

THE HEAD OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

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Although fifteen years have elapsed since our breed was placed upon Kennel Club register, I have not seen any marked tendency toward getting a definite type of head for the Staffordshire.

We still see different types of head – namely, Bull, Terrier, and even a type that resembles the Mastiff, in fawns. The former two types even break up again and vary. This is caused by either too blunt or too sharp a foreface, or is due to lack of stop.

Well, what is the correct head? It is obvious that the Bull-type head must of necessity be carried with a Bull-type neck, accompanied by a body built to carry it, and that, in turn, on four well-boned legs. This all goes to make weight, and when our maximum is 38 lbs., we have to be very sparing in size and build to obtain this.

This brings us to the Terrier-type head. Here we have the head more finely made and usually carried on a lighter neck, body, and with lighter bone. But this type of specimen does not lack agility that is usually found with the Bull type. Although we have this Terrier-type head, quickness and strength, it is not just enough if one was in battle, to overcome an opponent who was built with the correct Stafford head.

My own personal idea of the correct head is described as follows:

Looking from the top, it should look pear-shaped, foreface neither long, thin or square at the front, but of about one-third of total overall length of head from tip of nose to occiput bone, which is found at the top and at the back of the skull. Sideways, the foreface is about as deep as it is wide. This type of head, with a good stop and set with neat rose ears, is the ideal. It can be quick to punish, with ease of movement. The circumference of skull should be about the approximate height at the shoulder. This should also coincide with the circumference of the neck.

I should like to mention a few words about the size of a bitches' head. In considering this we must remember that the maximum weight for a bitch according to the standard is 34 lbs., secondly, that a bitch must be feminine. If we are to encourage a skull of seventeen inches for bitches, then they will either be overweighted or out of balance. For a 34 lb. bitch, I think a skull of sixteen inches is ample and correct and strong for her size. If we have a dog carrying a bitches head he would be automatically penalized. I maintain that the same should apply if the bitch has a dogs head.

If we can get a definite type of head encouraged we shall then, I think, give the newcomer a clear picture of what is wanted, and avoid much confusion as we see when a full-sized dog gets his C.C., and next to him, with res. C.C., a small animal who is of different Type entirely, just because head properties are so much different, when in spite of size, the smaller one should, in fact, be a replica of his C.C. winning brother.

Let us hope that the new standard will help us to obtain our objective.