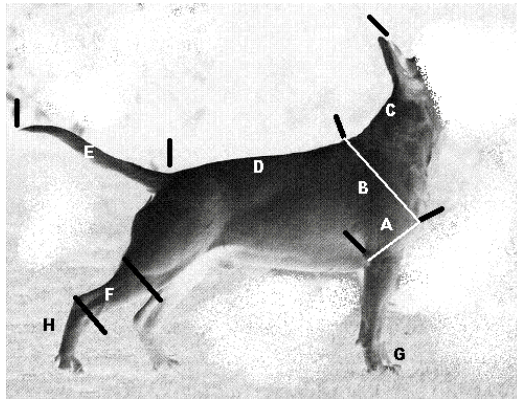


THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CONSTRUCTION. By Jamie Watkiss

I recently re-read Tom Horners book "All About The Bull Terrier " and so much of what was written then, applies now. Tom suggests to new enthusiasts that when they are looking for a foundation bitch and they have the chance to buy a very well made bitch with a plain but strong filled head, or a cracking headed bitch with an average front and poorer quarters, one should buy the well made bitch. Every country has many super headed dogs with average construction, so the well made bitch will have the choice of plenty of stud dogs and she can supply the good conformation. If she has good heads in her pedigree it is a great help. Based upon my many years of international judging, the poorer made bitch with the super head is very limited with her options as I can count on one hand the males I have seen with anything approaching the correct proportions of Humerus to Scapula. Unfortunately since Raymond Oppenheimer and the great kennels the likes of Maerdy, Woodrow, Contango and many more of the top UK breeders have left the scene, there is a tendency to judge against ones peers rather than to the standard. I firmly believe that many modern breeders who have had fortunate " Best In Show " awards, have either never read or have failed to understand the original standard. I say fortunate because a large proportion of contemporary judges have never had the opportunity to learn from those old doyens of the breed and tend to judge by being followers of fashion or get sucked in by cute heads and robot type showmanship.

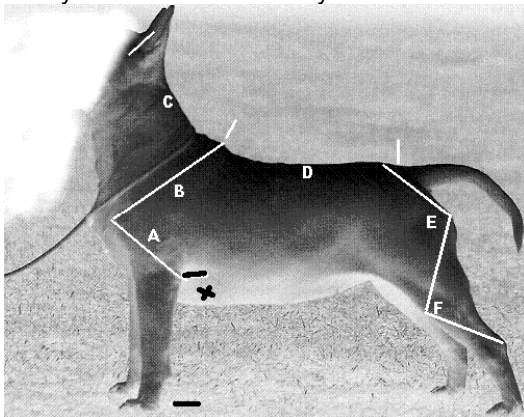
I recall lamenting on the phone to a UK judge about fronts and jokingly said to him "If you see a dog anywhere with a correct upper arm while you are judging, please buy it for me and I will come and collect it ".He replied, " If by some unlikely stroke of luck I do see one, I will be keeping it" Such is the absence of sound construction. Powerful quarters, which are the most important attribute for a fighting dog to perform his original purpose are also almost obsolete. A weak rear condemns a fighter to defeat as they cannot hold their ground, much less force the opponent over onto his back and take control.

I have taken on board the opinions of all the great breeders and when filtered and combined the picture of a well made dog is clear. In the following pictures I will try to illustrate where some dogs which to many people seem sound, tend to fall down in the finer points. I searched the net for pictures of various types Heads have been removed and the pics posterised and produced in negative format for obvious reasons, so that I am using just shape to illustrate the finer points.If any reader disagrees with the comments, I will be happy to debate my analysis with them and endeavour to steer them on the correct path, or they may enlighten me.



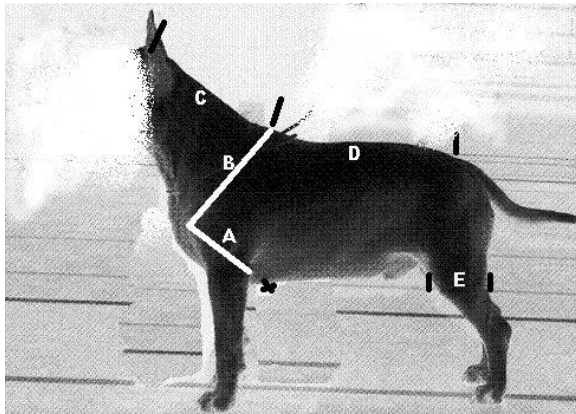
1

While this dog (1) would appeal to many young breeders because of his lovely head, depth and length of muzzle and nice ear placement, (Obscured) I would like to point out where he could have been better made. If his Humerus (A) was the same length as his Scapula (B) this would cause the top of his scapula to end up further down his back giving him better lay of shoulder and making the distances at (C) and (D) much more even and he would have a shorter back and longer neck. He also would have his elbows much further back almost even with the deepest part of his brisket, resulting in a good forechest. He appears to have short Cervical bones (C) longer Thoracic (Front part of D) and quite long Lumbar (Back part of D) and Coccygeal (E) This is exactly the reverse of what the standard requires, ie; Long Cervical-Shorter Thoracic-very short lumbar and coccygeal. I remember a top old breeder saying to me 30 years ago, "If a dog has one third of his weight in front of his elbows, he is likely to be correctly made." This dog also has the Gundog type longer hocks-slight sag at the pasterns-and a lack of muscle in the area above the hock(F) A strong rear end would have hams almost reaching the heel (Beginning of the hock) a number of people do not realise that the hock is the dog's foot and the part usually called the foot is only the toes.



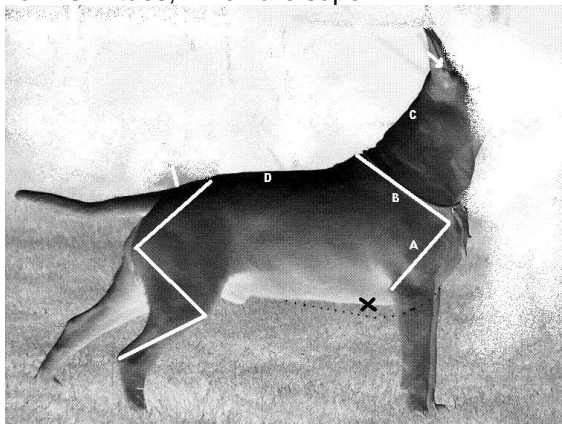
2

Dog No.(2) has a closer proportion of neck to back length (C) to (D), but is still a long way off being balanced again because of the lack of upper arm length. (A) If you observe the length of upper arm and the position where his elbow resides, try to imagine how good he would look if the elbow ended up where the black cross is. That would take the dip behind the withers out, giving him a better forechest and most important his foreleg would start from there instead of a quarter of the way up his ribs, which would put some daylight under his front and improve his topline no end. In the near future I will perfect the ability to do a before and after with photoshop and demonstrate what happens to the overall balance when the upper arm is the same length as the scapula and foreleg.



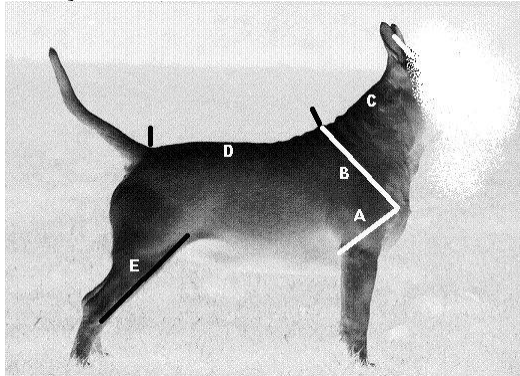
3

Dog No.3 also has a decent neck to back proportion, (C to D) but he too would benefit from a longer upper arm.(A) Even if it finished where the black cross is, it would still be shorter than his scapula. He has a reasonable turn of stifle but lacks the depth of muscle from front to back of his thigh, (E) it should be one third more than it is. It does not mean that a dog like this cannot be used for his virtues, which are super.



4

Dog No. 4. Once again the upper arm is short yet his neck length is not too bad. For a few seconds it puzzled me as to how he had such layback of shoulder, with a short Humerus. If you look carefully you will see that he does not have a lot of depth through the brisket. Please imagine if you could pull the elbow down to where the black cross is and he had the depth indicated by the black dots, the point where his Scapula and Humerus met would be further back and this would accentuate his forechest. The superb resulting balance would be complimented by his well angled rear and tailset. I could mate this dog to a number of Aussie bitches which I have judged and I believe do very well.

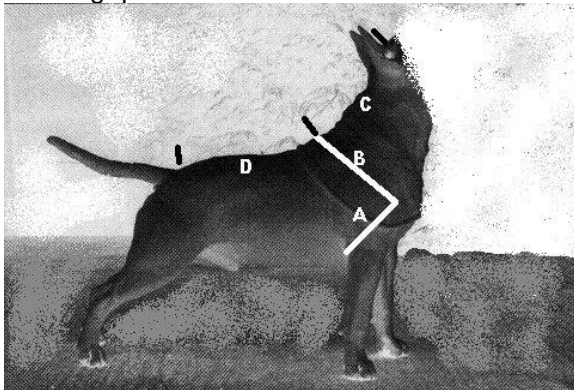


5

Dog No. 5. Short upper arm again, (A) how much better would he look if his Scapula and Humerus were in proportion.

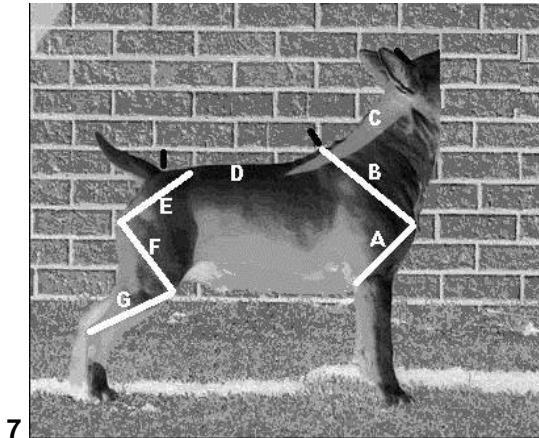
His neck, dorsal and lumbar bones are all medium and his tailbones are long. An unusual combination.

His rear (E) is so typical of many modern dogs whereas it forms little angulation while being quite muscular.



6

Dog No. 6. Has a very impressive neck to back proportion, in spite of his upper arm length (A) being less than his Scapula. (B) His shoulder has very good layback and one can only assume that he has long Cervical bones (C) and short Thoracic and Lumbar (D) with medium Coccygeal.

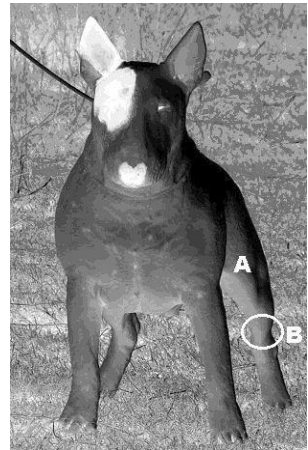


7

Dog No. 7. Again has a shorter upper arm. (A) His neck to back proportion is not bad (C to D) He has good angulation with muscle all the way down to the hock and even length of bones (E-F and G) His Thoracic and Lumbar bones are short and his coccygeal are very short. He has managed to be compact despite his short upper arm.

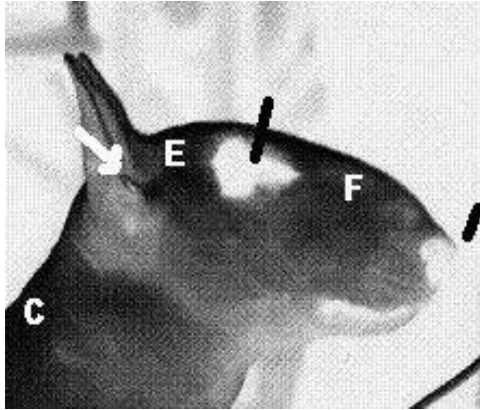


A



B

These two dogs have very strong virtues; the dog A has front bones of almost even proportions with length of foreface and good forechest, while B has super width of muzzle all the way to his nose and more meat on his quarters than some cc lineups combined. (A) The muscle goes all the way down to his hock (B). He also has nicely tucked in elbows. I am sorry I cannot provide a picture of a dog with the correct upper arm as I have not bred one, judged one or seen one for many years. Good luck finding one.



This dog is the first dog I have seen a photo of in years where the head has the **correct proportions**. From Memory Tom Horner used to advocate that we break the head up into 5 sections and the distance from occiput to eye should constitute 2 and the eye to nose should be the other three. The Muzzle must be longer than the skull. Many I have judged around the world are either equal or 3 to 2 the wrong way, giving a horrible balance to the head. The first adjective in the head standard is **LONG**. **James Hinks bred the length to enable the dog to get more of the other dog in his grip**. This boy also has depth of muzzle and underjaw and I would assume from the photo a good mouth.