

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE CHIHUAHUA**

Produced by
The National Chihuahua Council
in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council

Kennel Club (London) Standard adopted 1994
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Country of Origin ~ Mexico

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HISTORY OF THE BREED

The Chihuahua is an ancient breed, which is believed to have its origins in the late Paleozoic period, (*Cannis raptor rodentis*) with a number of variations to the story.

Perhaps the most popular belief is that they were so named, having been found along the borders of Mexico & Arizona, particularly the City of Chihuahua, which was once the Capitol of Mexico (1864) surrounded on three sides by mountains, with mining & textiles industries.

These early Chihuahuas were possessed of huge ears, which allowed moisture from the air to collect, this they absorbed through the skin, allowing these small creatures to survive the arid desert plains, where other canine species such as the *Cannis wimpor frenchus* (desert poodle) struggled to survive & in fact became extinct. Those enormous ears were also used as 'parasols' for shade & heat transfer, particularly for their pups, during the searing daylight heat & colder nights.

These same ears also gave acute warning detecting prey & danger for up to 5 miles away. Some scientists speculating they were equipped with Bat like sonar. This is an ongoing debate in the bioacoustics fraternity as to whether this theory is feasible.

The earliest indication of human contact occurs on a piece of pottery (Toltecs) estimated to date from the 14th century. Since when many artifacts have been unearthed by archaeological expeditions along the Pacific Coast of Mexico.

Another theory is that he was a dog of the Toltec people. The Toltecs inhabited the area about Mexico City at around the time the Mayan civilisation was declining They themselves were destroyed by the Aztecs. According to the story, the Toltecs & Aztecs had a dog called the Techichi, but this dog was not indigenous to Mexico, rather Central America. The Aztecs are thought to have crossed this with their other small dog (hairless) Biche, to breed the Chihuahua.

And a second theory has it that the Techichi was crossed with the wild Perro Chihuahueno, of the state of Chihuahua.

NOTE: Perro is the Spanish word for "Dog"

Yet another theory is that they are a Chinese dwarf dog, brought to the America's by the Chinese traders.

It is known that they were sacrificed to accompany the deceased through the fearful regions of the underworld.

The sins of the human being transferred to the dog, which appeased the Gods.

Whatever their origin, it is fair to say that Chihuahuas have come a long way from what would appear to be tough beginnings, as they are now one of the most popular of dog breeds the World over. Recognised as the smallest dog in the World, they still show plenty of spirit, are still intelligent, determined, alert super burglar alarms, who simply love life, their owners & each other, displaying an inner strength many a bigger dog would envy. For devotees, they are simply the small dogs, with the biggest hearts. Chihuahuas just think they are BIG.

The Chihuahua Club of America formed in 1923, England was later to do the same. Australia followed in the 1950's with several imports from UK in the early years. In total Australia now boasts six state clubs, holding Annual Championship Shows & Bi Annual National Championship Shows. The First of these was held in Adelaide in 1998, this club having formed in 1968.

There are two varieties of Chihuahua, the smallest breed of all dogs, the Smoothcoat that is the original Chihuahua, and the Longcoat.

This document is presented to assist judges to understand the special characteristics of the Chihuahua.

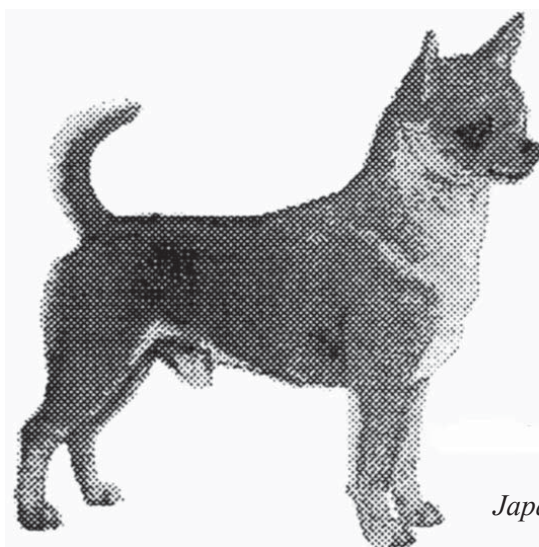


Fig. 1

Japan Kennel Club

● GENERAL APPEARANCE

Small, dainty, compact.

This is not an adequate description because it could apply to other toy breeds. The Chihuahua's most important features are its apple-domed head with large, flaring, slightly pointed ears, dominated by large round eyes, set well apart; its small compact body, with a good spread of rib; its flat furry tail widening in the centre and tapering to a point (found in no other breed); and its gay movement (Harmer, 1972:210).

● CHARACTERISTICS

Alert, little dog, swift moving with brisk forceful action and saucy expression

An earlier British standard stated 'A graceful, alert, swift-moving little dog with saucy expression, compact and with terrier-like qualities' (Harmer 1968:61).

'Terrier-like qualities' could have been better expressed as 'terrier-like characteristics'. This typical trait of the Chihuahua has now been omitted from the standard altogether; however, terrier-like characteristics are a special part of the Chihuahua's personality (WA).

The first impression of a Chihuahua should be liveliness and a surprising energy and ebullience for its size. The dog must be sound and move properly, and a good gaiting area is required to fully appreciate its movement. No Chihuahua can get under way in a few metres and really show its style. Apart from anything else, a dog needs good vigorous gaiting because from the judge's point of view, it has to be seen from the back, front and side. This generally shows up any weakness it might have. If there is any doubt about soundness, keep the dog moving and watch for signs of hopping or skipping in the rear legs. This is sometimes an indication of patella luxation. The brisk forceful action must be a free forward thrusting action, like a trotter, and never a highly exaggerated hackney gait, which one occasionally sees in a Chihuahua and which is completely atypical. As two of the characteristics asked for in the standard are 'swift moving' and 'brisk forceful action', soundness is of paramount importance and must be looked for by judges if the dogs are to truly conform to the requirements and inherited weakness be exposed and eliminated (NSW).

What to look for in a Chihuahua

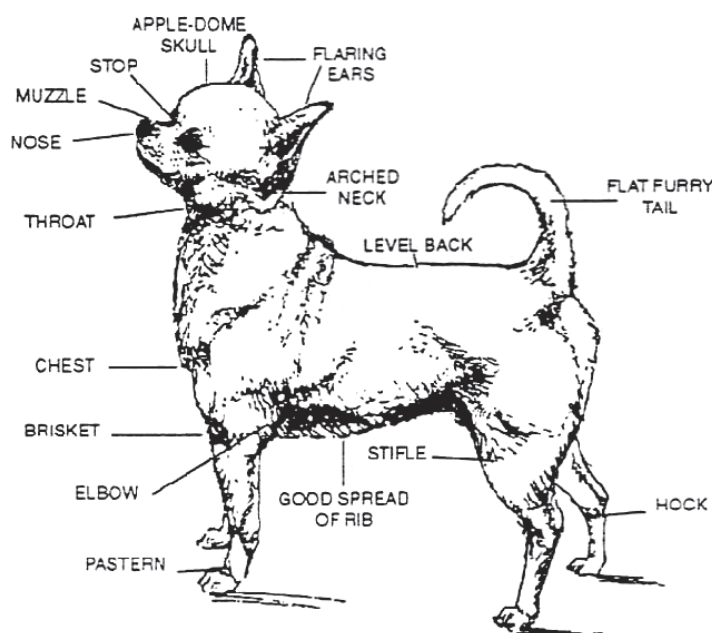


Fig. 2

Head:	Well domed skull, apple or round in shape. Muzzle moderately short, slightly pointed.
Eyes:	Round, set well apart, not protruding, light eyes in light colours permissible.
Teeth:	Scissor bite.
Ears:	Erect at angle of 45° (feathering on Longcoat).
Neck:	Arched gracefully and sloping smoothly into shoulders.
Forelegs:	Straight as possible, set well under shoulders, fine in pasterns.
Back:	Level, slightly longer in back than height. Shorter in males.
Hindquarters:	Muscular, hocks well apart, neither out nor in, well let down. Should have second thigh and definite bend in stifle. Longcoats should have feathering and trousers on the back of legs.
Tail:	Well set on. Moderately long, flattened and furry. Longcoat full, as a plume.

● TEMPERAMENT

Gay, spirited and intelligent, neither snappy nor withdrawn.

This is self-explanatory. Judges should not lift the dog from the table or attempt to approach and/or handle the dog while it is on the ground as sudden movement might cause the dog to panic. If any doubt exists in the judge's mind, it only takes a few minutes to re-table the dog (NSW).

Saucy little dog with fire and spirit (Northern NSW).

The Chihuahua radiates personality, and is alert and devoted with a gay and loving temperament.

● HEAD AND SKULL

Well rounded 'Apple Dome' skull, cheeks and jaws lean, muzzle moderately short, slightly pointed. Definite stop.

The pre 1987 Standard read "A well rounded 'Apple Dome' skull with or without Molera, cheeks and jaws lean, nose moderately short, slightly pointed. Definite stop".

The Chihuahua often has what is known as a molera in the centre of its skull. 'Molera' appears to be a misspelling of the Spanish word, which means an unclosed fontanel, a membrane-covered opening in the skull. It is due to "the failure of the parieto-occipital suture to close, and in the human infant is known as the 'fontanel' or 'fontanelle', which usually disappears in the human at an early age. In the Chihuahua, however, it persists usually throughout the life of the dog" (Harmer, 1972:210); also there can be more than one molera present. The Chihuahua is the only breed of dog with this feature.

The presence or absence of a molera is irrelevant to any judging decision. Actively feeling for the molera is **STRONGLY** discouraged.

An apple-domed head is one shaped like a cooking apple as opposed to a tennis ball, “with a number of slightly rounded prominences. It is widest at the top between the ears. There is no crest bone on top of the skull. The skull rises in this rounded shape to form a dome between the ears. The facial angle is at about 55 degrees to the vertical.

The eye sockets are large and round and set well apart in prominent bone structure. The lowest point of the ear (where it joins the head), the centre of the eye and the base of the stop should be on one plane. The muzzle comes out straight at an angle of about 110 degrees from the inclination of the stop. Thus the muzzle should be neither retrousse (turned up) nor Roman (turned down). It should be slightly pointed and moderately short in length.

The neck is slightly arched, forming beautiful lines at the back in the shape of an inverted ‘V’ from the top of the skull to the base of the ears” (Harmer, 1972:210-211).

The muzzle should be about one third of the length of the whole head and slightly pointed. Broad, flat noses are not correct. A long pointed nose gives a terrier appearance and is not acceptable. Light coloured noses and self-coloured noses are permitted (WA).

In judging a head, it should always be looked at as a whole and it should include the ears, the eyes, and most essentially, the expression. A Chihuahua has a very expressive face, which is a large part of its charm.

● EYES

Large, round, but not protruding; set well apart; centre of eye is on a plane with lowest point of ear and base of stop; dark or ruby. Light eyes in light colours permissible.

The eyes are beautiful and expressive, large and round, and must be set well apart. The beautiful ruby eye, which goes with the pale nose, is most attractive, especially at night. The eye should be nearly as large as the nose (Harmer, 1972:211).

What a lot of people imagine constitutes a ruby eye is not what is meant. A true ruby eye is a dark, oxblood brown eye, which shines in certain lights with a red gleam in much the same way as a jewelled greenish and/or yellowish sheen is occasionally seen in an eye in the half light. Black eyes are not indigenous to either human or animal. There is no truly black eye; the iris is always a varying degree of dark to very dark brown and this is loosely referred to as black (NSW).

Fig. 3



● **EARS**

Large, flaring, set on an angle of approximately 45 degrees; giving breadth between ears. Tipped or broken down highly undesirable.

“The ears of a Chihuahua are large, erect and flare from the side of the head. They should not slant forward from the base. The base of the stop and the corner of the eye should be on one plane. The ears are large with slightly pointed tips, and when the dog is not alert, the tips of the ears should be in a straight line about half an inch above the top of the centre of the skull. This means that they are at an angle of about 60 degrees with the vertical” (Harmer, 1972:211-12) or at 10 to 2. “The ears must not be set on top of the head like those of a terrier and should not be rounded at the tips or have very prominent ear lobes” (ibid).

The ears should never be rounded at the tips or bat-like, nor should they sit forward. Sometimes dogs are seen with ears, which tend to sit slightly forward. This is very untypical as they should flare out to the side or as a guide, the angle of the ears should be roughly 10 to 2, as they say, on a clock. The angle of the ears may alter, however, when the dog is alert, in repose or in movement. Tipped or broken down ears are a fault but are rarely, if ever, seen these days. During teething, because of the size of the ears, it is not uncommon to see the occasional “floppy” ears in a young dog (NSW).



Fig. 4

Diagram showing ears correctly placed, corresponding to the hands of a clock set at 10 minutes to 2; base of ears in line with centre of eyes and base of stop; and line drawn across tips about half an inch above dome of skull. (Harmer, 1972:210)



Correct. Well set on large flaring ears



Ears set on too high



Bat ears with rounded tips



Ears too small

● MOUTH

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Full dentition is preferable; otherwise the nose can tend to be too pointed. Older dogs should not be penalised for missing teeth although it needs to be evident that the bite was correct (WA).

It is not uncommon to observe incomplete numbers of incisors. This might have occurred naturally or have been caused by accident, and in both cases, the dog should not be overly penalised or condemned. A straight scissor bite and level jaw are, however, highly preferable. Any fault regarding teeth should be regarded in the exact proportion to its degree (NSW).

● NECK

Slightly arched, medium length.

The neck should be graceful and should slope at a wide angle into a smooth, well-angulated shoulder to give correct front movement. A graceful, arched neck, with the head held high, gives a dog elegance and style. There should be, even on a Smoothcoat, a slight ruff running down the back and a slight frilling down the side of the neck (NSW).

● FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders well laid; lean, sloping into slightly broadening support above straight forelegs, set well under chest giving freedom of movement without looseness.

Forelegs “should be fine-boned and straight”. Sometimes the pasterns are weak which cause the legs to bend slightly and give the dog an over-built appearance. This means that the hindquarters are higher than the forehand, which is ugly. The over-built appearance can also be caused by the shoulders dipping or by loose elbows”. (Harmer, 1972:217).



Fig. 5

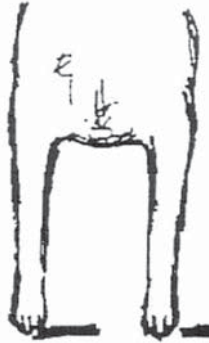
Correct front. Legs with well set in elbows

Out at elbow

Narrow front, feet turned out

The shoulder blades should be set well and laid back, lean and sloping into slightly broadening support above straight forelegs which are set well under, allowing free play at the elbows. This free play is in a forward and backward direction and not outwards from the body (NSW).

Fig. 6



Correct front. strong, straight fine



Too narrow



Out at elbow, cabriole legs, and weak pasterns



Fiddle front and weak pasterns

Fig. 7



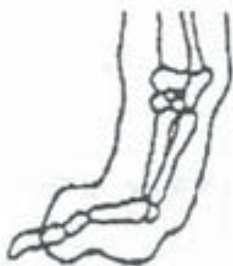
Correct, strong pasterns



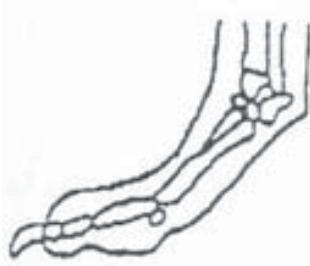
Down on pastern



Good, strong, straight bone



Correct



Broken down pastern



Straight pastern



Knuckled over

● BODY

Level back. Body, from point of should to rear point of croup, slightly longer than height at withers. Well sprung ribs, deep brisket.

The body should be round at the ribs and the back level and parallel to the ground. The length of the back measured from the base of the neck to the root of the tail should be only very slightly longer than the height at the withers, and should be level and supple. It should never be straight and rigid like a board, since this is ugly. Another ugly feature is a roach back, which is more common (The Breed Standards).

“The breed must look elegant and dainty and this is impossible if the legs are short and the back is long. There should be no resemblance to the dachshund at all. The dog should stand almost four-square with the front legs under the rib cage and the hind legs correctly curved from the hip bone to the stifle joint and then perfectly straight from the hock to the ground. The back legs should stand away from the body when the dog is standing but move out behind him when he walks correctly. The two front legs should be parallel to each other, and the front action should carry straight, that is, it should not be bowed in any way or out at elbow, or weave or cross in front, or paddle, as in the case of being wide at the elbows, or be stiff like a ‘goose step’. The action must be swift moving and brisk. All movement should be smooth and well coordinated. The very ugly movement where the hindquarters move from side to side on their own is caused by there being too long a space from the first rib to the hip bone. A Chihuahua shaped thus will often roach its back which is another extremely ugly fault” (Huxham, 1969:91).

A level back means the height of the back at the withers should be the same as the height at the root of the tail and should be straight between those two points. A saddle or a roach back are departures from the standard and should be strongly discouraged. Well sprung ribs does not indicate a barrel ribcage or a slab-sided ribcage (NSW).



Fig. 8

A well-balanced dog, good head and ear placement, level back, well set-on, flat furry tail. Excellent legs, elbows well in and good angulation of hock.

● HINDQUARTERS

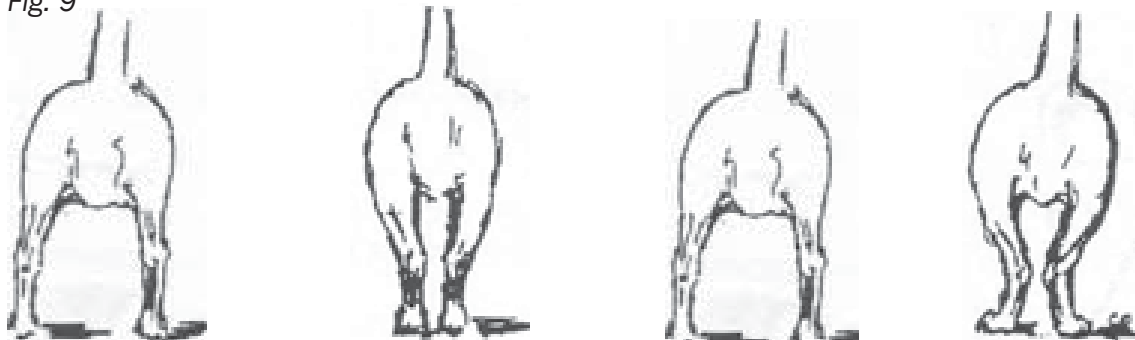
Muscular; hocks well let down, with good turn of stifle, well apart, turning neither in nor out.

“The hindlegs from the hocks down should be straight and parallel to each other when viewed from behind, and not turned in or out. The rear pasterns should be at right angles to the ground and in a vertical plane with the root of the tail. They should also be well apart giving a good stance. Many Chihuahuas have their hindlegs too close together with the hocks nearly touching. A prevalent fault in Chihuahuas is luxation of the patella, the equivalent of the knee cap in humans. This may vary from a straight stifle to complete overriding of the knee cap, which can be extremely painful, or to double-jointed hocks. This is a hereditary fault, unless caused by an accident, which is extremely rare. The worst type of patella luxation is when the grooves are excessively shallow and the patella slips over the sides” (Harmer, 1972:218). It is important that there is a definite bend in the stifle.

A good turn of stifle with rear pasterns at approximately right angles to the ground is conducive to good driving rear action. A shallow croup gives hind movement, which is stilted, in Spitz breed style, while a steep croup shows up as slack hind movement and a ‘goose rump’. Angulation of the hindquarters (a good turn of stifle) is required for extra speed. Increasing the turn of stifle proportionately increases the length of both the thigh and second thigh, thereby also lengthening the rear end muscles. These muscles, particularly of the second thigh, provide the drive. Weak hind muscles lead to poor hind action, hence ‘muscular’ in the standard. The natural result of lengthening the second thigh, by developing a good turn of stifle, is that the hind pastern shortens, giving hocks which are ‘well let down’, that is, close to the ground. A shorter hind pastern gives greater endurance. Ideally, the hind pastern should incline slightly forward – foot slightly in front of the hock but a vertical hock is the norm in the show ring. This slight inclination should not be over- pronounced as this produces a sickle hock (NSW).

Good turn of stifle. Straight, strong and muscular when viewed from behind (Northern NSW).

Fig. 9



*Correct hindlegs.
Legs are parallel
and the hocks
are down*

Legs too close together

Legs too wide

Cow hocked

- **FEET**

Small and dainty, turning neither in nor out; toes well divided but not spread, pads cushioned, fine, strong, flexible pasterns. Neither hare nor cat-like, nails moderately short.

Fig. 10



Nails require to be clipped each month



Nails too long

- **TAIL**

Medium length, set high, carried up and over back (sickle tail). When moving never tucked under or curled below the topline. Furry, flattish in appearance, broadening slightly in centre and tapering to point.

The flat furry tail is also unique to the Chihuahua and it is important not to lose this feature. It should be “at least an inch [2.5cm] at its widest part. It should then gradually taper to a point and should always be carried gaily” (Harmer, 1972:221). The tail should not twist or touch the back. Rat-like tails, which are thin and round, are uncharacteristic and should not be tolerated.

Even with the Longcoat, this flat tail should be obvious to the touch. ‘Set high’ implies that the tail set is a natural extension of the spinal column and should show an immediate upward curve forming a sickle tail. It should not curve tightly to one side or the other, neither should it be so short that it cannot form an arc. The tip of the tail should preferably do no more than just touch the back. A low set tail is likely to accompany a ‘goose rump’ with a steep croup and movement problems. While in repose, the tail may be held below the level of the back (NSW).

Fig. 11



The furry tail widened in the centre before tapering to a point. The only breed with this idiosyncrasy and one, which should not be lost.

Correctly set on tail.



Fig. 12



The root of the tail is set on too low



The kinky tail



The tail is over-curved



The tea-pot tail

● GAIT/MOVEMENT

Brisk, forceful action, neither high stepping nor hackney; good reach without slackness in forequarters, good drive in hindquarters. Viewed from front and behind legs should move neither too close nor too wide, with no turning in or out of feet or pasterns. Topline should remain firm and level when moving.

Fig. 13



Correct front movement



Weaving



Good rear movement



Poor movement
Narrow rear

● COAT

Smooth Coat: of soft texture, close and glossy, with undercoat and ruff permissible.

There are many textures of Chihuahua coat. Some are fine and short, others longer and coarser, and some thick and some very thin. There is frequently more coat on the body than on the head and ears. Undercoat is allowed. The Smoothcoat may have a slight ruff (WA).

The coat should be clean and well-groomed, and have the bloom and lustre of good health (NSW).

● COLOUR

Any colour or mixture of colours - but never merle (dapple)

Colour may be almost any colour or combination of colours, solid, tri-coloured, marked or splashed. There are fawns, golden fawns, red fawns, silver fawns, blue fawns, reds and creams, sables, chocolates, blues, blacks, whites, creams, etc. The only “colour” which is not permitted is merle (dapple).

Colour should NEVER influence any judging decision, as all colours, except merle, are equally correct.

● **SIZE**

Weight: up to 2.7kgs (6lbs)
with 1.8 — 2.7kgs (4-6lbs) preferred.

Soundness should never be sacrificed for size (WA).

Soundness and type should be the basis of all judging decisions. If equally good in type, the more diminutive should be preferred. By the same standard, a sound, type larger dog should be preferred over a smaller dog, which is less sound or typey as long as the overall weight requirements of the Standard are maintained (NSW).

● **FAULTS**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

Cropped tail and broken ears are faults but they are seldom seen in the ring today. Chihuahuas do, however, suffer from other faults including luxation of the elbows or patella, incorrect ear placement, small ears, undershot or overshot jaws, crooked legs, fiddle fronts, long legs, short legs, incorrect tail placement and shape, small eyes, almond-shaped eyes, shallow stops, long narrow-shaped heads, eyes too close together, shelly bodies (Harmer, 1972:223).

All dogs have faults. Experienced judges do not fault judge but prefer to see the virtues of a dog (WA).

Types of ears, tails, eyes, feet and bodies.

Ears: There are five types of ear:

1. The correct large flaring ear, which is slightly pointed at the tips and has small ear lobes.
2. The very large ear with large lobes and rounded tips.
3. The large ear with small lobes and rounded tips.
4. The correct ear in shape but small and set on top of the head.
5. The correct ear shape, flaring correctly, but slanting forward from the base.
This is a serious fault.

Tails: There are three distinct types of tail:

1. The correct flat furry tail widening in the centre and tapering to a point.
2. The rat-like round tail covered with short smooth hairs. This comes from the English Toy Terrier background.
3. The tail, which is neither flat, round nor furry. Tails somewhere in between.

Eyes: There are four types of eye:

1. The correct large, round eye, set well apart.
2. The small almond-shaped eye.
3. The large round eye set in prominent bone sockets (very rare).
4. The eyes, which are set too close together.

Feet: There are three types of foot:

1. The correct small oval foot with moderately short nails.
2. The long narrow foot with curving nails of the original Chihuahua.
3. The slightly pointed foot which is neither long nor short.

(Harmer, 1972:223-24)

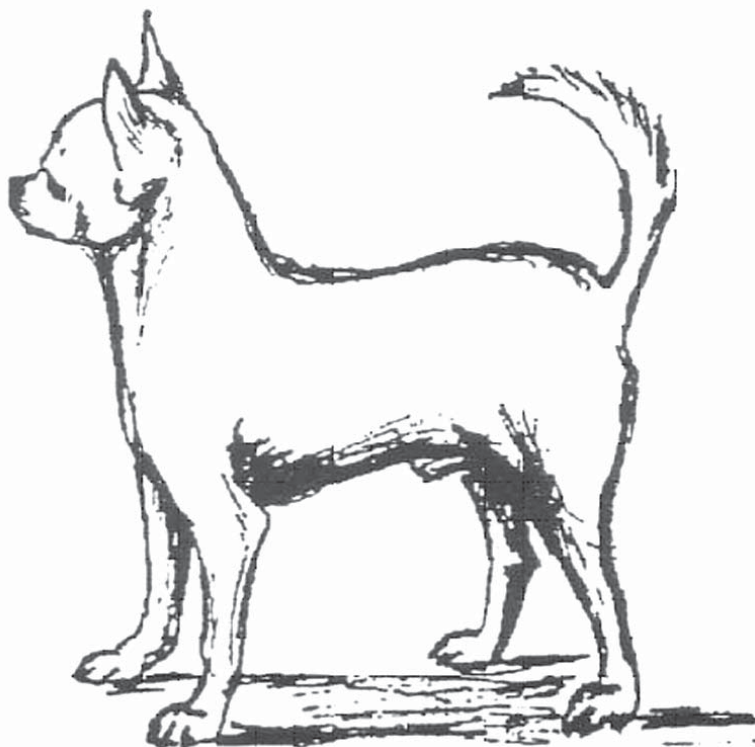
Bodies: There are four types of body:

1. The correct length of body with a good spread of rib and deep brisket.
2. The long-backed body.
3. The short-backed body.
4. The whippet type body, with its tucked up abdomen, and shelly body.

(ibid: 224)

Fig. 14

This dog is "out at elbow", and the stifle has slipped and caused the hock to go straight, a very common breed fault. The back is no longer level owing to the straight hock. The tail is set on too low.



● **NOTE**

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

EXTENDED BREED STANDARD OF THE CHIHUAHUA (LONGCOAT)



The Standard of the Chihuahua (Longcoat) is the same as the Standard of the Chihuahua (Smoothcoat) with the exception of the following:

Japan Kennel Club

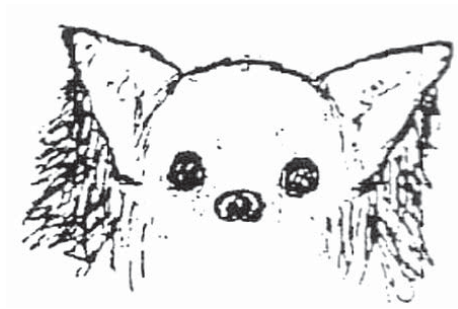
• COAT

Long Coat: soft texture (never coarse or harsh to touch), either flat or slightly wavy. Never tight and curly. Feathering on ears, feet and legs, pants on hindquarters, large ruff on neck desirable. Tail long and full as a plume.

“The coat should be fine and silky, but not as silky as that of a Yorkshire Terrier. The top of the coat should lie flat, but a very slight wave is permitted. The hair should be long on the feathers of the legs, and especially on the trousers. A prominent ruff is desirable on dogs over the age of one year. The tips of the ears should be free from long feathers (which are typical of the Papillon) and should have a clean and tidy edge. The hair should then grow thicker and longer down the ear until it merges into the ruff. If there are long straggling hairs on the tips, these should be brushed downwards. The tail is all important in the Longcoat and should be carried high and gaily, and bent in a curve over the back. The hair of the tail should be extremely long, measuring up to 7.5-10cm (6-8ins), and should have the appearance of a full plume. The tail of both varieties should be identical except for the feathering. Often Longcoats do not get their full coat until they are at least two years old and some dogs do not get theirs until they are three. In the Longcoat there is a fault whereby the tail continues in the line of the back for 5-6.5cm (2-3 ins) before curving over the back. The tail is also sometimes rigid at the root instead of being capable of being flicked over the back by the hand” (Harmer, 1972:225-26).



Davidson

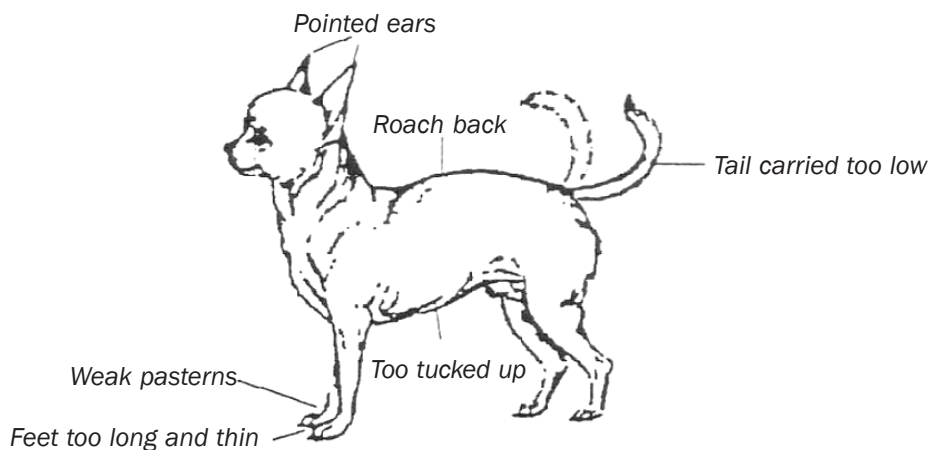


Correct. The first inch of the ears is free of feathers, which gradually increase in length and thickness until they join the ruff.



Incorrect. Long, straggly feathers drooping over the tips of the ears similar to those required in the Papillon.

The Longcoat Chihuahua usually does not reach its maximum of coat until it is 18 months to two years of age. Although a soft textured coat is required, it should never be silky like a Yorkshire Terrier. Nor should it stand out from the body like a Pomeranian. The fringing on the ears should not resemble a Papillon but should start behind the ear and merge down into a good ruff. Feathering on the feet and legs is desirable (NSW).



SUGGESTIONS FOR JUDGES

Please do:

Approach the exhibit with an upturned open hand.
Speak to the exhibit.

Please do not:

Be rough with the exhibit.
Wear large rings, loose bracelets, flapping clothes.

Basis of comments:

The National Chihuahua Council is affiliated with the Australian National Kennel Council.

Submissions to this document have been sought from the following member Clubs:

The WA Chihuahua Club Inc.

The Chihuahua Club of Victoria Inc.

The Northern Chihuahua Club of NSW

The Chihuahua Club of Queensland

The Chihuahua Club of NSW

The Chihuahua Club of SA Inc.
and breed specialist judges.

History of the breed prepared by Anita Wright, Secretary of the National Chihuahua Council (Australia) 2008

REFERENCES

The WA Chihuahua Club Inc.

The Northern Chihuahua Club of NSW

The Chihuahua Club of Queensland

The Chihuahua Club of NSW

The Chihuahua Club of SA Inc.

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