

Congratulations on Your New American Staffordshire Terrier



The Staffordshire Terrier Club of America (STCA) would like to extend our best wishes to you and your new American Staffordshire Terrier (Am Staff) and welcome you to the world of ownership of this wonderful breed. The STCA is the AKC parent club for the American Staffordshire Terrier in the United States. The club was founded in 1936 when the breed gained AKC recognition as the Staffordshire Terrier. Our objective throughout the years has been to protect and advance the interests of the breed and to encourage responsible ownership and sportsmanlike competition among breeders and owners. For more breed and club information please visit our Website: www.amstaff.org.

General Information

Strong, athletic, intelligent and driven to please, the Am Staff can excel at just about anything asked of it, including, but not limited to agility, conformation showing, carting, packing, therapy work, search & rescue, and protection work. The Am Staff can be strong willed, exuberant and impulsive while remaining quite sensitive. Training is most successful when kept fun and diverse. The owner must attain pack leader status at an early age and not let this diminish as the puppy matures. Another imperative step to raising a well-adjusted Am Staff is to heavily socialize puppies and young adults with lots of other dogs. This should always be done in controlled environments with dogs of known temperaments. In general, an Am Staff should not be left alone with other dogs. Dog aggression is something that can develop in even well-socialized dogs. Aggression towards humans in this breed in non-threatening situations should never be seen. They are very good with children, but keep in mind children and dogs of any breed should never be left alone together.

Legislation

Ownership of an Am Staff means that you now must become a breed ambassador charged with dispelling the public misconception that this breed is deserving of discriminatory regulations and restrictions. How these stereotypes affect you varies by location, but they are prevalent at the local level in almost every state. When traveling or relocating, look into local and state laws first to be sure you are not jeopardizing the safety of your dog. You may also encounter insurance discrimination.



With this said, it is a good idea to make sure your homeowners or renters insurance provider does not discriminate based on breed. With planning and socialization, you can show the world your dog—a well-behaved breed ambassador. If you would like to become involved beyond the personal level, the STCA has a Public Relations Committee and a Legislative Committee that are always looking for help and fundraising ideas.

History

The American Staffordshire Terrier did not gain American Kennel Club registration and recognition until 1936 at which time it was referred to as a Staffordshire Terrier. The essence of the breed however is much older. Their European predecessors were developed for the “sport” of dog fighting in the early 1800’s in England and Ireland as a result of crosses between the bulldogs of that time and various game terriers. These dogs came to the United States as early as 1870 with the large numbers of Irish who emigrated. They were known then as a Pit Dog, Pit Bull Terrier, later American Bull Terrier, and even later as Yankee Terriers. The refinement of the breed from its gladiator background into the American Staffordshire Terrier is a story that makes it truly an American breed. American pioneers immediately recognized the unique combination of remarkable adaptability, extraordinary vitality and incredibly stable temperaments. They utilized them for general farm work, hunting wild game (pigs, bears, and other large animals), guarding the homestead and general companionship. It is important to note that the gameness of the Staffordshire does not mean he is a fighting machine nor does the STCA praise this characteristic. These points are mentioned to present an accurate origin and history of the breed. In 1972 the name was changed to American Staffordshire Terrier to help further distinguish it from the English Staffordshire Bull Terrier who had recently obtained AKC recognition.

“Few dogs have been more carefully bred throughout their history, and there are few breeds with as voluminous pedigree records. Today the Staffordshire has emerged from his gladiatorial background as one of the finest of all dogs. He is proud and noble of bearing, he combines power and with grace and agility, he is bright and alert and his courage is not surpassed in any other animal on earth. He is intelligent, outstandingly amenable to training and discipline, and is adaptable to almost any conditions. He is superbly gentle with children, intensely loyal and affectionate, and is a wonderful watchdog. There are few dogs indeed that combine as many admirable qualities.”

“In no other breed is there present such a remarkable combination of gentleness, camaraderie and reliability.”

— Wilfred Truman Brandon
Founding President and primary energy behind AKC recognition of the Staffordshire Terrier.

Health

The Am Staff is generally considered a robust and healthy breed. There are some instances of mild hip dysplasia and some types of cardiac disease. The club recommends screening for these conditions in breeding stock. Instances of skin and coat allergies, which are attributed to immune system weaknesses, also have been found.

The breed has been afflicted with an inherited disease, Cerebellar Ataxia, that causes a progressive decline in muscle or voluntary coordination (ataxia). This disease is an autosomal recessive neurological disease with the first signs of the disease usually appearing between 3 and 5 years of age. Affected dogs typically show loss of balance, difficulty cornering, and falling when shaking their head.

After many years of research in this area, a marker has been identified and a test developed to identify those dogs affected as well as carriers of the gene. It is critical that all breeding stock be evaluated in order to eradicate this disease from our gene pool.

The Antagene Cerebellar Ataxia (NCL-A) Test is available through Optigen. For more information, please visit: http://www.optigen.com/opt9_cerebellarataxia_amstaff.html.

Care

The American Staffordshire Terrier is an easy breed to provide care for. The short coat requires an occasional bath and a quick toweling off when dirty or wet from outside play. Nails should be kept trimmed on a regular basis. Their teeth should not need special attention when fed a diet that includes those foods known to facilitate good dental health. Ears are generally not problematic but should be checked often to make sure they are clean and dry. Your Am Staff will enjoy daily exercise and is adaptable to almost anything you want to do to provide this. Be sure to license your dog and have its collar and tags on at all times in case it is lost. You may want to consider a permanent form of ID like a tattoo or microchip. The AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR) enrollment program provides 24/7 recovery services and offers a free dog tag with recovery information when you register your dog with the AKC. Whether you choose a microchip, tattoo, or tag number, be sure to register it with AKC CAR for lifetime recovery protection. For more information, see www.akcreunite.org.

Breeding

Breeding is a huge responsibility and requires a great deal of knowledge about the breed to be done successfully. If this is something you are considering please be sure to work with an established breeder as a mentor. They will help you understand everything that needs to be considered such as temperament, health, pedigree, appearance, soundness and genetics. A breeder needs to be willing and prepared to be responsible for all the puppies they produced throughout their lifetime should it become necessary.

American Staffordshire Terrier Standard

General Impression:

The American Staffordshire Terrier should give the impression of great strength for his size, a well put-together dog, muscular, but agile and graceful, keenly alive to his surroundings. He should be stocky, not long-legged or racy in outline. His courage is proverbial. Full standard can be found on AKC Website and the STCA Website.



Head: Medium length, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop; and ears are set high. *Ears*—Cropped or uncropped, the latter preferred. Uncropped ears should be short and held half prick or rose. Full drop to be penalized. *Eyes*—Dark and round, low down in skull and set far apart. No pink eyelids. *Muzzle*—Medium length, rounded on upper side to fall away abruptly below eyes. Jaws well defined. Underjaw to be strong and have biting power. Lips close and even, no looseness. Upper teeth to meet tightly outside lower teeth in front. Nose definitely black.

Neck: Heavy, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to back of skull. No looseness of skin. Medium length.

Shoulders: Strong and muscular with blades wide and sloping.

Back: Fairly short. Slight sloping from withers to rump with gentle short slope at rump to base of tail. Loins slightly tucked.

Body: Well-sprung ribs, deep in rear. All ribs close together. Forelegs set rather wide apart to permit of chest development. Chest deep and broad.

Tail: Short in comparison to size, low set, tapering to a fine point; not curled or held over back. Not docked.

Legs: The front legs should be straight, large or round bones, pastern upright. No resemblance of bend in front. Hindquarters well muscled, let down at hocks turning neither in nor out. Feet of moderate size, well-arched and compact. Gait must be springy but without roll or pace.

Coat: Short, close, stiff to the touch and glossy.

Color: Any color, solid, parti, or patched is permissible, but all white, more than 80 percent white, black and tan and liver not to be encouraged.

Size: Height and weight should be in proportion. A height of about 18 to 19 inches at the shoulders for the male and 17 to 18 inches for the female is to be considered preferable.

Faults: Faults to be penalized are Dudley nose, light or pink eyes, tail too long or badly carried, undershot or overshot mouths.

Adopted and approved June 10, 1936.