



Information on Judging English Cocker Spaniels for Sweepstakes Judges

Thank you for your interest in the English Cocker Spaniel. The Breed Education Committee of the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America has put together this packet of information on judging this breed to aid you in your assignment.

This is a coated breed of many colors, in order to judge them, you must train your eye to see through the distractions and look for the sturdy hunting dog underneath. Please keep in mind the English Cocker Spaniel was bred to work in the heavy, dense terrain of England, darting in and out of hedgerows and bramble to pursue woodcock and other fowl as well as hare.

Please note when judging, that the bone, forechest, ribspring, and “hammy” rear should be very evident in even a six month old puppy. A well-made puppy of any color should not be considered “dumpy”. A racy, narrow, fine-boned puppy will never mature into a correctly made adult.

This link shows the breed in action:

<https://www.facebook.com/100008297626901/videos/1819508458335724/>

Please visit our Club’s website for more information and educational materials:

<http://www.ecsca.info/index.php/education/judges-education>

Here are a few directives and pointers:

AKC’S POLICY ON JUDGING TABLE BREEDS

Designated table breeds must be examined on an examination table. **If re-examination is necessary for a table breed, they must be placed back on the table.** For re-examination, a maximum of two dogs may be placed on the table at the same time. Special care should be taken in the positioning of the table. If reverting from table to non-table breeds, ensure the table is moved out of the way.

***Please do not examine or touch this breed on the ground.**

DIRECTIVE ON JUDGING:

When judging the English Cocker Spaniel, it is important to remember the original purpose of the breed, which is to hunt in very dense cover. It must be understood that the English Cocker pushes through the cover and does not leap over it like the larger Springer or Setter. To function efficiently in this type of terrain and in this manner, the correct “cockery” dog must have well sprung ribs that are deep and carried well back, a short, broad back, a well-developed forechest, generous bone, a short, broad loin, and broad and muscular hindquarters. He is a compact, broad, and very powerfully built dog for his size.

The English Cocker must be viewed from above to confirm that the well-sprung ribcage is the widest part of the dog, with an ample chest and a broad, "hammy" rear to support the body. An English Cocker lacking in substance that is long, narrow, refined, shelly, racy, and/or fine-boned, is "settery" in appearance, is atypical of the breed, and should not be rewarded.

JUDGING THE ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL WITH A NATURAL TAIL

The English Cocker Spaniel is a docked, hunting breed. The characteristic incessant, merry action of the tail while working in thick, dense cover, normally deeper than the dog is tall, necessitates docking to prevent injury. (Please refer to the directive here). The E.C.S.C.A. does not intend to change the breed standard.

In accordance with A.K.C. rules (Chapter 7, Section 15), you may either choose to excuse an English Cocker with a natural tail as being inconsistent with the standard, or judge the dog, considering the tail to be a fault. The E.C.S.C.A. will support your decision to excuse, as well as judge, an undocked dog. Should you choose to keep a natural tailed English Cocker in the ring, it is expected that you would prioritize by virtues and factor in faults lastly.

The natural tail is thick at the root (consistent with the required generous amount of bone), tapering to the end, and ideally not reaching below the hock joint. As this has always been a docked breed, determine the tail carriage by observing the first quarter to third of the tail as the dog is being moved.

CLARIFICATION OF ECS COLORS

The Breed Education Committee and breeder-judges of English Cocker Spaniels have noticed an increase in the number of questions regarding acceptable color and markings. In order to provide information on color and markings in accordance with the Breed Standard, this clarification was drafted by the Committee.

The English Cocker Spaniel standard states under Color - "Various."; then goes on to list the acceptable colors and markings in the breed.

The AKC guidelines (1994, amended 2006) for writing breed standards states: "In breeds where multiple colors or color combinations are acceptable, but not all colors are permitted, the complete list of all acceptable colors and color combinations must be included in the standard. In such cases, any color or color combinations not mentioned are unacceptable, and judges are to pass judgment on this basis."

Please keep in mind when judging this breed, that color patterns occurring in breeds outside the Sporting group, such as brindle or sable, etc., are not described in the English Cocker Spaniel Breed Standard as they are neither parti-color (ticked, roaned, or open marked, with or without tan points) nor solid color (with or without tan points).

Issued by the E.C.S.C.A. Breed Education Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America, Inc.

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We fervently hope that you enjoy your assignment! If we can be of any further help to you, please do not hesitate to ask.

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English Cocker Spaniel Breed Standard

General Appearance

The English Cocker Spaniel is an active, merry sporting dog, standing well up at the withers and compactly built. He is alive with energy; his gait is powerful and frictionless, capable both of covering ground effortlessly and penetrating dense cover to flush and retrieve game. His enthusiasm in the field and the incessant action of his tail while at work indicate how much he enjoys the hunting for which he was bred. His head is especially characteristic. He is, above all, a dog of balance, both standing and moving, without exaggeration in any part, the whole worth more than the sum of its parts.



Size, Proportion, Substance

Size--Height at withers: males 16 to 17 inches; females 15 to 16 inches. Deviations to be penalized. The most desirable weights: males, 28 to 34 pounds; females, 26

to 32 pounds. Proper conformation and substance should be considered more important than weight alone.

Proportion--Compactly built and short-coupled, with height at withers slightly greater than the distance from withers to set-on of tail. **Substance**--The English Cocker is a solidly built dog with as much bone and substance as is possible without becoming cloddy or coarse.

Head

General appearance: strong, yet free from coarseness, softly contoured, without sharp angles. Taken as a whole, the parts combine to produce the expression distinctive of the breed. **Expression**--Soft, melting, yet dignified, alert, and intelligent. **Eyes**--The eyes are essential to the desired expression. They are medium in size, full and slightly oval; set wide apart; lids tight. Haws are inconspicuous; may be pigmented or unpigmented. Eye color dark brown, except in livers and liver parti-colors where hazel is permitted, but the darker the hazel the better. **Ears**--Set low, lying close to the head; leather fine, extending to the nose, well covered with long, silky, straight or slightly wavy hair. **Skull**--Arched and slightly flattened when seen both from the side and from the front.



Viewed in profile, the brow appears not appreciably higher than the back-skull. Viewed from above, the sides of the skull are in planes roughly parallel to those of the muzzle. Stop definite, but moderate, and slightly grooved.

Muzzle--Equal in length to skull; well cushioned; only as much narrower than the skull as is consistent with a full eye placement; cleanly chiseled under the eyes. Jaws strong, capable of carrying game. Nostrils wide for proper development of scenting ability; color black, except in livers and parti-colors of that shade where they will be brown; reds and parti-colors of that shade may be brown, but black is preferred. Lips square, but not pendulous or showing prominent flews. **Bite**--Scissors. A level bite is not preferred. Overshot or undershot to be severely penalized.



Neck, Topline and Body

Neck--Graceful and muscular, arched toward the head and blending cleanly, without throatiness, into sloping shoulders; moderate in length and in balance with the length and height of the dog.

Topline--The line of the neck blends into the shoulder and backline in a smooth curve. The backline slopes very slightly toward a gently rounded croup, and is free from sagging or rumpiness. **Body**--Compact and well-knit, giving the impression of strength without heaviness. Chest deep; not so wide as to interfere with action of forelegs, nor so narrow as to allow the front to appear narrow or pinched. Forechest well developed, prosternum projecting moderately beyond shoulder points. Brisket reaches to the elbow and slopes gradually to a moderate tuck-up. Ribs well sprung and springing gradually to mid-body, tapering to back ribs which are of good depth and extend well back. Back short and strong. Loin short, broad and very slightly arched, but not enough to affect the topline appreciably. Croup gently rounded, without any tendency to fall away sharply. **Tail**--Docked.

Set on to conform to croup. Ideally, the tail is carried horizontally and is in constant motion while the dog is in action. Under excitement, the dog may carry his tail somewhat higher, but not cocked up.

Forequarters

The English Cocker is moderately angulated. Shoulders are sloping, the blade flat and smoothly fitting. Shoulder blade and upper arm are approximately equal in length. Upper arm set well back, joining the shoulder with sufficient angulation to place the elbow beneath the highest point of the shoulder blade when the dog is standing naturally. *Forelegs*--Straight, with bone nearly uniform in size from elbow to heel; elbows set close to the body; pasterns nearly straight, with some flexibility. *Feet*-- Proportionate in size to the legs, firm, round and catlike; toes arched and tight; pads thick.

Hindquarters

Angulation moderate and, most importantly, in balance with that of the forequarters. Hips relatively broad and well rounded. Upper thighs broad, thick and muscular, providing plenty of propelling power. Second thighs well-muscled and approximately equal in length to the upper. Stifle strong and well bent. Hock to pad short. Feet as in front.

Coat

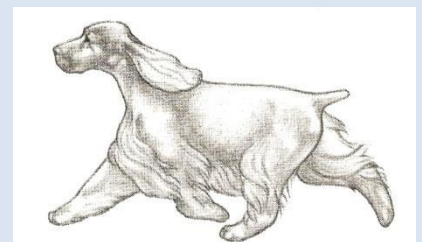
On head, short and fine; of medium length on body; flat or slightly wavy; silky in texture. The English Cocker is well-feathered, but not so profusely as to interfere with field work. Trimming is permitted to remove overabundant hair and to enhance the dogs true lines. It should be done so as to appear as natural as possible.

Color

Various. Parti-colors are either clearly marked, ticked or roaned, the white appearing in combination with black, liver or shades of red. In parti-colors it is preferable that solid markings be broken on the body and more or less evenly distributed; absence of body markings is acceptable. Solid colors are black, liver or shades of red. White feet on a solid are undesirable; a little white on throat is acceptable; but in neither case do these white markings make the dog a parti-color. Tan markings, clearly defined and of rich shade, may appear in conjunction with black, livers and parti-color combinations of those colors. Black and tans and liver and tans are considered solid colors.

Gait

The English Cocker is capable of hunting in dense cover and upland terrain. His gait is accordingly characterized more by drive and the appearance of power than by great speed. He covers ground effortlessly and with extension both in front and in rear, appropriate to his angulation. In the ring, he carries his head proudly and is able to keep much the same topline while in action as when standing for examination. Going and coming, he moves in a straight line without crabbing or rolling, and with width between both front and rear legs appropriate to his build and gait.



Temperament

The English Cocker is merry and affectionate, of equable disposition, neither sluggish nor hyperactive, a willing worker and a faithful and engaging companion.

Approved October 11, 1988

Effective November 30, 1988