan.

Blanket-Back

Saddle-type piebald marking over back & ribs, with white over loin & shoulder and on legs, brisket and stomach. With or without Tan markings.

Irish Marked

Tuxedo: predominately solid from shoulder to tail; White chest/feet/with White full or partial collar marking with or without Tan markings.

Piebald

White with any shape, acceptable color, or pattern -- with or without tan markings.

Sable, White Markings

Any white markings, in combination with dark tipped, overlay of sable hairs on base color.

Solid

Predominately solid - self-colored with minimal required patch of white (1-10%) on body, OR complete "Excessive White" piebald with mottled skin/ticking & dark nose. With or without Tan markings or tan flecks.

Spotted Or Patched

Any color with piebald pattern mostly white: dark head/mask, or eye patch/s with ovate/rounded markings and/or jagged/patched piebald patterns. With or without Tan markings.

White Mask, White markings

Near solid "Excessively White Piebald" but has only small patch/s of color. A few spot piebald

White Markings, Tan Points

white markings with any visible tan trim. Use with any bicolor listed above in Color, to denote individual as tricolor.

Movement: The hind Feet although slightly smaller are ground-covering efficient trot with good reach and drive suggesting agility, speed and power. The legs are parallel at a trot, but as speed increases, the legs converge toward a center line. There should be no elbowing out, weaving or rolling action while in motion.

Disqualifications:

-Any dog over six months of age measuring less than 10 inches, or over 18 inches.

-Any blue color in the eye.

-An absence of coat (genetic hairlessness)

-Any suggestion of kink or curl, or coat type other than described is a disqualification (wire or broken coat, long coat).

-Solid colorations (other than white)

-Brindle or Merle color patterns

-Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid

-Unilateral or bilateral deafness

-Albinism

-Hanging ears.