

Judging the Polish Lowland Sheepdog a.k.a PON

By Ryan Sinclair Kerner

One's first impression of the Polish Lowland Sheepdog is that of an ideal shaggy dog. The PON has similarities to other breeds so it is very important for the judge to thoroughly examine this breed and be able to distinguish the differences from breeds that appear alike.

The Polish Lowland Sheepdog is a cobby, medium sized, strong and muscular dog. The word cobby means "compact." It does not mean square and short legged. It can also mean "stocky." Good bone and well-developed muscles are absolutely essential. The general appearance is of a sturdy and robust dog. By no means should the PON be an "elegant" dog. Consequently, they should not be judged like the slender long Bearded Collie, or the small boned Tibetan Terrier. The PON has a long thick coat and hanging hair that covers the eyes. It is lively, but self-controlled, clever and perceptive and is endowed with an excellent memory. His herding and working ability is attributed to an intense desire to please.

The PON is a well-balanced dog, measuring at the withers 18-20 inches for a dog and 17-19 inches for a bitch. There is no disqualification for not fitting within this size. One needs to remember, however, that the dog is a working dog. Consequently his size must not go below the standard; he must neither be too weak nor too delicate.

The body is rectangular rather than square. The height-to-length ratio, from withers to tail, is 9:10. The chest should be deep and broad; considering general proportions the distance from the withers to the bottom of the chest should be slightly more than 50% of the total height. The PON should not be too leggy or narrow and/or shallow in the front.

The beautiful head at a glance, appears to be actually larger than it is due to the profuse hair on the forehead, cheeks and chin. The head is of medium size in proportion to the body. The skull is moderately broad and slightly domed. The width of the skull in an adult male is only slightly smaller than its length. Well-pronounced stop is of utmost importance. The ratio of muzzle to skull is 1:1. The muzzle is broad never snipey. Eyes are of medium size and oval, not protruding. Eye color varies from amber (in chocolate dogs) through hazel and brown to very dark shades. It should match coat color with the eye rims being as dark as possible within the color. Ears are medium sized, heart shaped, set moderately high, drooping with fore-edge close to cheeks. They should be fully covered with long hair. The jaws are strong. A full compliment of teeth meet in a scissor or level bite. The nose should be large and black or brown, depending on color.

The PON should have a medium length neck, which is strong, muscled, without dewlap and carried rather horizontally. The topline is level with well-sprung ribs leading to a slight tuck up at the loin. Withers are well pronounced and broad.

The shoulders are heavily muscled, and well laid back at an angle of approximately 45°. Hindquarters are heavily boned, well muscled and well angulated.

The entire body is covered with a long, dense, shaggy, thick coat that is reasonably straight. It is double coated with a soft and dense undercoat. The quality of a PONs coat is much more

important than its length. The PON is a natural dog and any trimming is to be discouraged. Coat color is immaterial. Different coat colors are linked to different coat textures. Generally the best texture comes with the gray and white/gray color. Black/white coats are usually softer and thinner, sometimes almost silky. Chocolates have woolly and soft undercoats. Rare jet-blacks have extremely soft coats, lacking undercoats.

The PON moves effortlessly with good reach in the front and full extension in the rear. The gait is smooth walking or trotting. He is inclined to amble when he walks slowly.

This is a stable and self-confident dog, that is extremely loyal, but somewhat aloof and suspicious of strangers.