

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD



Extended Breed Standard of **THE DALMATIAN**

Produced by
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in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council Ltd

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Standard adopted by ANKC Ltd pre 1987

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HISTORY

The Dalmatian is an ancient breed, dating back to 2000BC, when spotted dogs appeared on Greek and Egyptian wall murals, showing them working with the chariots of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt. Origins are unknown with the name originating from Dalmatia, Croatia but there is little evidence as to why they were such named other than that they were 'spotted' in the region! Ancient gypsies (Romanies) were accompanied by the dogs in their wanderings around the world. Over the years Dalmatians have been used as dogs of war, border patrols, cart pullers, sheep herders, hunting dogs, circus performers and, of course, coach dogs.

With the breed's introduction to Britain in the 18th century, the Dalmatian became very popular with the aristocracy as an additive to their ornate carriages, especially because of their ability to work alongside and in front of the horses or under the carriage axles. Additionally, their distinctively unique spotted coats were seen as attractive. They were given names such as 'Spotted Dick', 'English Coach Dog' and 'Plum Pudding Dog'. The dogs were adopted in the 1800's by fire departments and it was not an unusual sight to see Dalmatians running through the streets of London to clear the way for the horse-drawn water-wagons. They would help to keep the horses calm as well as protecting the horses. The breed today continues to have a natural affinity with horses and is still the mascot of many fire stations.

! GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Dalmatian should be a balanced, strong, muscular, active dog of good demeanour. Symmetrical in outline, free from coarseness and lumber, capable of great endurance with a fair amount of speed.

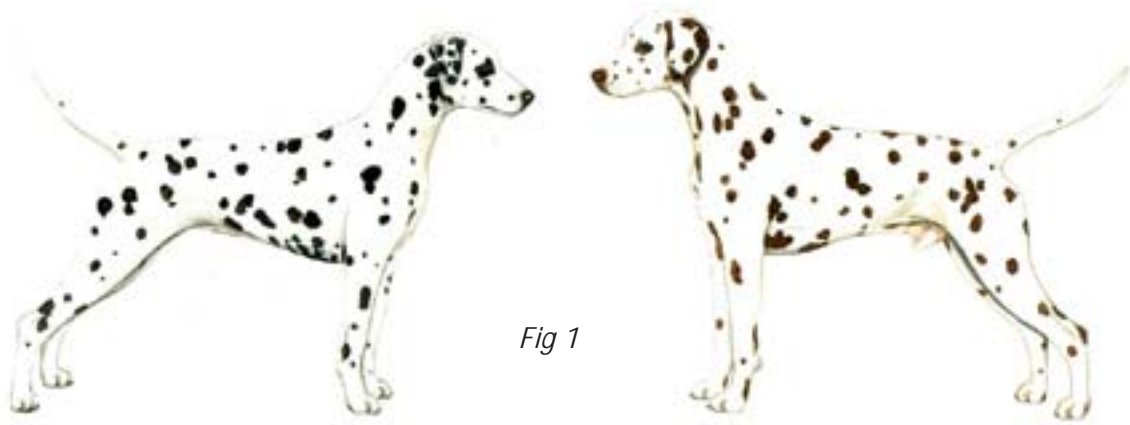


Fig 1

The Dalmatian is a distinctively spotted dog, however, no dog is more normal in its make up than the Dalmatian. It is free from abnormalities and exaggeration. Other than its spotting, which will be discussed in detail later, no features are peculiar to this breed. Balanced in all proportions, it is an active, medium sized dog, displaying the stamina, strength and musculature needed to keep up with horses for long periods of time. In addition, the Dalmatian is elegant and graceful enough to enhance the appearance of any horse and carriage. BALANCE and proportions should satisfy the eye and give a sense of perfect harmony both in repose and action. STRONG, MUSCULAR, ACTIVE. The Dalmatian conveys the impression of substance combined with elegance and perfect balance, never overdone. CAPABLE OF GREAT ENDURANCE. With its purpose as a carriage dog so important, the Dalmatian should have the ability to trot long distances alongside a coach. FAIR AMOUNT OF SPEED. This is interpreted as meaning an ability to accelerate with a quick burst of speed when necessary. While it must have the stamina to go all day, it must also have an action that is economical in order to conserve energy. Although the Dalmatian's purpose as a carriage dog is obsolete, the standard is written with this in mind. Stamina is a must for this breed and is achieved only with a combination of soundness, firm topline, correct rib cage, correct boning, good feet, correct angulation and sufficient exercise to produce good hard muscles.

! TEMPERAMENT

Of good demeanour.

Outgoing and friendly, not shy or hesitant, free from nervousness and aggression. The Dalmatian is easy to get along with and loves people. It is intelligent, alert and always friendly. An extrovert, and well known for its characteristic grin.

! HEAD AND SKULL

The head should be of fair length, the skull flat, reasonably broad between the ears but refined, moderately well defined at the temples i.e. exhibiting a moderate amount of stop, not in one straight line from nose to occiput bone, entirely free from wrinkle. The muzzle should be long and powerful, never snipy, the lips clean, fitting the jaw moderately close. The nose in the black spotted variety should always be black, in the liver spotted variety always brown.

The Dalmatian is not a head breed, but the head must be in proportion to the rest of the dog, clean looking smooth and free of wrinkle. The top skull and muzzle should be about the same length. The top skull is nearly as broad as it is long and is almost flat with a slight centre groove starting at the occiput, coming down the stop between the eyes and extending onto the muzzle to the nose leather. The stop is not pronounced but a subtle rise where the muzzle blends into the upper head. From the side, toplines of the skull and the muzzle appear approximately parallel. The muzzle is never weak nor pointed. The lips are clean and dry. There are no flews or dewlaps.



Fig 2

! EYES

The eyes, set moderately well apart, should be of medium size, round, bright and sparkling, with an intelligent expression, their colour, depending on the markings of the dog, dark in the black spotted, amber in the liver spotted. The rim round the eyes should be complete, black in the black spotted and liver brown in the liver spotted.

Please remember that a Dalmatian's eyes are "round, bright and sparkling". A dog with a blue eye should not be shown.



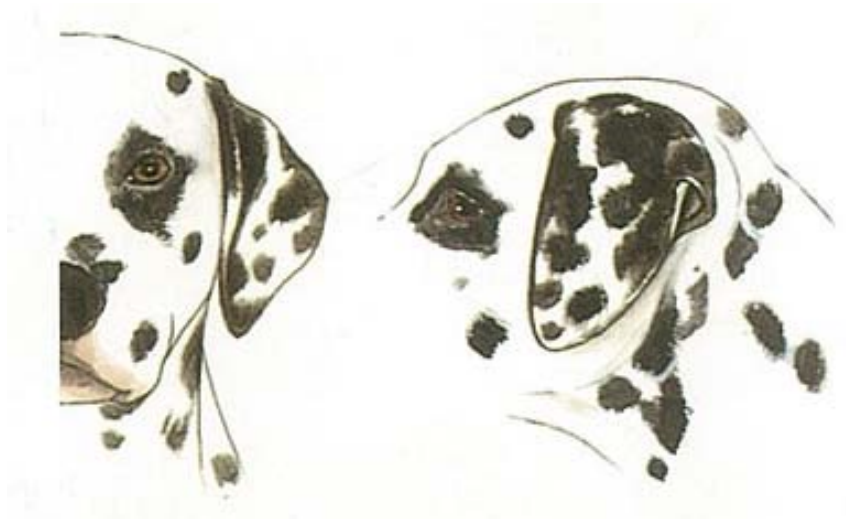
Fig 3

! EARS

The ears should be set on rather high, of moderate size, wide at the base, gradually tapering to a rounded point, fine in texture, carried close to head. The markings should be well broken up, preferably spotted.

The ears should be set on rather high. When alert the base of the ear is level with the top of the skull. They should be of moderate size, rather wide at the base gradually tapering to a rounded point. The ears should be fine to touch, carried close to the head. There should be white breaking up the colour on the ears, sometimes seen as marbling, though spotted ears are preferred.

Fig 4

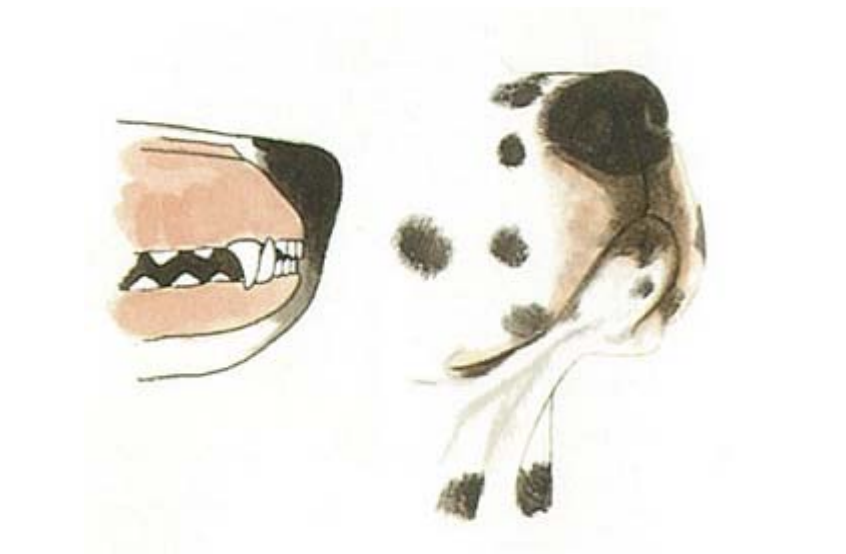


! MOUTH

The teeth should meet, the upper slightly overlapping the lower (scissor bite).

Any bite other than scissor bite incorrect.

Fig 5



! NECK

The neck should be fairly long, nicely arched, light and tapering, entirely free from throatiness.

The Dalmatian requires fairly long cervical vertebrae to give it that graceful arched neck which is desirable. It should have a good flow of neck into the shoulder to assist in forming the symmetrical outline. While many Dalmatians have been trained to hold the head high in the ring, when trotting freely the head is thrust forward to achieve kinetic balance and is only slightly higher than the topline.

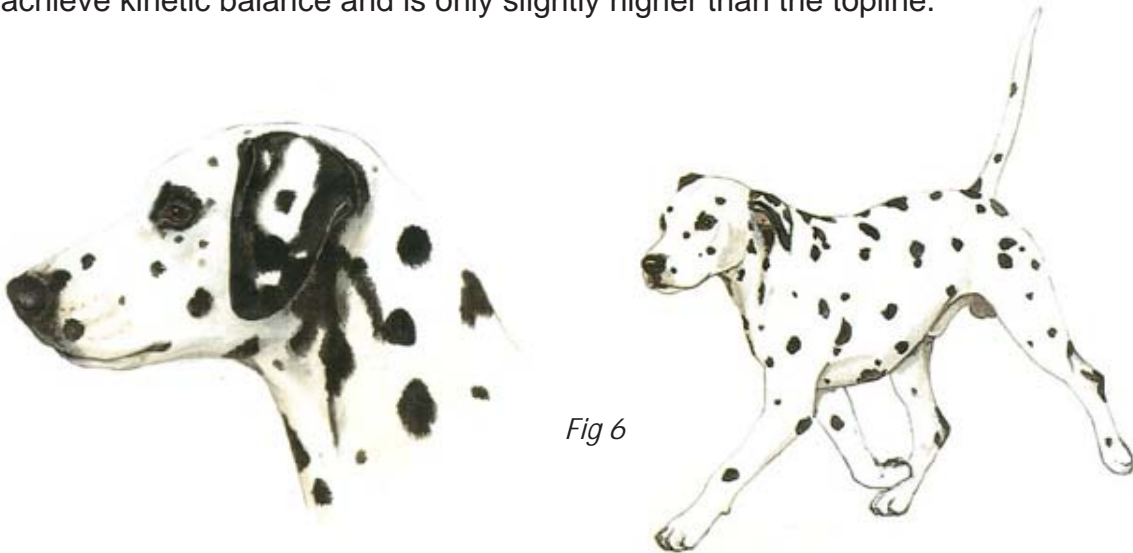


Fig 6

! FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders should be moderately oblique clean and muscular. Elbows close to the body, the forelegs perfectly straight with strong round bone down to the feet, with a slight spring at the pastern joint.

The standard requires a moderately oblique shoulder. The angle between the scapula and humerus is slightly more than 90 degrees. Shoulders should be well laid back and also of good length for muscles and tendons to function properly. With correct angulation the scapula, together with the humerus act as shock absorbers. The two combined lift the leg, giving the rhythmic stride called for in the standard. Length of scapula and humerus should be equal. Front legs should be perfectly straight right down to the foot, with a slight spring of pastern. They should be about the width of two legs apart and should be evenly boned the entire length.

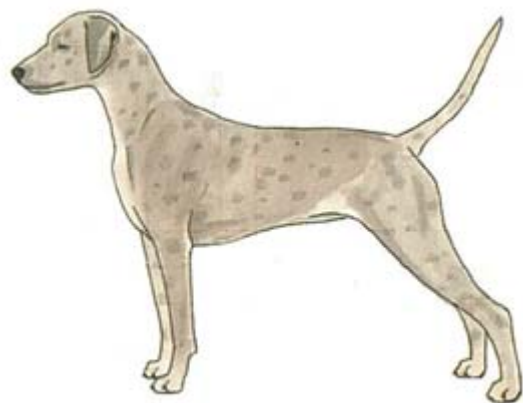


Fig 7

! BODY

The chest should not be too wide but deep and capacious with plenty of lung and heart room. The ribs well sprung, well defined wither, powerful level back, loins strong, clean and muscular, and slightly arched.

The chest should be viewed from three angles. From the front, it is deeper than it is wide and it is well filled. From above, it is wider at the shoulder than at the loin. From the side the pro-sternum is only slightly visible in front of the forelegs, but the lower portion of the chest extends to the dog's elbow. A chest with a long rib cage is described as "well ribbed back" which give plenty of room for the lungs to expand, which is necessary for endurance. The underline of the chest gradually slopes upward from midway along the rib cage to the end of the ribs. The Dalmatian has only a moderate tuck up. The back should be level in motion and in natural stance. In a properly constructed dog with good muscle development the topline from the withers to the onset of tail remains level whether the dog is standing or moving. There should be well defined withers, but with no interruption to the flow of neck into the shoulders and back. The loin should neither be excessively long nor short. If anything, the Dalmatian is slightly longer than high from point of shoulder to point of buttock, withers to ground. The extra length of rib cage, not loin. The arching of the loins should not be exaggerated and comes from strong musculature.

Fig 8

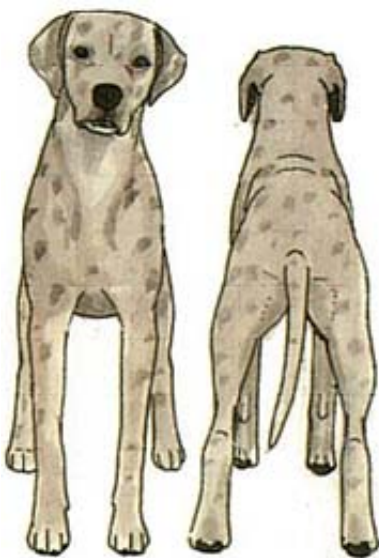


Fig 9

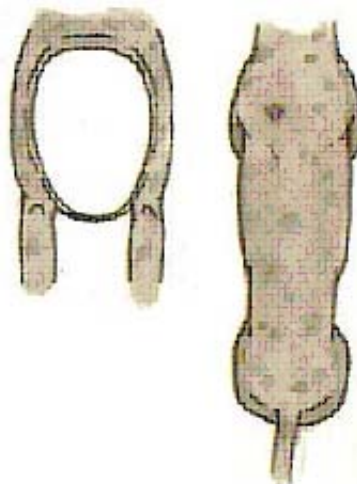


Fig 10

! HINDQUARTERS

Rounded, muscles clean with well-developed second thigh, good turn of stifle and hocks well defined.

Correct hindquarters on a Dalmatian are also important as it is a dog who must be able to gait for many kilometres up and down hills. It is a “moderate” dog with a normal front angulation, and therefore requires a stifle which is moderately well bent. The Dalmatian should convey endurance and a fair turn of speed. If it had excessive angulation it would tire itself and without angulation, would not cover the ground. The hindquarters should be strong. The outline of well-developed muscles should be clearly seen on the buttocks, legs and second thigh.

Fig 11



Fig 12



Correct moderate

Incorrect lacking angulation



Fig 13

The pelvic slope should be approximately 30 degrees. The thigh and second thigh should be long and the hock to the ground short. Muscles should be well developed in inner and outer thighs as well as the second thigh (calf muscle). The hock should be vertical to the ground when standing. Hocks should be well let down to give good endurance.

! TAIL

In length reaching approximately to the hocks. Strong at the insertion gradually tapering towards the end, it should not be inserted too low or too high, free from coarseness and carried with a slight upward curve, never curled. Preferably spotted.

It is a moderate tail-set. The tail is an extension of the topline, flowing with the backline after taking into consideration the slightly arched loin. At rest the Dalmatian may carry the tail low, but on the move or when alert it is carried with a slight upward curve. A traditional sabre carriage.



Fig 14

! FEET

Round, compact, with well arched toes (cat feet) and round tough elastic pads. Nails black or white in the black spotted variety, in the liver spotted, brown or white.



Good legs and “cat feet” are very important. Strong feet and thick tough pads are a must for an endurance dog. Feet should turn neither in nor out.

Fig 15

! GAIT/MOVEMENT

The dalmatian should have great freedom of movement. A smooth, powerful rhythmic action with a long stride. Viewed from behind, the legs should move in parallel, the hind legs tracking the fore. A short stride and paddling action is incorrect.

Movement tells us much about the Dalmatians' structure, which is not always revealed when it is standing still, for it reflects its physical coordination, balance for the body and soundness. The dog seeming to exert a minimum of effort to cover the ground. When judging the Dalmatian in the ring, the length of stride should be in proportion to the dog, steady in rhythm of 1,2,3,4. Front legs should not paddle, nor should there be a straddling appearance. Hind legs should neither cross nor weave. Judges should be able to see each leg move with no interference from another leg. Drive and reach are most desirable. When a dog moves away from the judge in a straight line, the hind legs conceal the fore, the hind foot covering the spot the fore foot has just left, not overreaching.



Fig 16

! COAT

The coat should be short, hard and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance.

The coat should be of uniform texture with hair on the ears and head shorter and softer. It is a single coated dog.

! COLOUR

The ground colour should be pure white. Black spotted dogs have dense black spots and liver spotted dogs liver-brown spots. They should not run together but be round and well defined, the size of a five to a twenty cent coin, as well distributed as possible. Spots on the extremities should be smaller than those on the body.

In both varieties the colour of the spots should be dense and have a sheen. The black should be a shiny jet black. There is no definite description laid down as far as the liver colour is concerned, but it should be a rich liver brown. The ideal is a colour which cannot be mistaken for black in average light at a reasonable distance (e.g. across a show ring.) Variations of liver colour on the one dog or greyish markings on a black spotted specimen are undesirable. Spots should not run together but be round and well defined. Balance of markings is a feature. Most dogs have groups of spots close together. A few spots that join are acceptable, provided they can be seen to be spots. They should not form a conglomeration of ugly proportions. Clear definition of spots is important. The edges should not blend into the ground colour so as to appear grey or have a dark halo. Spots in size FIVE to a TWENTY cent coin. Spots on the body are larger than those on the head, legs and tail. The ears should be spotted, but this is not essential just as spots on the tail are not essential. For some reason many liver dogs have smaller spots than blacks. Tick marks, or flecks are not spots and are undesirable. Tick marks are smaller than a one cent piece and are rather more like flecks appearing on the coat. Optical illusion can be created by uneven spotting regarding conformation and gaiting.



Fig 17 Correct, clearly defined spotting



Fig 18 Incorrect

Spotting is the one unique feature of the Dalmatian and is an essential part of the breed type, although conformation should not be sacrificed to spotting alone. However the significance of good spotting must not be denigrated or this unique and identifying feature of the breed could be lost. Perfect markings have never been achieved and it is safe to say they never will be.

! SIZE

Overall balance of prime importance, but the ideal height to be aimed at is: Dogs 58.4-61.0cm (23-24ins) bitches 56.0-58.4cm (22-23ins)

Balance is of prime importance and should not be sacrificed to size alone. Dogs slightly larger or smaller than the ideal standard should not be excluded from placings if they present a balanced picture. The belief that the dogs only ran under the axle is incorrect. The Dalmatian was equally at home alongside, in front of, or behind the coach. Remember, overall balance.

! 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.

Blue eyes, patches, black and liver spots on the same dog (tricolours), lemon spots, bronzing and other faults of pigmentation.

Blue eyes, patches, tri-colours and lemon spots highly undesirable.

Patches. Dalmatian pups are born pure white, although shadows of spots may be seen on the skin at birth. A patch is clearly visible at birth and usually found on the ear or face. A patch is an area of solid colour, a rich deep black or liver, usually with a velvety texture. It is sharply defined with an absence of white hairs. To determine between a solidly marked ear and a patch, turn the ear over to see if there are any white hairs. The presence of white hair, no matter how small an amount, would indicate a solidly marked ear. Tri-colours, a black spotted tri-colour is a dog with black spots and tan/brown spots. A liver spotted tri-colour has liver brown spots and light orange or lemon spots. The tri-colour spots generally appear on the front of the neck, chest, inside legs or around the vent.

Lemon/orange spotting. Lemons have black nose and eyerim pigment, where oranges have brown nose and eyerim pigment. Black and liver spotting are the only acceptable colours. Dalmatians with Patches, Blue eyes, Tri-colours or having lemon or orange spotting, should not be exhibited. Bronzing can occur during a "coating out" period. On the black spotted variety it is seen as a bronze tinge around the edges of the spots and/or on the surface of spots. Livers are affected similarly, the spots tending to develop a halo of gingery colour. Bronzing must be assessed in relation to the rest of the dog and should be considered similar to a coated breed being out of coat or having dropped coat temporarily.

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

CONCLUSIONS

Judging the dalmatian.

A good Dalmatian must be of good breed type, balanced, sound in movement, well spotted and of good temperament. One of these things on its own is not enough.

Remember the Standard describes a dog free of exaggerations and abnormalities. Please judge the breed to leave it that way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Japanese Kennel Club for permission to use their graphics
for illustration of this Extension.