

**MCOA Presents the**



**OFFICIAL STANDARD  
FOR THE MASTIFF**



What the Lion is to the Cat the Mastiff is to the Dog, the noblest of the family; he stands alone, and all others sinking before him. His courage does not exceed its temper and generosity and in attachment he equals the kindest of his race. His docility is perfect; the teasing of the smaller kinds will hardly provoke him to resent, and I have seen him down with his paw the Terrier or cur that has bit him, without offering further injury.

*Cynographia Britannica, circa 1800*

# THE MASTIFF



# General Appearance

**The Mastiff is a large, massive, symmetrical dog with a well-knit frame.**

**The impression is one of grandeur and dignity.**

**Dogs are more massive throughout. Bitches should not be faulted for being somewhat smaller in all dimensions while maintaining a proportionally powerful structure.**

**A good evaluation considers positive qualities of type and soundness with equal weight.**













There are no perfect dogs but the Mastiff comes very, very close. The Mastiff may not be the tallest, that honor lies with the Irish Wolfhound, However, the Mastiff is the heaviest of all the breeds with some males weighing as much as 250 pounds.

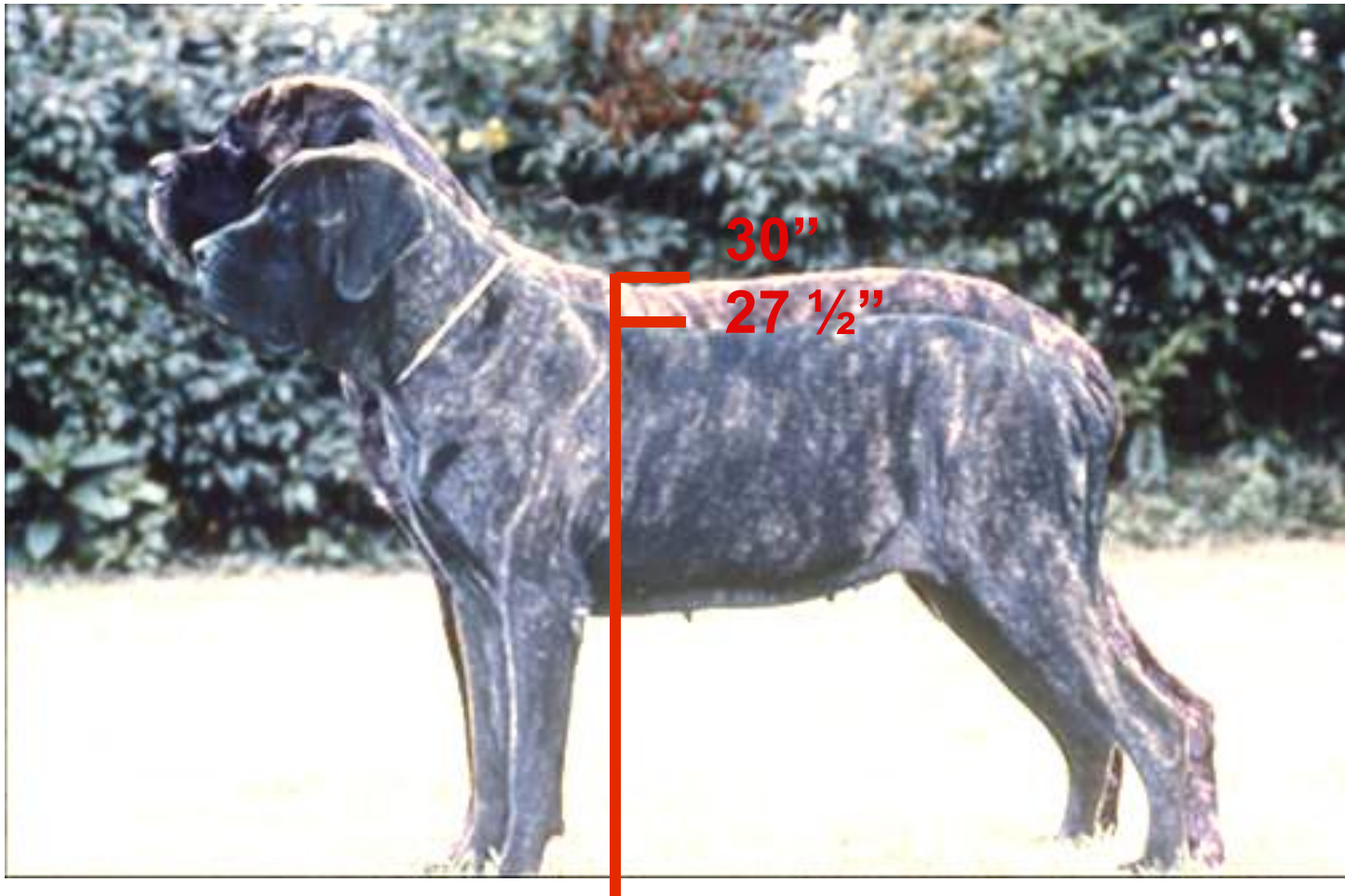
As you  
judge the  
Mastiff  
please keep  
in mind...

- **Bigger is not better.**
- **Substance is bred, not fed.**
- **A Mastiff is not just a head.**
- **Proportion - Rectangular, the length of the dog from the forechest to rump is somewhat longer than the height at the withers.**
- **The height of the dog should come from depth of body rather than length of leg.**
- **While the standard does not have DQ's, it does have 7 faults.**
- **A good evaluation considers positive qualities of type and soundness with equal weight.**

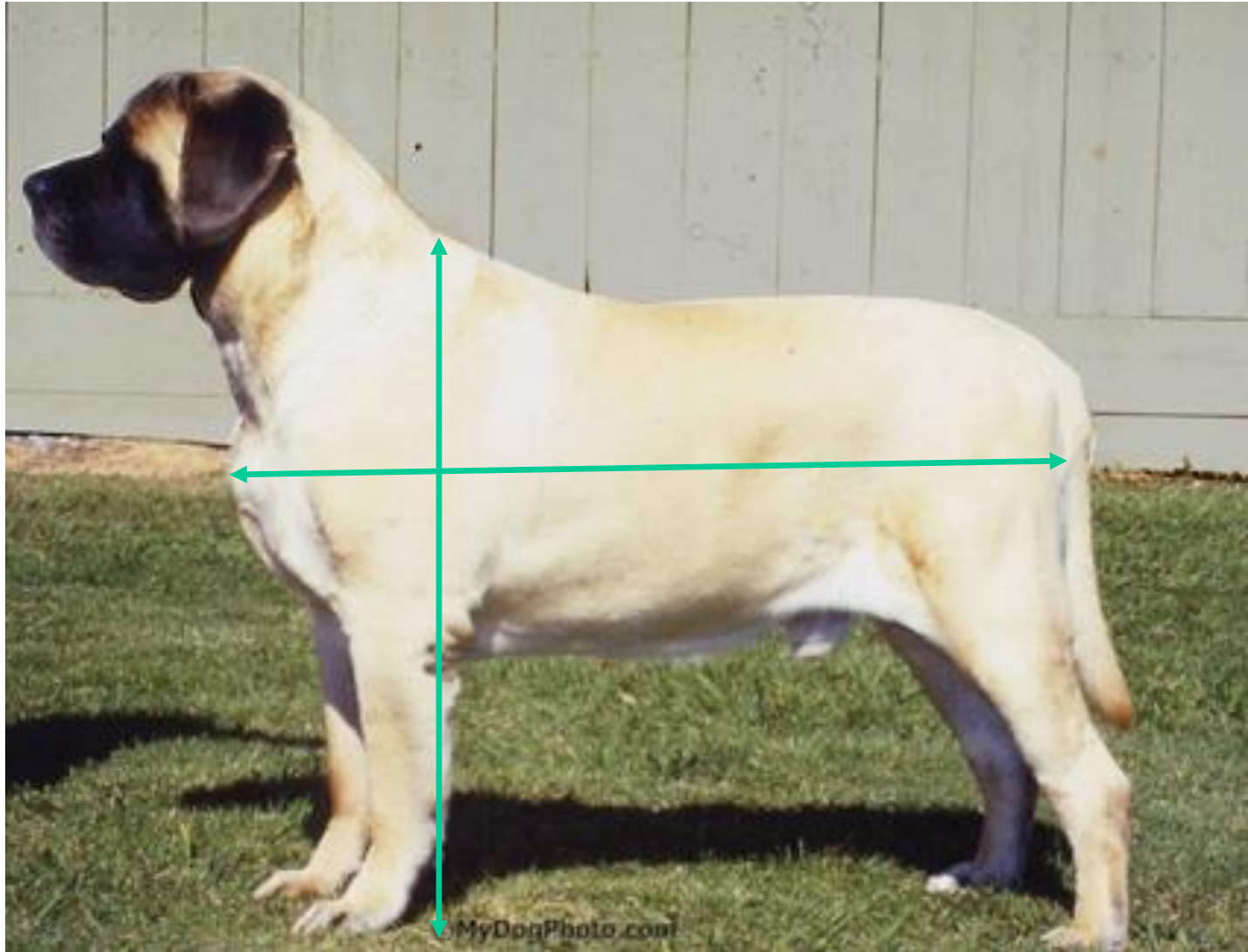
**Size – Dogs, minimum 30 inches at the shoulder.**

**Bitches, minimum 27 ½ inches at the shoulder.**

***Fault-Dogs or bitches below the minimum standard. The farther below standard, the greater the fault.***



**Proportion - Rectangular, the length of the dog from forechest to rump is somewhat longer than the height at the withers.**





**Here is a fine example of overall balance and type. Note the layback of shoulder, breadth of thigh, and bend of stifle.**

**These are Proportional and Balanced Mastiffs  
(Please note the similarities and differences between this dog and  
bitch.)**

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**Substance - Massive, heavy boned, with a powerful muscle structure. Great depth and breadth desirable.**

***Fault-Lack of substance or slab sided.***

**The width of the  
dog across the  
chest should  
match the width  
across the rear  
quarters  
regardless of  
age.**





This can  
best be  
seen  
looking  
down on  
the dog.



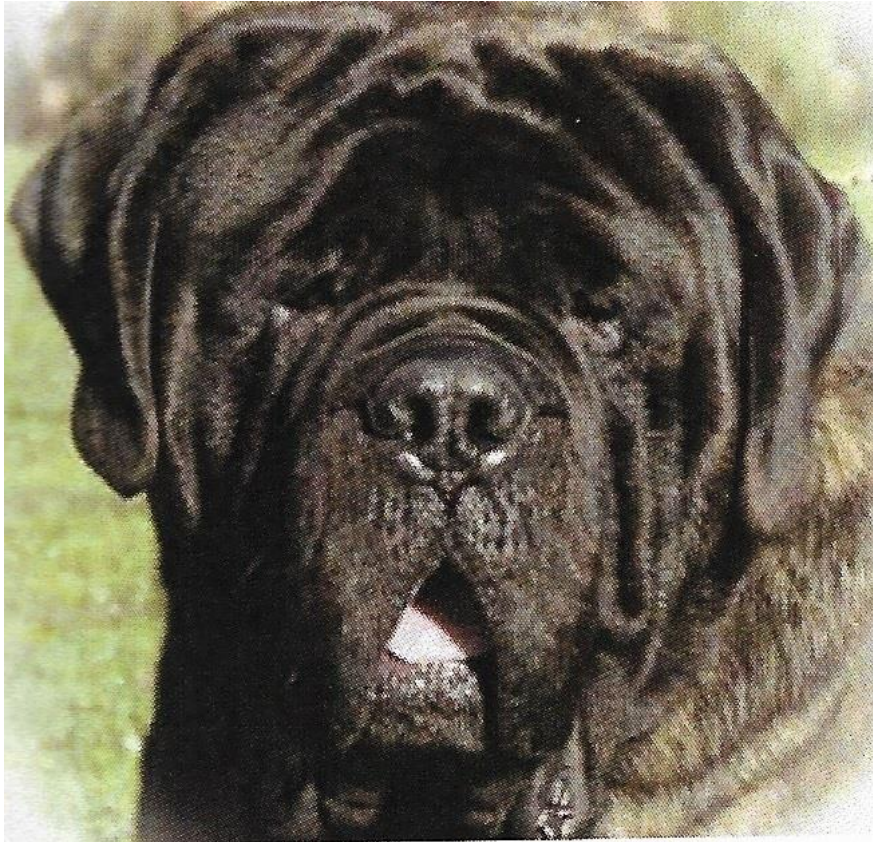
**Head - In general outline giving a massive appearance when viewed from any angle. Breadth greatly desired.**







**Eyes - Set wide apart, medium in size, never too prominent. Expression alert but kindly. Color of eyes brown, the darker the better, and showing no haw. Light eyes or a predatory expression is undesirable.**



**Ears - Small in proportion to the skull, V-shaped, rounded at the tips. Leather moderately thin...**



**...set widely apart at the highest points on the sides of the skull continuing the outline across the summit.**

**They should lie close to the cheeks when in repose.**

**Ears dark in color, the blacker the better, conforming to the color of the muzzle.**





**Nice heads: broad, deep, appealingly wrinkled, with well-set ears.**



**Skull - Broad and somewhat flattened between the ears, forehead slightly curved, showing marked wrinkles which are particularly distinctive when at attention.**



**Brows (superciliary ridges) moderately raised.**

**Muscles of the temples well developed, those of the cheeks extremely powerful.**



**Relaxed**

**At Attention**



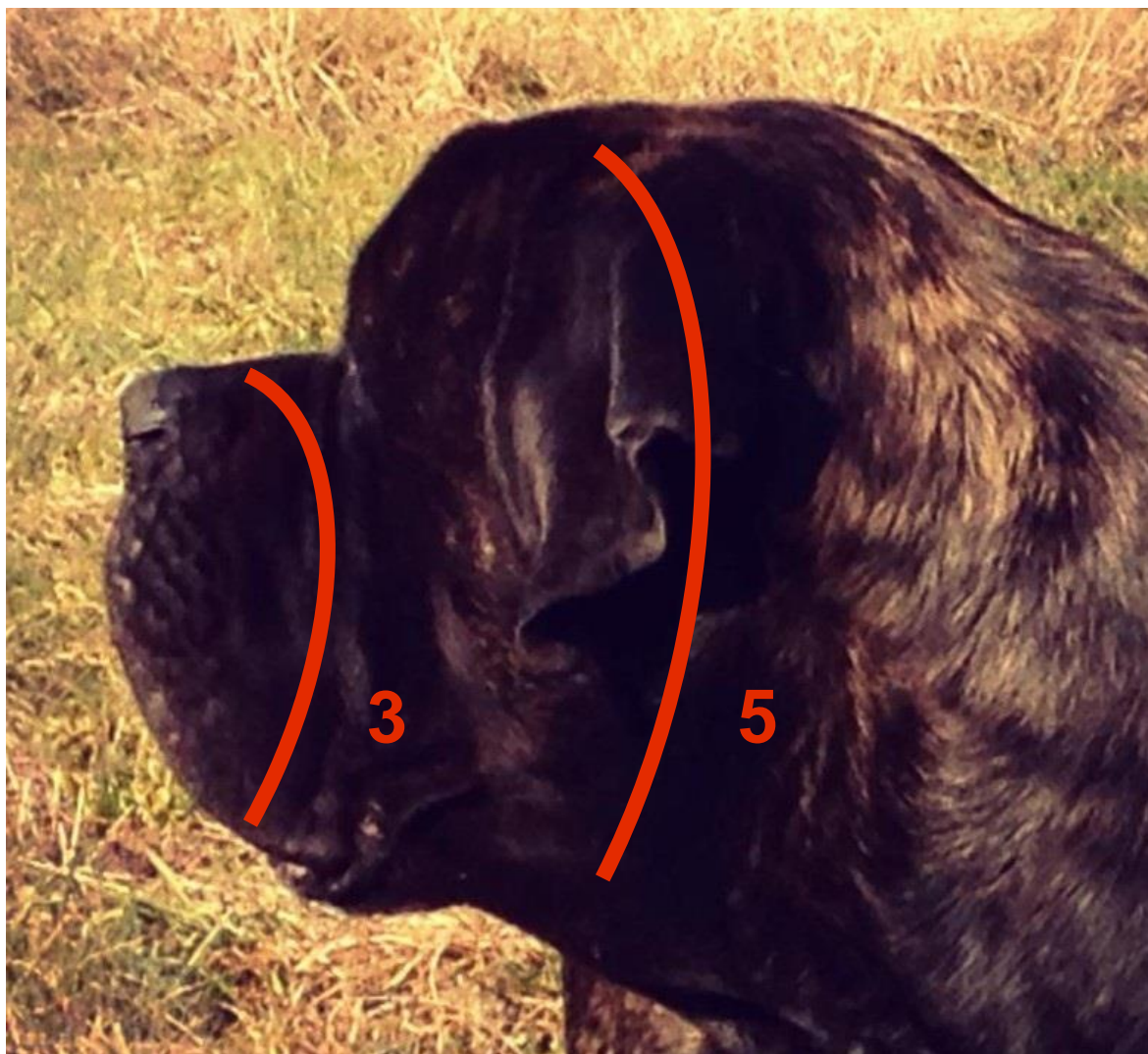


**Arch across the skull a flattened curve with a furrow up the center of the forehead. This extends from between the eyes to halfway up the skull. The stop between the eyes well marked but not too abrupt.**

**Muzzle should be half the length of the skull, thus dividing the head into three parts- one for the foreface and two for the skull. In other words, the distance from the tip of the nose to stop is equal to one-half the distance between the stop and the occiput.**



**Circumference of the muzzle (measured midway between the eyes and nose) to that of the head (measured before the ears) is as 3 is to 5.**



**Muzzle - Short, broad under the eyes and running nearly equal in width to the end of the nose.**

**Truncated, i.e. blunt and cut off square, thus forming a right angle with the upper line of the face.**





**From stop to tip of nose, the Mastiff muzzle should be short in relation to the entire length of the skull. The muzzle should also appear very broad where it joins the skull, and should taper only slightly toward the nostrils.**

**Of great depth from the point of the nose to the underjaw. Underjaw broad to the end and slightly rounded. Muzzle dark in color, the blacker the better.**

***Fault: snipiness of the muzzle.***





**Nose - broad  
and always  
dark in color,  
the blacker  
the better,  
with spread  
flat nostrils  
(not pointed  
or turned up)  
in profile.**





**Lips - Diverging at obtuse angles with the septum and sufficiently pendulous so as to show a modified square profile.**



**From the front, the inverted V that is formed under the nostrils by the union of the upper lips creates an angle at or slightly wider than 90 degrees. A complete evaluation includes lifting the dog's upper lips to check that the front arch of the lower jaw has sufficient width.**



**Canine Teeth - Healthy and wide apart. Jaws powerful. Scissors bite preferred, but a moderately undershot jaw should not be faulted providing the teeth are not visible when the mouth is closed.**

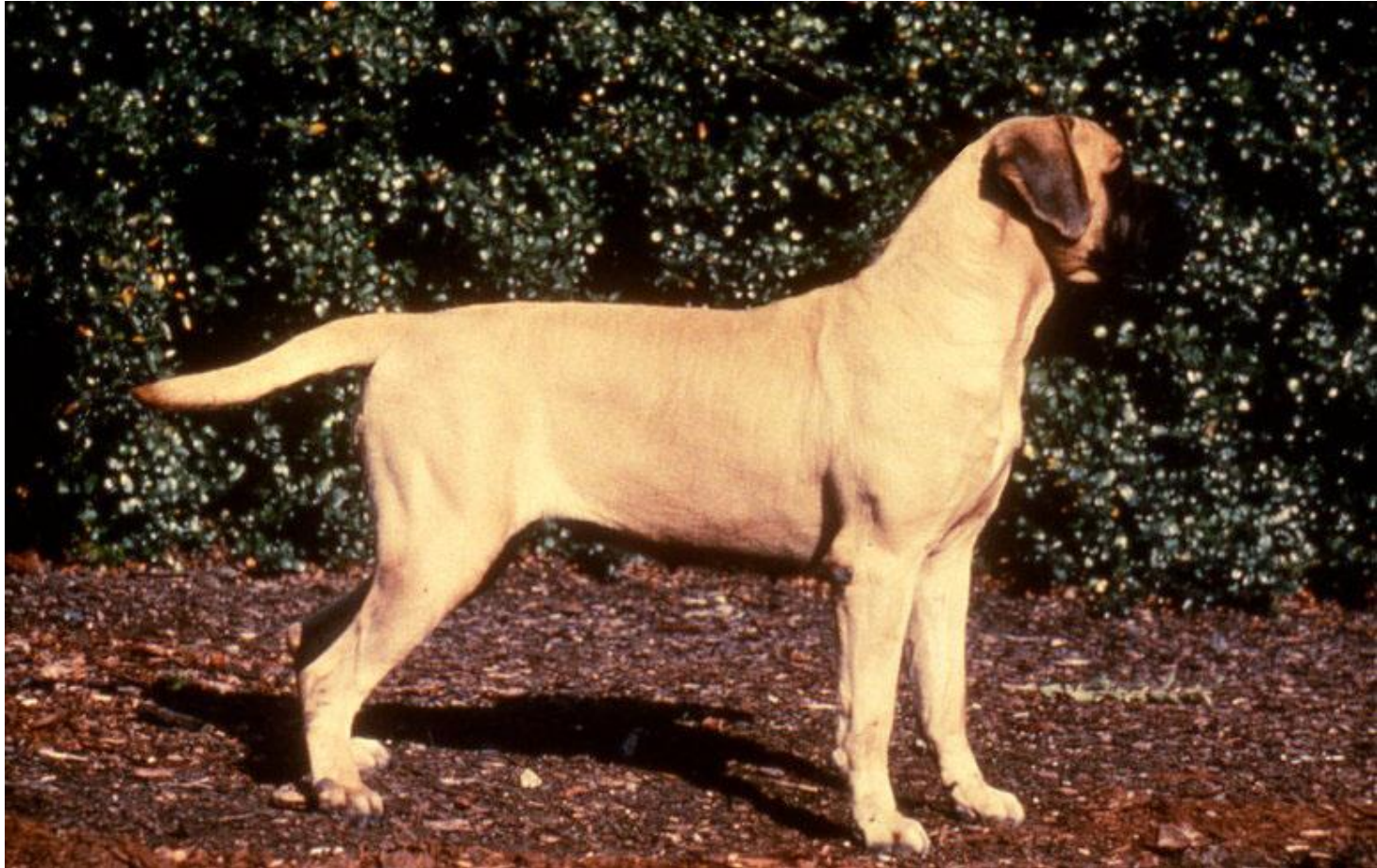
**Occasionally you will see a wry bite. Wry is NOT square. The standard does not mention this. A wry mouth is considered to be genetic as such its requested that it be judged accordingly.**



**Neck - Powerful, very muscular, slightly arched, and of medium length. The neck gradually increases in circumference as it approaches the shoulder. Neck moderately "dry" (not showing an excess of loose skin).**



**Topline - In profile the topline should be straight, level, and firm, not swaybacked, roached, or dropping off sharply behind the high point of the rump.**









**Chest - Wide, deep, rounded, and well let down between the forelegs, extending at least to the elbow.**



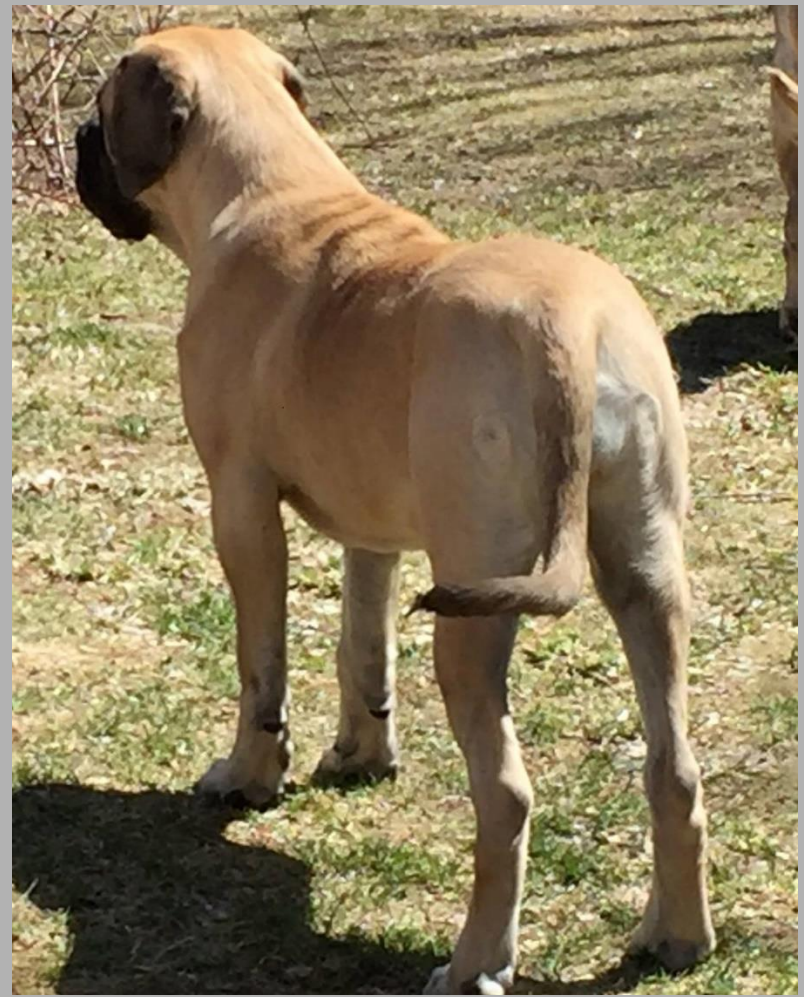
**Forechest should be deep and well defined with the breastbone extending in front of the foremost point of the shoulders. Ribs well rounded. False ribs deep and well set back.**

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**Underline - There should be a reasonable, but not exaggerated, tuck-up**



**Back - Muscular, powerful, and straight. When viewed from the rear, there should be a slight rounding over the rump.**  
**Loins - wide and muscular.**

**Tail - Set on moderately high and reaching to the hocks or a little below. Wide at the root, tapering to the end, hanging straight in repose...**



**...forming a slight curve, but never over the back when the dog is in motion.**

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**Shoulders - Moderately sloping, powerful and muscular, with no tendency to looseness. Degree of front angulation to match correct rear angulation.**





**Legs - Straight,  
strong and set wide  
apart, heavy boned.**

**Elbows -  
Parallel to  
body.**

**Pasterns -  
Strong  
and bent  
only  
slightly.**





**Feet - large, round, and compact with well arched toes. Black nails.**



**Hindquarters - Broad, wide and muscular. Second thighs - Well developed, leading to a strong hock joint. Stifle joint - Is moderately angulated matching the front. Rear legs - Are wide apart and....**



**...parallel when  
viewed from the  
rear.**

**When the portion of the leg below the hock is correctly "set back" and stands perpendicular to the ground, a plumb line dropped from the rearmost point of the hindquarters will pass in front of the foot.**



**This rules out straight hocks, and since stifle angulation varies with hock angulation, it also rules out insufficiently angulated stifles.**

***Fault-Straight stifles.***



**Coat- Outer coat straight, coarse, and of moderately short length. Undercoat dense, short, and close lying.**







**Coat should not be so long as to produce "fringe" on the belly, tail, or hind legs.**



Fault – Long or Wavy Coat

# Color



# Color - Fawn



**...apricot, or...**



**...brindle.  
Brindle should  
have fawn or  
apricot as a  
background  
color which  
should be  
completely  
covered with  
very dark  
stripes.**



**Muzzle, ears, and nose must be dark in color, the blacker the better, with similar color tone around the eye orbits and extending upward between them.**









A small patch of white on the chest is permitted. *Faults-Excessive white on the chest or white on any other part of the body. Mask, ears, or nose lacking dark pigment.*



**Gait- The gait denotes power and strength.**

**The rear legs should  
have drive...**



**...while the forelegs should track smoothly with good reach. In motion, the legs move straight forward; as the dog's speed increases from a walk to a trot, the feet move in toward the center line of the body to maintain balance.**





# **Temperament**

**In temperament, dignity rather than gaiety, is the mastiff's correct demeanor.**

**Judges should not condone shyness or aggressiveness.**

**Conversely, judges should also beware of putting a premium on showiness.**

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**Mastiffs are a working breed.**

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6 weeks

7 months



6 years



2 years

9 years



# Hallmarks of the Mastiff

## CHAMP

- **CHEST** – Wide, deep and well let down to at least the elbows with a well-defined breastbone.
- **HEAD** - Block on a block separating head into 3 parts (1 for muzzle, 2 for back skull.)
- **ANGULATION** - Moderate and balanced front to rear.
- **MASSIVE** - Heavy boned, well muscled and substantial
- **PROPORTION** - Rectangular, height comes from depth of body not length of leg





**When you  
think of  
the ideal  
mastiff,  
picture a  
massive  
dog...**



**...deep  
bodied...**







**...and wide.**

**A powerful mover...**





**...with  
heavy  
bone...**



**...and a  
large head  
that looks  
square...**



**From any  
vantage point.**

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**Mastiff Club**



**of America**









