



Official Standard of the Rhodesian Ridgeback

General Appearance: The Ridgeback represents a strong, muscular and active hound, symmetrical and balanced in outline. A mature Ridgeback is a handsome, upstanding and athletic dog, capable of great endurance with a fair (good) amount of speed. Of even, dignified temperament, the Ridgeback is devoted and affectionate to his master, reserved with strangers. The peculiarity of this breed is the ridge on the back. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed.

Size, Proportion, Substance: A mature Ridgeback should be symmetrical in outline, slightly longer than tall but well balanced. Dogs – 25 to 27 inches in height; Bitches – 24 to 26 inches in height. Desirable weight – Dogs – 85 pounds; Bitches – 70 pounds.

Head: Should be of fair length, the *skull* flat and rather broad between the ears and should be free from wrinkles when in repose. The stop should be reasonably well defined. *Eyes* – Should be moderately well apart and should be round, bright and sparking with intelligent expression, their color harmonizing with the pigmentation color of the dog. *Ears* – Should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at the base and tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head. *Muzzle* – Should be long, deep and powerful. The lips clean, closely fitting the jaws. Clear faced or masked dogs are equally correct and neither is preferred. A clear face with black or brown/liver pigmentation only on nose, lips and around the eyes, or a masked face with black or brown/liver pigmentation is correct as long as the color is not continuing with a solid mask over the eyes. A darker ear often accompanies the darker masked dog. *Nose* – Should be black, or brown, also known as liver, in keeping with the color of the dog. No other colored nose is permissible. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown or liver nose with amber eyes. *Bite* – Jaws level and strong with well-developed teeth, especially the canines or holders. Scissors *bite* preferred.

Neck, Topline, Body: The *neck* should be fairly long. It should be strong, free from throatiness and in balance with the dog. The chest should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious, ribs moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel hoops (which would indicate want of speed). The back is powerful and firm with strong loins which are muscular and slightly arched. The *tail* should be strong at the insertion and generally tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should not be inserted too high or too low and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled or gay.

Forequarters: The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed. Elbows close to the body. The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong and heavy in bone. The feet should be compact with well-arched toes, round, tough, elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads. Dewclaws may be removed.

Hindquarters: In the hind legs the muscles should be clean, well defined and hocks well down. Feet as in front.

Coat: Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance but never woolly nor silky.

Color: Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes permissible but excessive white there, on the belly or above the toes is undesirable (See muzzle).

Disqualification: Solid black. Black and tan, or brown and tan in brown/liver nosed dogs.

Ridge: The hallmark of this breed is the ridge on the back which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed. The ridge should be clearly defined, tapering and symmetrical. It should



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start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to a point between the prominence of the hips and should contain two identical crowns (whorls) directly opposite each other. The lower edge of the crowns (whorls) should not extend further down the ridge than one third of the ridge. Disqualification – Ridgelessness. Serious Fault – One crown (whorl) or more than two crowns (whorls).

Gait: At the trot, the back is held level and the stride is efficient, long, free and unrestricted. Reach and drive expressing a perfect balance between power and elegance. At the chase, the Ridgeback demonstrates great coursing ability and endurance.

Temperament: Dignified and even tempered. Reserved with strangers.

Scale of Points:

General appearance, size, symmetry and balance 15

Ridge 20

Head 15

Legs and Feet 15

Neck and Shoulders 10

Body, Back, Chest and Loin 10

Gait 10

Coat and Color 3

Tail 2

Total 100

Disqualifications:

Ridgelessness.

Solid black.

Black and tan, or brown and tan in brown/liver nosed dogs.

Approved April 8, 2025

Effective July 1, 2025