



## The Welsh Springer Spaniel Breed Standard

### General Appearance

The Welsh Springer Spaniel is a dog of distinct variety and ancient origin, who derives his name from his hunting style and not his relationship to other breeds. He is an attractive dog of handy size, exhibiting substance without coarseness. He is compact, not leggy, obviously built for hard work and endurance. The Welsh Springer Spaniel gives the impression of length due to obliquely angled forequarters and well developed hindquarters. Being a hunting dog, he should be shown in hard muscled working condition. His coat should not be so excessive as to hinder his work as an active flushing spaniel, but should be thick enough to protect him from heavy cover and weather.

### Size, Proportion, Substance

A dog is ideally 18-19 inches in height at the withers and a bitch is 17-18 inches at the withers. Any animal above or below the ideal to be proportionately penalized. Weight should be in proportion to height and overall balance. Length of body from the withers to the base of the tail is very slightly greater than the distance from the withers to the ground. This body length may be the same as the height but never shorter, thus preserving the rectangular silhouette of the Welsh Springer Spaniel.

### Head

The Welsh Springer Spaniel head is unique and should in no way approximate that of other spaniel breeds. Its overall balance is of primary importance. Head is in proportion to body, never so broad as to appear coarse nor so narrow as to appear racy. The skull is of medium length, slightly domed, with a clearly defined stop. It is well chiseled below the eyes. The top plane of the skull is very slightly divergent from that of the muzzle, but with no tendency toward a down-faced appearance. A short chubby head is most objectionable. Eyes should be oval in shape, dark to medium brown in color with a soft expression. Preference is for a darker eye though lighter shades of brown are acceptable. Yellow or mean-looking eyes are to be heavily penalized. Medium in size, they are neither prominent, nor sunken, nor do they show haw. Eye rims are tight and dark pigmentation is preferred. Ears are set on approximately at eye level and hang close to the cheeks. Comparatively small, the leather does not reach to the nose. Gradually narrowing toward the tip, they are shaped somewhat like a vine leaf and are lightly feathered. The length of the muzzle is approximately equal to, but never longer than that of the skull. It is straight, fairly square, and free from excessive flew. Nostrils are well developed and black or any shade of brown in color. A pink nose is to be severely penalized. A scissors bite is preferred. An undershot jaw is to be severely penalized.

### Neck, Topline, Body

The neck is long and slightly arched, clean in throat, and set into long, sloping shoulders. Topline is level. The loin is slightly arched, muscular, and close-coupled. The croup is very slightly rounded, never steep nor falling off. The topline in combination with proper angulation fore and aft presents a silhouette that appears rectangular. The chest is well developed and muscular with a prominent forechest, the ribs well sprung and the brisket reaching to the elbows. The tail is an extension of the topline. Carriage is nearly horizontal or slightly elevated when the dog is excited. The tail is generally docked and displays a lively action.

### Forequarters

The shoulder blade and upper arm are approximately equal in length. The upper arm is set well back, joining the shoulder blade with sufficient angulation to place the elbow beneath the highest point of the shoulder blade when standing. The forearms are of medium length, straight and moderately feathered. The legs are well boned but not to the extent of coarseness. The Welsh Springer Spaniel's elbows should be close to the body and its pasterns short and slightly sloping. Height to the elbows is approximately equal to the distance from the elbows to the top of the shoulder blades. Dewclaws are generally removed. Feet should be round, tight and well arched with thick pads.

### Hindquarters

The hindquarters must be strong, muscular, and well boned, but not coarse. When viewed in profile the thighs should be wide and the second thighs well developed. The angulation of the pelvis and femur corresponds to that of the shoulder and upper arm. Bend of stifle is moderate. The bones from the hocks to the pads are short with a well angulated hock joint. When viewed from the side or rear they are perpendicular to the ground. Rear dewclaws are removed. Feet as in front.

### Coat

The coat is naturally straight flat and soft to the touch, never wiry or wavy. It is sufficiently dense to be waterproof, thornproof, and weatherproof. The back of the forelegs, the hind legs above the hocks, chest and underside of the body are moderately feathered. The ears and tail are lightly feathered. Coat so excessive as to be a hindrance in the field is to be discouraged. Obvious barbering is to be avoided as well.

### Color

The color is rich red and white only. Any pattern is acceptable and any white area may be flecked with red ticking.

### Gait

The Welsh Springer moves with a smooth, powerful, ground covering action that displays drive from the rear. Viewed from the side, he exhibits a strong forward stride with a reach that does not waste energy. When viewed from the front, the legs should appear to move forward in an effortless manner with no tendency for the feet to cross over or interfere with each other. Viewed from the rear, the hocks should follow on a line with the forelegs, neither too widely nor too closely spaced. As the speed increases the feet tend to converge towards a center line.

### Temperament

The Welsh Springer Spaniel is an active dog displaying a loyal and affectionate disposition. Although reserved with strangers, he is not timid, shy nor unfriendly. To this day he remains a devoted family member and hunting companion.

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Effective August 1, 1989



The  
Welsh Springer Spaniel  
Club of America  
Judges Education



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

**“A DOG OF DISTINCT VARIETY AND ANCIENT ORIGIN, WHO DERIVES HIS NAME FROM HIS HUNTING STYLE AND NOT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BREEDS”**



### KEY POINTS

Working Spaniel  
Unique Head  
Rectangular Silhouette  
Level Topline w/ Slightly Arched Loin  
Efficient, Effortless Movement  
Rich Red & White

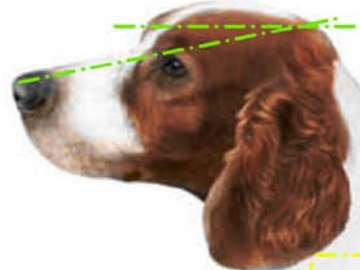
The Welsh Springer Spaniel head is unique and should in no way approximate that of other spaniel breeds.

Its overall balance is of primary importance.



Nostrils are well developed

Divergent Planes



Topline is level.

Loin is slightly arched, muscular, and close-coupled

Tail is an extension of the topline

Substance without coarseness.

Being a hunting dog, he should be shown in hard muscled working condition.

Compact, not leggy

This body length may be the same as the height but never shorter, thus preserving the rectangular silhouette



**RECOGNIZE AND REWARD**

- HEAD:** A head that is balanced with the body, with chiseling under kind, expressive eyes.
- FOREQUARTERS:** A defined prosternum, depth of chest and a well set-back upper arm.
- RIBBING:** Well-sprung oval ribbing.
- TOPLINE:** Correct flow of topline with a slight arch of loin and a slightly rounded croup.
- TAILSET:** Correct tail set and carriage flows as an extension of the topline – regardless of whether it is docked or undocked.
- FEET:** Tight round feet with deep pads, high knuckles.
- HINDQUARTERS:** Short, stable hocks. Well-developed second thighs.
- MOVEMENT:** Easy, efficient movement with drive from the rear.

**SOME COMMON ERRORS**

- BODY PROPORTIONS:** Choosing the wrong body type, i.e. too high on legs, too short in body (WSS that look like red & white ESS or longer Brittannies).
- TOPLINE:** Misinterpreting the correct flow of the topline, either rewarding a soft, sagging one with a steep croup mistaking that for 'arch of loin', or rewarding the flat, hard topline with no arch of loin.
- HEADS:** The planes of the head should not be parallel; heads should not resemble an Irish Setter or English Springer.
- MOVEMENT:** Rewarding frenetic trotting or lots of leg movement with no ground covering drive. This breed does not single track. There should be, however, convergence as speed increases with easy, effortless movement.
- COAT:** Judges get lost in hair and 'showiness'.
- EXAGGERATION:** Selecting a bunch of hair on a big boned frame. WSS are working spaniels; they should present a picture of an athletic endurance dog with moderate feathering.

For more information on The Welsh Springer Spaniel contact:  
**The Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America**  
[www.wssca.com](http://www.wssca.com)