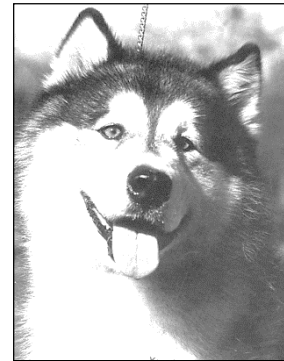
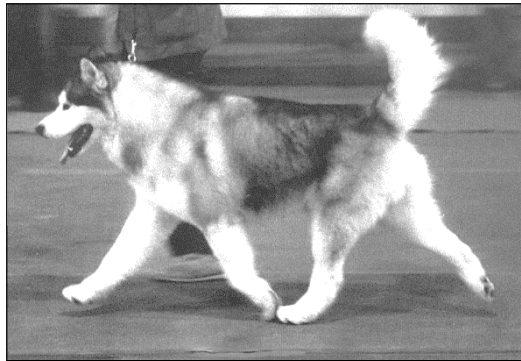




ALASKAN MALAMUTE

Breed Notes



- **Breed Standard**
- **Breed Type**
- **Movement**
- **Coat, Colour and Markings**
- **AMCA Judges Guide to the Alaskan Malamute**
- **The Alaskan Malamute - History, Type and Structure**
- **Visualisation of the Breed Standard**
- **Comments on the Breed Standard**
- **Those Perfect Markings!**
- **From the Ground Up**
- **The Waving Plume**
- **Comparison of Northern Breeds**



Alaskan Malamute Breed Standard

American Kennel Club - Effective 31st May 1994 (Amended January 1996)

Country of Development: United States of America

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The Alaskan Malamute, one of the oldest Arctic sled dogs, is a powerful and substantially built dog with a deep chest and strong, well-muscled body.

The Malamute stands well over the pads, and this stance gives the appearance of much activity and proud carriage, with head erect when alerted. The muzzle is bulky, only slight diminishing in width from root to nose. The muzzle is not pointed or long, yet not stubby.

The coat is thick with a coarse guard coat of sufficient length to protect a woolly undercoat. Malamutes are of various colours. Face markings are a distinguishing feature. These consist of a cap over the head, the face either all white or marked with a bar and/or mask. The tail is well furred, carried over the back, and has the appearance of a waving plume.

The Malamute must be a heavy boned dog with sound legs, good feet, deep chest and powerful shoulders, and have all of the other physical attributes necessary for the efficient performance of his job.

The gait must be steady, balanced, tireless and totally efficient. He is not intended as a racing sled dog designed to compete in speed trials.

The Malamute is structured for strength and endurance, and any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with the accomplishment of this purpose, is to be considered the most serious of faults.

CHARACTERISTICS - Important: In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else. The legs of the Malamute must indicate unusual strength and tremendous propelling power. Face markings are a distinguishing feature.

TEMPERAMENT: The Alaskan Malamute is an affectionate, friendly dog, not a "one man" dog. He is a loyal, devoted companion, playful on invitation, but generally impressive by his dignity after maturity.

HEAD AND SKULL: The head is broad and deep, not coarse or clumsy, but in proportion to the size of the dog. The expression is soft and indicates an affectionate disposition.

Skull: Is broad and moderately rounded between the ears, gradually narrowing and flattening on top as it approaches the eyes, rounding off to cheeks that are moderately flat. There is a slight furrow between the eyes. The topline of the skull and the topline of the muzzle show a slight break downward from a straight line as they join.

Muzzle: Is large and bulky in proportion to the size of the skull, diminishing slightly in width and depth from junction with the skull to the nose. The lips are close fitting.

Nose, lips and eye rims' pigmentation: is black in all coat colours except red dogs. The lighter streaked "snow nose" is acceptable.

EYES: The eyes are obliquely placed in the skull. Eyes are brown, almond shaped and of medium size. Dark eyes are preferred. *Blue eyes are a disqualifying fault.*

EARS: The ears are of medium size, but small in proportion to the head. The ears are triangular in shape and slightly rounded at the tips. They are set wide apart on the outside back edges of the skull on line with the upper corner of the eye, giving ears the appearance, when erect, of standing off from the skull. Erect ears point slightly forward, but when the dogs is at work, the ears are sometimes folded against the skull. High set ears are a fault.

MOUTH: The upper and lower jaws are broad with large teeth. The incisors meet with a scissors grip. Overshot or undershot is a fault.

NECK: The neck is strong and moderately arched.

FOREQUARTERS: The shoulders are moderately sloping; forelegs heavily boned and muscled, straight to the pasterns when viewed from the front. Pasterns are short and strong and slightly sloping when viewed from the side.

BODY: The chest is well developed. The body is compactly built but not short coupled. The back is straight and gently sloping to the hips. The loins are hard and well muscled. A long loin that may weaken the back is a fault.

HINDQUARTERS: The rear legs are broad and heavily muscled through the thighs; stifles moderately bent, hock joints are moderately bent and well let down. When viewed from the rear, legs stand and move true in line with the movement of the front legs, not too close nor too wide. Dewclaws on the rear legs are undesirable and should be removed shortly after puppies are whelped.

FEET: Are of the snowshoe type, tight and deep, with well-cushioned pads, giving a firm, compact appearance. The feet are large, toes tight fitting and well arched. There is a protective growth of hair between the toes. The pads are thick and tough; toenails short and strong.

TAIL: Is moderately set and follows the line of the spine at the base. The tail is carried over the back when not working. It is not a snap tail or curled tight against the back, nor is it short furred like a fox brush. The Malamute tail is well furred and has the appearance of a waving plume.

GAIT AND MOVEMENT: The gait of the Malamute is steady, balanced and powerful. He is agile for his size and build. When viewed from the side, the hindquarters exhibit strong rear drive that is transmitted through a well-muscled loin to the forequarters. The forequarters receive the drive from the rear with a smooth reaching stride. When viewed

from the front or from the rear, the legs move true in line, not too close nor too wide. At a fast trot, the front will converge toward the centreline of the body. A stilted gait, or any gait that is not completely efficient and tireless, is to be penalised.

COAT: The Malamute has a thick, coarse guard coat, never long and soft. The undercoat is dense, from 2.5-5 cm (1-2 ins) in depth, oily and woolly. The coarse guard coat varies in length as does the undercoat. The coat is relatively short to medium along the sides of the body, with the length of the coat increasing around the shoulders and neck, and down the back, over the rump, and in the breeching and plume. Malamutes usually have a shorter and less dense coat during the summer months. The Malamute is shown naturally. Trimming is not acceptable except to provide a clean cut appearance of feet.

COLOUR: The usual colours range from light grey through intermediate shadings to black, sable and shadings of sable to red. Colour combinations are acceptable in undercoats, points, and trimmings. The only solid colour allowable is all white. White is always the predominant colour on underbody, parts of legs and feet, and part of face markings. A white blaze on the forehead and/or collar, or a spot on the nape is attractive and acceptable. The Malamute is mantled, and broken colours, extending over the body or uneven splashing are undesirable.

SIZE - Size, Proportion and Substance: There is a natural range of size in the breed. The desirable freighting sizes are:

Dogs:	63.5 cm (25 ins) at the shoulders 38.5 kg (85 lbs)
Bitches:	58.5 cm (23 ins) at the shoulders 34 kg (75 lbs)

However, size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement and other functional attributes. When dogs are judged equal in type, proportion and movement, the dog nearest the desirable freighting size is to be preferred. The depth of chest is approximately

one half the height of the dog at the shoulders, the deepest point being just behind the forelegs. The length of the body from point of shoulder to the rear point of pelvis is longer than the height of the body from ground to top of the withers. The body carries no excess weight, and bone is in proportion to size.

FAULTS: The degree to which a dog is penalised should depend upon the extent to which the dog deviates from the description of the ideal Malamute, and the extent to which the particular fault would actually affect the working ability of the dog.

Serious faults: Any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with his strength and endurance is to be considered the most serious of faults.

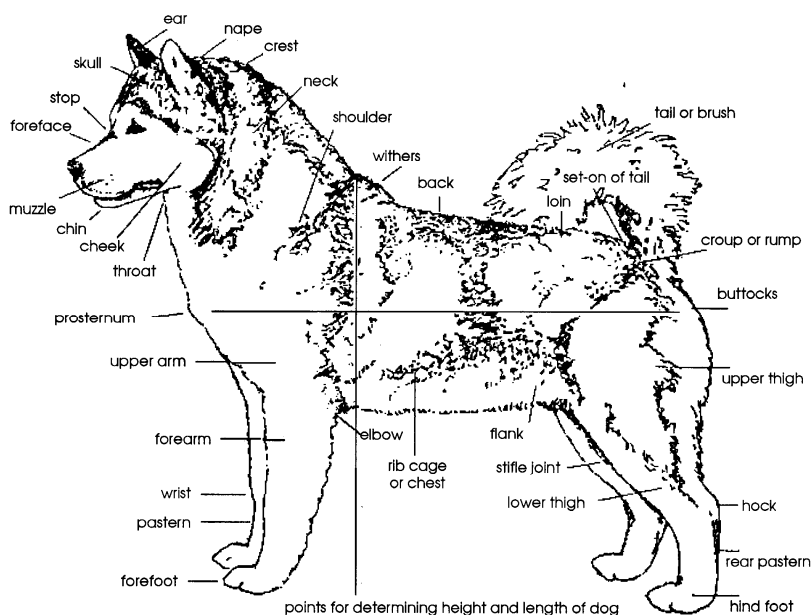
Any indication of unsoundness in legs and feet, front or rear, standing or moving. Faults under this provision would be :

- Ranginess, shallowness, ponderousness
- Lightness of bone
- Poor overall proportion
- Straight shoulders
- Lack of angulation
- Bad pasterns
- Cow hocks
- Splay footedness
- Stilted gait, or any gait that is not balanced, strong and steady.

Faults: High set ears
Over or undershot
Broken colours extending over the body or uneven splashing.

Disqualification: Blue eyes.

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



BREED TYPE in the Alaskan Malamute

In 1935 the American Kennel Council recognised the Alaskan Malamute as a pure bred dog. The initial recognition came about due to the hard work of a small number of people, most notably Eva "Short" Seeley, who developed the breed. The dogs used by Seeley to develop the breed resembled those dogs kept by an Indian tribe known as the Mahlamute tribe. The dogs, known within the breed as "Kotzebue's", were a small, hardworking dog, designed to live and work in hard conditions.

The original Standard called for males to be 23 to 25 inches at the shoulder, bitches 20 to 23 inches. Hardly big dogs at all. And yet, the Standard talked of "unusual strength" and "enormous propelling power". Were they wanting disproportionately sized dogs, massive yet short? No, of course not. The same people who worked to develop this breed and write the breed Standard, also worked to develop, gain official recognition for and write the breed standard for the Siberian Husky, which was recognised by the AKC 5 years prior to the Alaskan Malamute.

The original Alaskan Malamute Breed standard was written *in comparison* to that of the Siberian Husky.

The Siberian Husky was for light weight, long distance "as quick as you can" sledding. The Alaskan Malamute was for long distance freight haulage.

When disaster (aka the United States Armed Forces) struck the stocks of registered Alaskan Malamutes, decimating it to almost extinction, the Stud Books were re-opened and new blood allowed in. This new blood came in the form of other Kotzebue's, as well as a different strain, known as "M'Loot's", and "the third strain", sometimes called the "Hinman-Irwin dogs". The Standard had to be altered to accommodate these new dogs, leading to the Standard we have today. A variation in size, colour and markings all had to be introduced.

So with this unusual and recent history, what is *correct* Malamute BREED TYPE?

"The Malamute is structured for strength and endurance, and any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with the accomplishment of this purpose, is to be considered the most serious of faults."

"CHARACTERISTICS - Important: In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else. "

"Form follows function" applies to the Alaskan Malamute more so than any other breed. The Alaskan Malamute is a sledge dog whose every feature relates to its function AND its survival.

Many features, from the shape of its head, its top line, tail carriage, coat and even colour, help distinguish it from other arctic sledding breeds such as the Siberian Husky and the Canadian Eskimo Dog. Other features, such as substance, movement and coat are essential factors.

The Alaskan Malamute should show STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, ATHLETICISM, and WEATHER RESISTANCE.

STRENGTH

The following are excerpts from the breed Standard:

"The Alaskan Malamute, one of the oldest Arctic sled dogs, is a powerful and substantially built dog with a deep chest and strong, well-muscled body.

The Malamute must be a heavy boned dog with sound legs, good feet, deep chest and powerful shoulders, and have all of the other physical attributes necessary for the efficient performance of his job.

The legs of the Malamute must indicate unusual strength and tremendous propelling power.

The head is broad and deep

Muzzle: Is large and bulky in proportion to the size of the skull

Mouth - The upper and lower jaws are broad with large teeth.

Neck - The neck is strong

The forelegs are heavily boned and muscled

Pasterns are short and strong

The chest is well developed.

The loins are hard and well muscled

The rear legs are broad and heavily muscled

The feet are large

The toenails are short and strong.

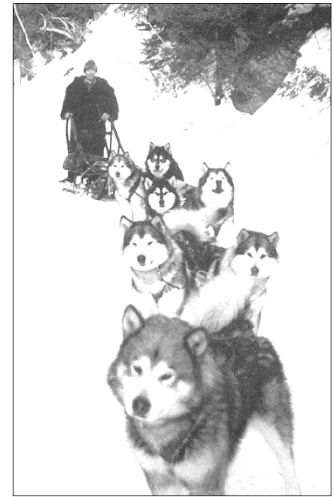
Hocks joints are moderately bent and well let down"

Every aspect right down to the toenails should indicate "STRENGTH". If the exhibit before you does not give you an impression of strength, can it be good breed type?

This should not equate to size, or bulk. Remember always the original 1935 AKC Standard called for males to be 23 to 25 inches at the shoulder and weighing 38.5 kg, bitches 20-23 inches at the shoulder and weighing 34 kg, this is not a large heavy dog. The current Standard also specifies that "There is a natural range of size in the breed." And "size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement and other functional attributes. When dogs are judged equal in type, proportion, and movement, the dog nearest the desirable freighting size is to be preferred."

The size of an exhibit should leave you in no doubt as to which of the northern breeds you are looking at. An Alaskan Malamute should never give you the impression of speed, and should never be so light as to appear to be a Siberian Husky. Nor should it be so heavy that it would be likely to sink and struggle in deep soft snow.

Remember at all times, this is a freighting dog. STRENGTH!!



ENDURANCE

The following are excerpts from the breed Standard:

“The Malamute must ... have all of the other physical attributes necessary for the efficient performance of his job.

The gait must be steady, balanced, tireless and totally efficient. He is not intended as a racing sled dog designed to compete in speed trials.

The Malamute is structured for endurance, and any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with the accomplishment of this purpose, is to be considered the most serious of faults.

Their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else.”

The gait of the Malamute is steady, balanced and powerful. The hindquarters exhibit strong rear drive that is transmitted through a well-muscled loin to the forequarters. The forequarters receive the drive from the rear with a smooth reaching stride.

A stilted gait, or any gait that is not completely efficient and tireless, is to be penalised.

Desirable freighting sizes:

Dogs: 63.5 cm (25 ins) at the shoulders - 38.5 kg

Bitches: 58.5 cm (23 ins) at the shoulders - 34 kg

The body carries no excess weight, and bone is in proportion to size.

FAULTS - *Any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with his strength and endurance is to be considered the most serious of faults.*

Any indication of unsoundness in legs and feet, front or rear, standing or moving.”

History tells us the Alaskan Malamute worked as a sledge dog, hauling heavy sleds long distances, and as a backing packing dog, carrying heavy packs over long distances. Not just for a day or two here and there, but all day, day after day.

If the exhibit before you does not give you an impression of endurance, if it does not have a steady, tireless and powerful gait, can it be good breed type?

Think of a weightlifter. Can the weightlifter be expected to lift heavy weights all day every day, day after day? **NO!** Endurance does not mean large and bulky. The ability for endurance **MUST** be present.



ATHLETICISM

To have the endurance to do long haul freighting work the Malamute must be an athlete, and to reflect this the breed standard emphasises heavily or well-muscled 5 times. Do

not confuse excess weight with substance or muscling – an out-of-condition Malamute should not be rewarded.

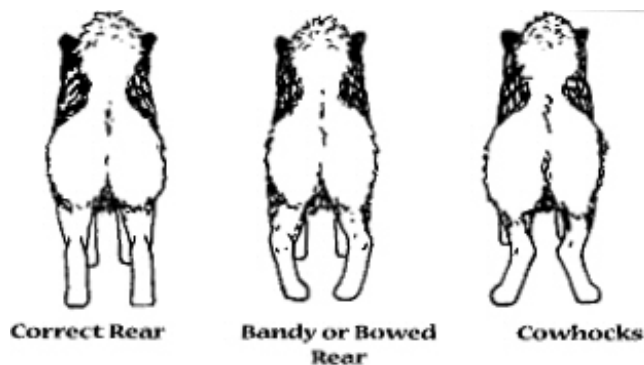
The following are excerpts from the Breed Standard:

The Malamute stands well over the pads, and this stance gives the appearance of much activity and proud carriage, with head erect and eyes alert showing interest and curiosity.

He is a loyal, devoted companion, playful on invitation

He is agile for his size and build.

FAULTS - *Any indication of unsoundness in legs and feet, front or rear, standing or moving. Ponderousness, Straight shoulders, Lack of angulation, Bad pasterns, Cow hocks, Stilted gait.*



History tells us the Alaskan Malamute had to forage for its own food during the summer months, and was used to hunt seal and course polar bear. It was expected to work on ice, as well as in snow drifts. How could a dog without athleticism be expected to hunt, to course, work its way through soft snow without sinking, and haul freight at the same time?

If the exhibit before you does not give you an impression of athleticism, can it be good breed type?

WEATHER RESISTANCE

The following are excerpts from the breed Standard:

“One of the oldest Arctic sled dogs

The coat is thick with a coarse guard coat of sufficient length to protect a woolly undercoat.

Important: In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else.

The Malamute has a thick, coarse guard coat, never long and soft. The undercoat is dense, from 2.5 - 5 cm (1 - 2 ins) in depth, oily and woolly. The coarse guard coat varies in length as does the undercoat. The coat is relatively short to medium along the sides of the body, with the length of the coat increasing around the shoulders and neck, down the back, over the rump, and in the breeching and plume.

History tells us that dogs with coats with too much length were susceptible to harsh arctic winds opening the coats, letting the weather reach the skin. Long coats were susceptible to being frozen to the ground over night, resulting in the dog being stuck to the ground, able to move only by ripping out chunks of hair and skin. Coats that were too short failed to provide adequate protection from those same harsh winds and coats lacking in correct texture simply did not repel the weather. Longer coats mean ice balls are too far from the body for the body heat to melt.

Other weather resistance characteristics:

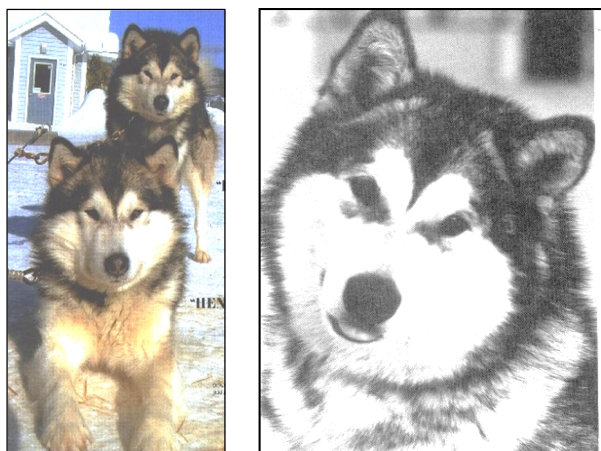
Head shape: moderately rounded with a moderate stop and slight furrow between eyes - this needs to be felt as protective fatty pads over the eyes can give the appearance of a pronounced stop. Correct head shape means there are no sharp angles to collect snow.

Tail carriage and length: the tail must be of sufficient length to cover the muzzle when curled up, this protects the face and allows the Malamute to breath in warmed air.

Snow shoe feet: to prevent the Malamute from sinking into the snow.

Close fitting lips and eyes: any loose mucous membranes would freeze in the arctic.

If the exhibit before you does not have correct coat and other weather resistant attributes, can it survive? Dead dogs cannot work. If it cannot survive, if it can not work, can it be good breed type?



Correct head shape is vital to arctic survival.

Strength, Endurance, Athleticism, Weather Resistance...

These four things are the basics. An exhibit displaying 1, 2 or even 3 of these things and not the remainder lacks balance, and lacks an essential element of breed type.

Of course, there's more to type than just these four things. There are the basics of any Spitz breed - the double coat, wedge shaped head, erect ears, curled tail. And there are also features which distinguish the Alaskan Malamute from the other arctic breeds.

The breadth and depth of head, the ear set, the muzzle, should all differentiate the Alaskan

Malamute from the Siberian Husky and the Canadian Eskimo Dog (CED).

The top line of the Alaskan Malamute gently slopes from withers to croup, whilst the other two breeds have level top lines.

The Alaskan Malamute's tail, a waving plume, differs from the CED's which is to be "carried up or curled over the back, and the Siberian Husky's is usually carried in a sickle curve. Note also the Alaskan Malamute Breed Standard states the tail "Is moderately set and follows the line of the spine at the base." The Siberian Husky's states "The well furred tail of fox-brush shape is set on just below the level of the top line". The CED does not mention tail set (as opposed to carriage).



1 is a correct tail, 2 & 3 are incorrect

Coats also differ, with the Alaskan Malamute coat expected to stand off, whilst the Siberian Husky calls for a smooth lying coat.

Both the CED and the Siberian Husky can be any colour or combination of colours, whilst the Alaskan Malamute has only 1 allowable solid colour (white) and otherwise has a mantled coat "and broken colours extending over the body or uneven splashing are undesirable".

Above all else- can it work? Can it survive?

If the answer is 'no' for any reason, consider the question: "Is it type?"

STUDY THE STANDARD:

The Alaskan Malamute Breed Standard is most explicit. For example, the Alaskan Malamute **is**, (not "should be"). The ears **are**, (not "should be"). The head **is**, (not "should be") and so on. The eyes **are**, the ears **are**, the jaws **are**, the neck **is**, the shoulders **are**, pasterns **are**, the chest **is**, the body **is**, the back **is**, the loins **are**, the rear legs **are**, the feet **are**, the tail **is**, the gait **is**, etc.etc.etc.

There is very little room for misinterpretation!

Below: The Alaskan Malamute of today still needs to be soundly structured and in good physical condition to perform the strenuous activities that are part of their natural heritage such as backpacking, sledding & weight-pulling.



Backpacking, Wombat State Forest



12-dog Alaskan Malamute team – Dinner Plain, VIC



Weight pull event – KCC Park, VIC

Movement in the Alaskan Malamute

The age old argument of movement vs type has no place in discussions regarding the Alaskan Malamute. Movement is, MUST be an integral part OF type.

If you have any doubt as to the validity of this statement, let me draw your attention to the following statements which appear in the breed standard:

In "General Appearance":

"The Alaskan Malamute, one of the oldest Arctic sled dogs, is a powerful and substantially built dog with a deep chest and strong, well-muscled body.

The Malamute must be a heavy boned dog with sound legs, good feet, deep chest and powerful shoulders, and have all of the other physical attributes necessary for the efficient performance of his job.

The gait must be steady, balanced, tireless and totally efficient

The Malamute is structured for strength and endurance, and any characteristic of the individual specimen, including temperament, which interferes with the accomplishment of this purpose, is to be considered the most serious of faults."

In "Characteristics":

"Important: *In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else. The legs of the Malamute must indicate unusual strength and tremendous propelling power."*

In "Hindquarters":

"When viewed from the rear, the legs stand and move true in line with the movement of the front legs, not too close nor too wide."

The entirety of "Gait/Movement":

"GAIT/MOVEMENT - *The gait of the Malamute is steady, balanced and powerful. He is agile for his size and build. When viewed from the side, the hindquarters exhibit strong rear drive that is transmitted through a well-muscled loin to the forequarters. The forequarters receive the drive from the rear with a smooth reaching stride. When viewed from the front or from the rear, the legs move true in line, not too close nor too wide. At a fast trot, the feet will converge toward the centreline of the body. A stilted gait, or any gait that is not completely efficient and tireless, is to be penalised"*

In "Size":

"... size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement and other functional attributes. When dogs are judged equal in type, proportion and movement, the dog nearest the desirable freighting size is to be preferred."

In "Faults":

"The degree to which a dog is penalised should depend upon the extent to which the dog deviates from the description of the ideal Malamute, and the extent to which the particular fault would actually affect the working ability of the dog. Serious Faults: Any characteristic of the individual specimen..., which interferes with his strength and endurance is to be considered the most serious of faults.

Any indication of unsoundness in legs and feet, front or rear, standing or moving.

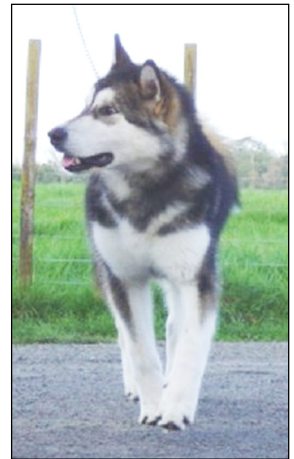
Faults under this provision would be:

- *ponderousness*
- *Straight shoulders*
- *Lack of angulation Bad pasterns*
- *Cow hocks Splay-footedness*
- *Stilted gait, or any gait that is not balanced, strong & steady"*

All of these things are matters which affect movement. The very purpose of the dog revolves around its ability to move, to haul freight, or carry a pack.

Of course, any dog, no matter the breed, can move and demonstrate soundness. This we hear all the time in the old argument I mention before. However, we are not talking about any dog, we are talking about the Alaskan Malamute, the dog bred to work in the Earth's harshest environment.

CORRECT Malamute movement comes from correct Malamute structure. Correct Malamute structure includes a correct, slightly sloping top line, as opposed to a receding top line, usually associated with an incorrect front assembly, and often a lack of balance between front and rear.



*Note, the Malamute is not meant to single track, however, the feet should converge **towards** the centre line as the dog moves at a quick trot.*



Above: Perfect sidegait demonstration. Powerful, completely efficient, with correctly positioned head on a strong neck flowing into correct slightly sloping topline. Perfectly set tail carried in a correct waving plume.

Reach

Quite clearly we want "smooth" reach. The front foot should be placed on the ground directly under the jaw. To assist this, the head should be forwards, not held high in the air. The rear foot should be placed on the ground immediately behind the front foot, and as the front foot is leaving the ground. This is part of the essence of the statement *"the hindquarters exhibit strong rear drive that is transmitted through a well-muscled loin to the forequarters. The forequarters receive the drive from the rear with a smooth reaching stride"*.

Movement viewed from the front or rear should show *“the legs move true in line, not too close nor too wide”*. This is so important, it is referred to twice in the standard.

Why? Because it refers to foot falls. Too often we see dogs who overreach, so that the rear foot comes past the front foot, instead of being placed behind the front foot. Once this happens, we lose efficiency, we lose balance, and instead we have a *“gait that is not completely efficient and tireless”* which *“is to be penalised”*.

There are a number of things *“which interferes with his strength and endurance”* and so *“is to be considered the most serious of faults”*. These include obesity, lack of musculature as well as general unsoundness, lack of angulation, too much angulation and a lack of balance. And they should all be penalised equally.



Above: This bitch has correct, moderate angulation, creating good reach and drive. But she is too short in coupling (loin), hence her compensating by over-reaching ... from front and rear she will be 'crabbing or 'side-winding'.

Other dogs with this same problem can be moved slower as to give the appearance of being correct, and footfalls with in fact be correct. But a lack of correct reach and drive ('mincey' movement) will then become apparent. NOT completely efficient. Head carriage is too high.



Above: Demonstrating balance and power with correct reach and drive. Complete efficiency with perfectly timed footfalls. Head carriage correctly held, strong neck flowing into a correctly slightly sloping topline. Correct waving plume tail.



Over reaching

Drive

“strong rear drive”. The back foot should leave the ground as the front foot is placed on the ground. It should then be brought forwards without *“hang time”*. That is, we do not want to see a rear foot high in the air, in an action that contains only wasted effort, regardless of how flashy it looks.



Above: A slight lack of length in upper arm creates an imbalance in the movement of this dog. He has correct rear angulation and overall proportions but the weakness in the front creates lack of reach (measure distance between the 2 front legs compared with distance between the 2 back legs ... this should be equal), throwing the timing out causing the need the for the rear leg to 'hang' (back leg higher off the ground than the front leg) in compensation.

NOT a balanced gait, NOT completely efficient.

Reach and drive combined

Correct reach combined with correct drive should demonstrate power AND balance. Power should show itself through a ground-covering stride in which the feet spend more time on the ground than in the air. Balance should show itself through length of stride and correct footfalls.



Too Wide



Correct



Too Wide



Correct

The vision of a correctly moving Malamute should speak to you of POWER, STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, EFFICIENCY, AGILITY AND BALANCE.

Always remember these words: UNUSUAL STRENGTH and TREMENDOUS PROPELLING POWER

A Guide to the Alaskan Malamute Coat, Colour & Markings

Judging and Coat

- **NEVER LONG**
- **NEVER SOFT**
- **NEVER TRIMMED** (the exception is trimming of feet for neat appearance)

The texture, composition and quality of the coat are an integral part of the Malamute's ability to survive in arctic conditions. In colder climates, a Malamute in full coat will have such a dense undercoat it will be difficult to part to the skin. The woolly undercoat also has protective oils which may leave the hands feeling slightly soiled even though the dog is clean – these oils may be temporarily removed by washing.

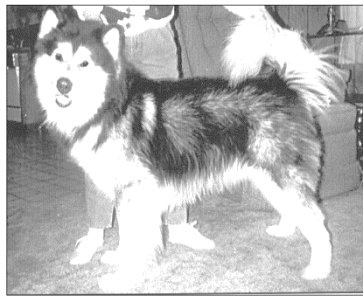
Baby puppies may not have a fully developed guard coat giving them a "woolly lamb" appearance - this is acceptable in baby puppies. If you part the coat you should see darker guard coat coming through. A triangular patch part way down the tail should be noticeably visible, giving an indication of colour and texture. Extra fluffy coat behind the base of the ears may be an indication of an incorrect coat.

Providing that a Malamute's coat complies with the requirements of the breed standard, the structure and soundness of the breed must be given priority when judging. Undue emphasis should therefore not be placed on the "impressive" appearance of a more profuse coat unless the exhibits are otherwise of equal quality.

Why not Long or Soft?

An overly long or soft coat are fatal flaws for a Malamute living in arctic conditions and should be penalised accordingly. The guard coat needs to be sufficiently coarse to protect the undercoat, whereas a soft coat would lack the ability to deflect wind, snow and rain and retain its insulating properties.

The long coat will part, exposing the undercoat and skin to the elements. In addition, the iceballs and snow crust forming on the extremes of a long-coat are not in close enough proximity to the body to be melted by the body heat and will stick to a coat of incorrect texture (see images below). These iceballs build up, adding significant weight to the dog and compromising the coat's insulating properties.



Above: Examples of incorrect coats

Any attempt to disguise a longer coat by trimming or artificially texturise a soft coat is unacceptable.

How long is too long?

The guard coat must be of sufficient length to protect the woolly undercoat, which the Standard states is 1 to 2 inches in length. Along the sides of the body the coat is generally around 1½ inches long, increasing to 3-4 inches over the neck, back, rump and tail.

The undercoat must support the guard coat in order for the Malamute coat to stand off the body. Any appearance of draping or parting is an indication of an overly long coat.

Shedding & Adaptation to Climate

The Malamute will shed coat once or twice a year as a normal part of the breed's natural coat cleaning and maintenance process. The Breed Standard states that the coat will be shorter and less dense during warmer months, indicating that the Malamute coat is expected to adapt according to climate.

The density and length of the coats seen in Australia will be less than if that same Malamute were living in a colder climate, particularly in the warmer months.

A Malamute that is shedding or with a less dense coat should therefore not be penalised in favour of an exhibit with more coat but less desirable structure or exhibiting unsoundness. The coat will change throughout the seasons and with changes of climate, but the structure will not!

The Illusion of Coat, Colour and Markings

A hands-on approach is required to determine the boning, depth of chest, height at shoulder etc. as well as the texture of the coat. Coat can create the impression of substance and can be used by the clever groomer to hide or "resculpt" structural inadequacies. Profuse coat can give the illusion of shorter leg and heavier bone. Be aware that some markings can create an optical illusion which may be misleading. For example, a dark bar extending down the muzzle will give it the illusion of being narrower than with an open face. Likewise, a blaze can give the illusion of a narrower head, and a collar may give the illusion of a longer leg. A dark coloured exhibit may give the illusion of being less substantial than the same sized exhibit with lighter colouring. Do not over-prioritise or be misled by coat - use your hands to measure and feel the structure of the exhibit.



Above are photographs showing puppies that have been playing in the snow. Note the ice balls that have formed on the long coated bitch. And note that the pup who has a full coat with guard hairs, has NO snow stuck to her.

These photographs show the difference between long coats and normal coats. The 35 cm of snow they were playing in was very dry and powdery - just like sugar when you pick it up. One can't even make a snowball with it as it runs through your fingers like sand and blows away. However, it seems to ball up quite nicely on the fluffy's coat.

"In judging the Alaskan Malamute, (its) function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting must be given consideration above all else."

Excerpts from the ALASKAN MALAMUTE BREED STANDARD:

GENERAL APPEARANCE - The coat is thick with a coarse guard coat of sufficient length to protect a woolly undercoat. Malamutes are of various colours.

COAT - The Malamute has a thick, coarse guard coat, never long and soft. The undercoat is dense, from 2.5 - 5 cm (1 - 2 ins) in depth, oily and woolly. The coarse guard coat varies in length as does the undercoat. The coat is relatively short to medium along the sides of the body, with the length of the coat increasing around the shoulders and neck, down the back, over the rump, and in the breeching and plume. Malamutes usually have a shorter and less dense coat during the summer months. The Malamute is shown naturally. Trimming is not acceptable except to provide a clean cut appearance of feet.

COLOUR - The usual colours range from light grey through intermediate shadings to black, sable and shadings of sable to red. Colour combinations are acceptable in undercoats, points, and trimmings. The only solid colour allowable is all white. White is always the predominant colour on underbody, parts of legs and feet, and part of face markings. A white blaze on the forehead and/or collar, or a spot on the nape is attractive and acceptable. The Malamute is mantled, and broken colours extending over the body or uneven splashing are undesirable.

Descriptive Colour and Marking Code

Please note: This section is included purely to emphasise that a large variety of colours and markings are acceptable. **COLOUR AND MARKINGS ARE PURELY COSMETIC** – as with any characteristic that does not interfere with the Malamute's survival, structure and movement, cosmetic attributes should not be given priority when judging an exhibit.

Color Description

Black and White — Black guard hair with black or dark grey undercoat

Seal and White — Black or black tipped guard hairs with white or cream undercoat. Dog appears black at a distance but is not a true black because of the light undercoat.

Sable and White — Black or grey guard hairs with a reddish undercoat and red trimmings. Both black and red factors evident.

Grey and White — Grey guard hairs with light grey, cream, or white undercoat. Dog definitely appears grey even though there may be some black hairs on the topline. No red factor evident.

Silver and White — Light grey guard hairs with white undercoat.

Red and White — A definite shade of red, either light or dark; with light points (lip line and nose), and eye colour. No black factor evident.

All White — Both guard hairs and undercoat are white. Often evidence of a mask in cream colour. Only solid colour allowed.

Trimmings — Shadings of gold, cream, buff, brown or reddish hues often found on legs, ears, tail and face between white areas of the underbody and the dark colour above.

Neck Area

Collar — A white band of colour encircling the neck. Can be full or partial.

Withers Spot — A white mark varying in size but centred on the withers or at the base of the neck.

Chest Markings

Necklace — A curving band of dark colour across the chest.

Eagle — Two bands of dark colour protruding partially across the chest forming a pattern resembling the eagle emblem.

Face Markings

Cap — A cap of colour covers the top of the head and ears usually coming to a point in the centre of the forehead.

Goggles — Dark areas under the eyes and extending sideways to the cap.

Bar — A dark area extending from the centre point of the cap down the nose.

Eye Shadow — Dark markings under the eyes but not extending out to the cap.

Star — A small white spot in the centre of the forehead.

Blaze — A white mark extending from the centre point of the cap back up the forehead. Width and length can vary.

Closed Face — Dark colouring covering the face with no distinct markings on the face.

Open Face — A cap covering the top of the head and no other markings on the face.

Full Mask — The combination of cap, goggles and bar.

Mask — The combination of cap and goggles.

Mismarkings

Undesirable, uneven splashings.

Important Points to Remember

An Alaskan Malamute:

- must have a double coat. The guard coat must be thick and coarse. The dog will have a shorter, less dense coat in the summer and in warmer climates (such as that in Australia).
- Must NEVER have a long or soft coat.
- Is a breed presented naturally. Artificial texturing and trimming (except on the feet) are unacceptable.
- *May be one of several different colour combinations and markings. None is given preference over the others.*
- Should not have broken colours extending over the body.
- Needs a hands-on approach to judging – the coat, colour and markings can create misleading illusions.



Survival and functional characteristics should never be sacrificed in favour of cosmetic ones.

A Judge's Guide To The Alaskan Malamute

Introduction and Priorities

Thank you for your interest in our breed. The Alaskan Malamute is a noble dog with a unique history. Malamutes served in the Byrd Expeditions and also in several expeditions after World War II. After surviving near extinction, the breed has come back to take its place on the trail, in the home, and in the show ring.

The Malamute is a true working dog, and we would like you as judges to reward him for those attributes which make him a true sled dog. The following attributes are the priorities that the parent club would like addressed:

1. **Soundness** — A working dog must be sound. Soundness of feet and legs is our top priority. We want a dog which is clean coming and going and with good reach in the front and drive in the rear. Do not reward an unsound dog just because it is pretty. We do feel that the Malamute should be a beautiful dog. Records of the first white men who saw the dogs of the Malamut tribe state that they marvelled at the beauty of these dogs. However, soundness is always your top priority.
2. **Coat** — A sled dog cannot exist in a primitive environment without a proper coat. A harsh double coat is absolutely necessary. The length may vary somewhat. Do not reward a dog with a soft silky coat and no undercoat. Such a dog would find it difficult to survive in an Arctic climate.
3. **Feet** — Feet are extremely important in this breed. The Malamute foot should be fairly large and tight. There should be very little bend of pastern. A small dainty foot or one down at the pastern are not functional.
4. **Temperament** — The Alaskan Malamute is supposed to be a friendly, outgoing dog. He is not a one man dog. A Malamute should never growl at the judge. If the dog growls at you or his owner, excuse him from the ring. This is not the behavior that we want portrayed as proper Malamute temperament. Occasionally you may see two dogs who grumble at each other. This should be quickly controlled by the handler and not allowed to continue. The Alaskan Malamute should be an outgoing dog. A shy dog is not typical of this breed.
5. **Condition** — The Alaskan Malamute is a working sledge dog. He should be shown in top physical condition with no excess weight. You should not be able to grab handfuls of fat anywhere on the dog's body. The dog is an athlete and should look and act like one. In the summertime you will see many dogs out of coat. This does not reflect poor condition.



Too Wide



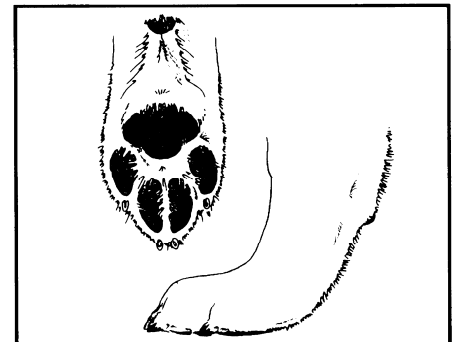
Correct



Too Wide



Correct



Correct snowshoe foot

Correct Examination Procedure

The Malamute is a fun loving dog and can be quite a clown, often at the expense of a human. Large dangling jewellery, hats and scarves could possibly become the objects of a game that you do not want to be a part of.

After looking at the dog's head, do your examination from the side. Feel the ears for thickness of leather, check shoulders and chest for depth and width. You will need to check the topline because sometimes the coat will be brushed up just before the croup and the appearance will be deceiving.

The dog should be in top physical condition, and you should not feel any extra fat. It is not necessary to over examine the dog; most of what you need to see, you will see when he is moving. Do not bend down in front of or behind a Malamute. He could interpret it as an invitation to play, and you could find yourself on your back, which could be quite embarrassing.

The Alaskan Malamute should stand for examination with confidence. He should not shy away from a judge. The breed can be quite vocal; the talking, however, should be limited to a low "woo woo". A dog which shows any aggression should be excused from the ring.

The Alaskan Malamute is best judged on a loose lead at a moderate speed. He should be under control at all times. The stride should be easy and tireless, but powerful. He is relatively light on his feet for such a large and powerful dog.

If there is bait in the ring, please have it cleaned up prior to the Malamute judging. Food is the number one priority for the Alaskan Malamute, and he will do almost anything to get that piece of liver for himself and keep it away from all competitors. This attitude could easily cause chaos in your ring.

Important Points to Remember

An Alaskan Malamute

- Must be sound of body and of temperament.
- Must have a double coat. The guard coat must be thick and coarse. The dog will have less coat in the summer.
- Must NEVER have a long, soft coat.
- Is a natural breed. Scissoring is acceptable ONLY on the feet.
- Is a large, not a giant breed.
- Must be able to exist in a primitive environment. This includes having a thick ear small for the size of the head.
- Must have a tight, deep snowshoe foot with well-cushioned pads.
- Should have a broad head with a bulky muzzle.
- Should be moderately angulated.
- Should have an alert, interested, and intelligent expression.
- Should have a well furred tail with the appearance of a waving plume.
- May be one of several different colour combinations and markings. None is given preference over the others.
- Should have a dark eye.
- Should have a scissors bite.
- Should not move in a stilted gait or in any gait that is not completely efficient and tireless.
- Should not have broken colours extending over the body.

Survival characteristics should never be sacrificed in favour of cosmetic ones.



Toeing In



Correct Front



Toeing Out



Correct Rear



**Bandy or Bowed
Rear**



Cowhock

Judging Tips:

- Judge by feel:
 - Stop and furrow – markings can be deceiving
 - Length of muzzle – measure – markings can be deceiving
 - Coat – texture
 - Rib Cage and loin – coat can hide
 - Condition – no fat – the coat can give the wrong impression
 - Bone – grooming and leg coat can deceive
 - Length of shoulder and upper arm – markings can deceive
 - Size – Length of coat and grooming can add inches to the appearance of a dog so push down the coat over the withers to determine size
- Judge feet standing still
- Judge ear set only when alert
- Judge when moving:
 - Angulation and Flexibility (full extension of hock, stifle and arm) side gate
 - Topline – side gate
 - Tailset – determine an extension of spine during side gate: The natural curve is best seen when the dog is relaxed and happy. When the dog goes to the end of the line after being gaited is a good time.

The Alaskan Malamute - History, Type and Structure

by Ian Luke

"When a man from Nome speaks of Alaska he means his part of Alaska, the Seward Peninsula. When a man from Valdez or Cordova speaks of Alaska he means the Prince William Sound country. When a man from Juneau speaks of Alaska he means the southeast coast. Alaska is not one country but many. With different climates, different resources, different problems, different populations, different interests: and what is true of one part of it is often grotesquely untrue of other parts."

These are the words of Hudson Stuck, Episcopal Archdeacon who ministered to the peoples, white and native, of Alaska from the runners of his dog sled, and author of the 1914 classic "The Thousand Miles With a Dog Sled".

Stuck provides a perfect example of what he meant, further into the book, when he says:

"Travelling, like so many other things, is completely different on the Seward Peninsula. The constant winds beat down and harden the snow until it has a crust that will carry a man anywhere. There are only two means by which snow becomes crusted: one is this packing and solidifying by the wind, and the other is thawing and freezing again. There is much less wind in the interior than on the coast, and usually much less snowfall, and the greater part of the surface of the country is protected by trees; the climate, being continental instead of marine, is not subject to such great fluctuations of temperature. A thaw sufficiently pronounced or sufficiently prolonged to put a stout crust on the snow when freezing is resumed, is a very rare thing in the interior, and a common thing on the coast. So a striking difference in travel at once manifests itself; in the interior all the snow is soft except on a beaten trail itself, while on the Seward Peninsula all the snow is alike hard. The musher is not confined to trails- he can go where he pleases; and his vehicle is under no necessity of conforming in width to a general usage of the country- it may be as wide as he pleases.... Hence many other differences also. Hitherto we had not dreamed of watering the dogs since snow fell; now I found their mouths bloody from their ineffectual attempts to dig up the hard snow with their teeth, and had to water them night and day.

So, as in nearly all such matters everywhere, local peculiarities, local differences, local customs, usually arise from local conditions, and the wise man will commonly conform so soon as he discovers them."

This theme was repeated by Bernard R. Hubbard, S.J. aka "The Glacier Priest", in his 1932 publication "Mush You Malamutes!", when he wrote "Father McElmeel had warned me that mushing on the coast was as different from mushing in the interior as automobile driving is from airplane flying and that I should make no move until helped by an experienced Esquimo".

In 1935, the American Kennel Club recognized the Alaskan Malamute as a pure breed and approved the very first Breed Standard for this breed.

The very first words of that Standard said:

"Origin- The Alaskan Malamute is a native sled-dog of Alaska and is the oldest native dog known to that country. It was originally named "Mahlemut" after a native Innuite (Mahlemut) Tribe."

The original Malamute bible, the Seeley/Riddle book "The Complete Alaskan Malamute" and the modern day Malamute bible, the Brooks/Wallis book "The Alaskan Malamute- Yesterday and Today" both set out the origins of the Alaskan Malamute breed : they lay in the villages of the native Innuite Mahlemut peoples who inhabited the coastal regions of the Kotzebue Sound.

Any study of history, regardless of what resources are used, depicts the Inuit peoples as subsistence peoples, hunters rather than gatherers, surviving on what they could catch. People were fed first, dogs fed if and when there was sufficient reward from the hunt. They were physically small in stature, and exceptionally hardy. Dogs were used for sledging, packing and hunting. They hauled, carried and coursed.

Until the 1950's, the only dogs registered were of the "Kotzebue" type- they were said to be representative of dogs of the Kotzebue Sound region. These dogs were either grey and white or black and white, and were uniform in size. However, the loss of dogs through World War II and Antarctic expeditions saw the number of AKC registered dogs drop to roughly thirty. The solution adopted by the AKC was to re-open the Stud Books. Unregistered dogs could be shown, and if they could win enough points to become a champion, they could be bred from and progeny would be registered.

Effectively, the future of the breed was placed in the hands of conformation Judges. Size, color, and even type, were put aside, and with insufficient knowledge and education, judges were asked to determine, realistically not "the best Malamute", but "the best looking sled dog". This led to official recognition of the "M'Loot" type of dogs, as well as the small number of dogs referred to as the "Hinman strain". Now, please take note of my use of the word "type".

Stuck, in writing of his adventures in the Arctic made some observations which should be uppermost in your mind when considering this breed. He described the Malamute thus:

"The malamute, the Alaskan Esquimaux dog, is precisely the same dog as that found amongst the natives of Baffin's Bay and Greenland. Knud Rasmussen and Amundsen together have established the oneness of the Esquimaux from the east coast of Greenland all round to Saint Michael; they are one people, speaking virtually one language. And the malamute is one dog. A photograph that Admiral Peary prints of one of the Smith Sound dogs that pulled his sled to the North Pole would pass for one of the present writer's team, bred on the Koyukuk River, the parents coming from the Kotzebue Sound.

There was never animal better adapted to environment than the malamute dog. His coat, while it is not fluffy, nor the hair long, is yet so dense and heavy that it affords him a perfect protection against the utmost severity of cold. His feet are tough and clean and do not readily accumulate snow. He is hardy and thrifty and does well on less food than the mixed breeds.

His comparative shortness of leg makes him somewhat better adapted to the hard, crusted snow of the coast than to the soft snow of the interior, but he is a ceaseless and tireless worker who loves to pull.

When he is good condition and his coat is taken care of he is a handsome fellow, and he will weigh from seventy five to eighty five pounds or ninety pounds."

A rough conversion is 33 to 38 to 41 kilos, in full working weight, bearing in mind muscle weighs more than fat.

In his lesser known book "A Winter Circuit Of Our Arctic Coast", published in 1920, Stuck repeated and reinforced the vast differences between travel and life on the coastal regions, specifically referencing the Kotzebue Sound, to that in the interior. But he also commented on the decline in the native dogs, already advanced and evident and attributable to the white man's impact on the region, with particular emphasis on sled dog racing. He spoke scornfully of the teams of dogs bred for racing using quality Kotzebue Sound Malamute bitches deliberately bred to hounds and setters to achieve speed, but

who were useless for sledging, could not survive on the travelling diet of his sledge teams (dried fish, rice and tallow), and needed to be bootied and jacketed.

Father Hubbard, the Glacier Priest, published his book in 1932, after the Goldrush era and white mans influences had made marked changes to the dogs on the Arctic. Within it he made the following observations:

“Dog mushing on the coast is entirely different from the work in the interior. The cold is damp and more penetrating and the tundra makes easier pulling than the talcum-like powdered snow of the interior.”

“eighty-seven degrees below zero had been registered at The Birches on the middle Yukon but forty degrees below of damp cold on the coast is equally fatal”

Many older books refer to “malamutes” of various sizes and colors. Hubbard comments on this in describing his own dogs, explaining that the word “malamute” had become a generic term used to describe any sled dog which at the least resemblance to “an inside dog” and specifically states the generic term “malamute” should NOT be construed as a reference to the native dogs of the Mahlamute tribes peoples, which were generally a small, stocky dog of uniform appearance. He describes one of his own “malamutes” as having “a bulldog like head, brilliant blue eyes and a short coat”. Hubbard’s comments are born out by none other than Allen “Scotty” Allen in his book “Gold, Men & Dogs” and Arthur Walden in “Dog Puncher On The Yukon”, two legends of Arctic mushing who each play a role in the eventual recognition of the Alaskan Malamute. And for a more recent and more scientific study, Ian Kenneth MacRury (Master of Philosophy in Polar Studies) sets out a detailed, comprehensive study in “The Inuit Dog: Its Provenance, Environment and History”, first published in 1991, and re-printed most recently in 2006.

MacRury makes some interesting comments on size, which include:

“The size of the Inuit dog is a balance of the factors which seek to increase or decrease its current dimensions. As a draught animal it is desirable to have as strong a dog as possible but added strength demands a larger size and a larger size demands more food. In times of plentiful food, larger dogs would have a survival advantage. In a polar environment where food supply was often extremely limited, and at times non existent, the dog which could survive on very little food had a survival advantage and was probably smaller than team mates who succumbed to starvation.”

MacRury’s studies include weights and measures over vast and various areas, and boils them down to averages- 61.69 cm (or 24.28 inches) and 38.49 kilos for males, 56.78 cm (or 22.35 inches) and 30.6 kilos for bitches.

So, if we boil this information down, and combine it with the original Standard, we can see that survival and function ***in environment*** led to a certain ***type***. Do we really think native dogs from subsistence peoples are meant to be heavy, massively boned plodding dogs?

Another book to consider is Robert Dovers “Huskies” (also published as “My Friends The Huskies”). Dovers was an Australian, seconded to the French Antarctic team in 1957, as “the dogman”. Dovers recounts adding two large, heavy dogs to the team in their first long sledging expedition, thinking their size would make them ideal, with high expectations of those two being the better sledging dogs of the team. Both dogs failed miserably, losing condition on the same diet and rations as the rest of the team, lacking the agility required for the tough terrain, and returned to base as passengers on the sledges, never to be used in long expeditions again.

There’s a recurring theme throughout - bigger is **not** better.

Consider also the matter of a dog’s centre of gravity. What will provide greater leverage for hauling? Lower to the ground? Or higher?

Another book I would recommend to you is “Visualizations of the Breed Standards”. It contains a wonderful article by Hayes Blake Hoyt, a poodle breeder of renown, who wrote that once function was no longer emphasized, breeds risked turning into caricatures of what they once were: A very wise man. The Malamutes depicted within this publication are all either from the famous “Tigara” kennel (the original Tigara), or bred from Tigara stock. I very much doubt those dogs, all quality, champion and typical Malamutes, would have much hope under the average “all breeds” judge of today.

The original 1935 Breed Standard limited colors to “wolfish grey or black and white.” This is reflective of the dog’s village background. It included the descriptive statement “A large size dog with a strong, compact body, not too short coupled”, and went on to express sizes as “of male dog averaging 22 to 25 inches; of bitch averaging from 20 to 23 inches. Weight- of male dog averaging from 65 to 85 pounds; of bitch averaging 50 to 70 pounds”. These were the working sizes of the day, actual working freighting sizes. We’re talking about 25 inches and 38 kilo’s in working weight as the **largest** dog contemplated.

This original type, known as Kotzebue, has been blurred almost to the point of extinction, through the introduction of the “M’Loot” type and the so called “third strain”, the Hinman dogs, and through the continual and ongoing failure of breeders to breed true to type dogs. The “M’Loot” and “Third Strain dogs” were not from coastal Alaskan origins, were larger, and came in assorted colors. Nonetheless, these dogs impacted on the breed through their success in the show ring, which allowed them to impact the studbook. One can only imagine the usual ignorant “Bigger must be better” philosophy over ruled judges’ knowledge of the Standard and understanding of breed type.

The breed today reflects that blurring of type, and with that blurring comes variations of “style”.

The Breed Standard has been revised on occasion, most notably in 1959/1960. This particular revision saw the size revised from the “averages”, and removed the lower ranges, replacing them with the words “a natural range of sizes” and “recommended freighting size” being attached to the upper range of the original “average” size.

Other revisions have included expanding the original colors to include colors that were never contemplated in the Kotzebue.

Those who wrote “the recommended freighting size” in truth had no idea, having never freighted and by today’s standards, were relatively inexperienced breeders. Even with the inclusion of long time and experienced Kotzebue breeder DC Dillingham, the average experience of those on the committee was less than 8 years in the breed.

Stripped of all the justifications, the simple facts are that these revisions were made to fit what was being bred and shown, rather than seeking to strengthen or clarify the Standard for typical Malamutes or encourage breeders to breed to the Standard.

If you think that is an over simplification, do this- approach any long established, successful breeder of Doberman Pinschers, and ask them whether, after the breed had been recognized as a pure breed, it would have been acceptable to breed to a Rottweiler to increase bulk beyond what Louis Doberman had foreseen? After all, they are both German breeds, used for similar purposes, right? Or ask a Rottweiler breeder if it would be acceptable to breed to a Doberman to add red, blue and fawn colors to the Rottweiler and increase height? And would they be happy to see their Standards revised to accept dogs bred thus? Or ask any established breeder from any established breed whether their Standard should be changed to

accommodate the dogs in the ring which no longer fitted the Standard of the day?

Consider also the breed's fall from favour with expeditions as it increased in size.

Ask yourself these questions- what exactly is the true Alaskan Malamute type? To what extent does size play a part in type? Or color? Or tail set and carriage?

Consider what the difference between the Alaskan Malamute and the Canadian Eskimo Dog is? They are both Inuit sled dogs, but they are recognized as different breeds. Environment! And environment affected "type". So what then is the difference between "Malamute type" and "Canadian Eskimo Dog type"? They are from different regions, different environments and therefore have developed differently. The CED is a heavier dog. At least, it is meant to be. Compare the CED heights to those set out in the Malamute Standard of 1935, the description of the CED's neck and forequarters, "bowed" front legs, weights and even coats. Pay particular attention to the description of movement in the CED, which differs markedly from what the Alaskan Malamute Standard calls for. The CED Standard calls for agility in the General Appearance section, the Malamute Standard calls for agility in movement.

The head, ear set, and tail carriage are all to do with type and have little to do with function. Pretty much all Spitz breeds have wedge shaped heads, but the strength of back skull and jaw help distinguish the Malamute from the Siberian. It is this strength which helps establish ear set, as well as providing the correct oblique eye set.

Tail set comes from correct hindquarter angles, especially the pelvis. Carriage however, is controlled by muscles and ligaments, and is not going to effect performance, hence the different carriage provided by the CED Standard- again, bringing back the question of "type".

Length of tail is something that often draws comment. Many people espouse the idea the tail should reach to the hock. Again, historical facts simply do not support this. In fact, Inuit's often docked tails completely. Due to their practice of hitching dogs so close together, tails often froze with accumulated condensation from other dogs on the team and had to be amputated. And the commonly preached theory of using their tails to cover their noses is challenged by the observations of many, of dogs putting noses under thighs when curled.

When you stand back and look at the dogs in front of you, ask yourself- can you distinguish this exhibit from a Canadian Eskimo Dog? And from the flip side, if it came into the ring AS a CED, would you feel compelled to refuse it?

Cast your mind back to the original 1935 Standard. Consider once again the changes made in 1959/1960, and again ask yourself why? Why were these changes made?

Even with the vandalistic alterations made to it, the Breed Standard of today should tell you enough to grasp that correct type will reflect a balanced combination of factors. Strength, endurance, and athleticism chief amongst them.

In fact, balance is the essence of this breed. To achieve the effortless, powerful movement we desire, the length of muzzle will be balanced against the length of skull, the overall length of head will be in balance with the length of neck, which will be in balance with the length of back. The depth of chest will be in balance with the length of leg. The length of the upper arm will be in balance with the length of the shoulder, the upper thigh in balance with the lower thigh and the rear pastern. And the angles of the forequarter will be in balance with the angles of the hind quarter.

The forequarter will be built so that when standing, the foot will be positioned under and just forward of the withers- a plumb bob line dropped from the withers should graze the point of elbow and hit the ground immediately behind the back of the

foot. The front pastern should sufficiently sloping so as to act as a shock absorber.

The prosternum will project forward of the point of the shoulder, and the rib cage will extend well back. The dog will be neither square, nor long. Square would reduce power and prevent correct movement. Long often produces ground covering movement which looks fantastic, and can hide a lack of balance between front and rear. But a long back can be weak, sagging and dipping and interfering with the line of power being transmitted from the rear to the front. But what is too long? The rib cage MUST have sufficient length and breadth to house and protect lungs that provide endurance, without being so wide as to interfere with the front legs. Clearly we don't want a short rib cage. The Standard says the dog is not short coupled, but the loin must NOT be long, as length leads to weakness. Bear in mind this breed was a packing breed as well as a sledging breed. SO picture the dog in front of you wearing a pack, heavily loaded with gear. Is he so short bodied the pack will interfere? Or is he so long bodied the weight of the pack will affect that top line we want so firm?

When built right, moving, the dog will have its head lowered, so that a nice level line runs along the head and the back. The leading front foot will land on the ground directly under the muzzle. It will leave the ground just before the rear foot lands, and the rear foot will land either in the front foot's imprint or so close to it that the 2 imprints will be touching, and in motion the feet will be so close no gap will be visible to the eye. And this will happen **without** the feet touching, passing or otherwise interfering with each other.

The rear foot, having landed and propelled the dog forwards, extending as far as possible without leaving the ground, will leave the ground behind the point of buttock, and will immediately begin to travel forwards again. Neither front or rear feet will flick, or have any other exaggeration action. **The feet will spend as much time on the ground as possible.**

Feet which cross over, whether it be front feet which cross each other, or rear feet which cross each other, or a front foot which crosses a rear foot, is an indication of structural unsoundness. The construction of the dog is lacking somewhere. Those crossing feet add up to wasted energy and a dog which will tire more quickly, go lame more quickly, and feet which will interfere with each other when the dog is tired.

Dogs which "toe in", **will** go lame and can not be considered to have endurance capacity. Toeing in should never be mistaken for convergence. So even whilst the dog who moves thus may not limp around the show ring, he can NOT be said to be sound. (If you question this, please read "Running North", by Ann Mariah Cook, published in 1999, the story of one family's decision to put together and train a team to run the Yukon Quest, surely a test of endurance sledging).

In fact, without the proper forequarter construction, can the dog before you really be sound? A pounding front created by a short upper arm or a lack of angles will not have the shock absorption needed for the dog to have working capacity. This is an unsound dog, regardless of whether you see the dog limping or not. Put this into the context outlined by this phrase from the Standard:

"Important: In judging Malamutes, their function as a sledge dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else."

The top line will remain firm, level and strong. A top line which sags, dips or bounces whilst moving is indicative or structural flaws.

Feet themselves are vitally important but often ignored or misunderstood. Feet should be large; in fact they should be so large they appear almost **out** of balance with the rest of the dog. Correct sized feet are rare. However, what is sadder is that

we are losing correct shape; shape is as important if not more important than size. All too often we see round feet. These round feet will not travel far. There are many theories about what makes a good foot and why. One theory I've heard from a serious US musher was that the longer middle toes provide propulsion whilst the shorter out toes provide stability and balance. An Iditarod musher I discussed feet with would not disagree with that theory, and certainly endorsed the view that the shape of the foot MUST be snowshoe shaped rather than round, believing round feet led to blisters developing between the toes, and therefore lameness. This belief was based on experience gained running Malamute teams long distances.

The breed is generally not in a good state. Type has become so blurred most new people to the breed have no real grasp of what a correct Malamute is. The question of type is more than just "does this dog look like a sled dog?" The question of type must be extended to "does this dog look like the sled dog of subsistence peoples from coastal Alaska?" and to answer it, you need to research what those dogs looked like.

There are various strains of dogs' in interior regions such as the McKenzie River or Porcupine River in which a longer, softer coat is perfectly ok. Correct coat therefore becomes as much a question of type as survival. Coats have become exaggerated to the point of being useless. Big heavy "show" coats are not functional, no matter how flashy or showy they look. Too much coat will lead to a dog overheating at worst, and at best losing working capacity. The Standard specifies one to two inches of undercoat (along the sides of the dog) for good and sensible

reasons. Again we return to balance- if the undercoat is one to two inches down the sides, do we really want six inches or more of top coat over the shoulders or in the pants? More attention should be paid to density than length, because a quality coat will be dense, not long, or "big".

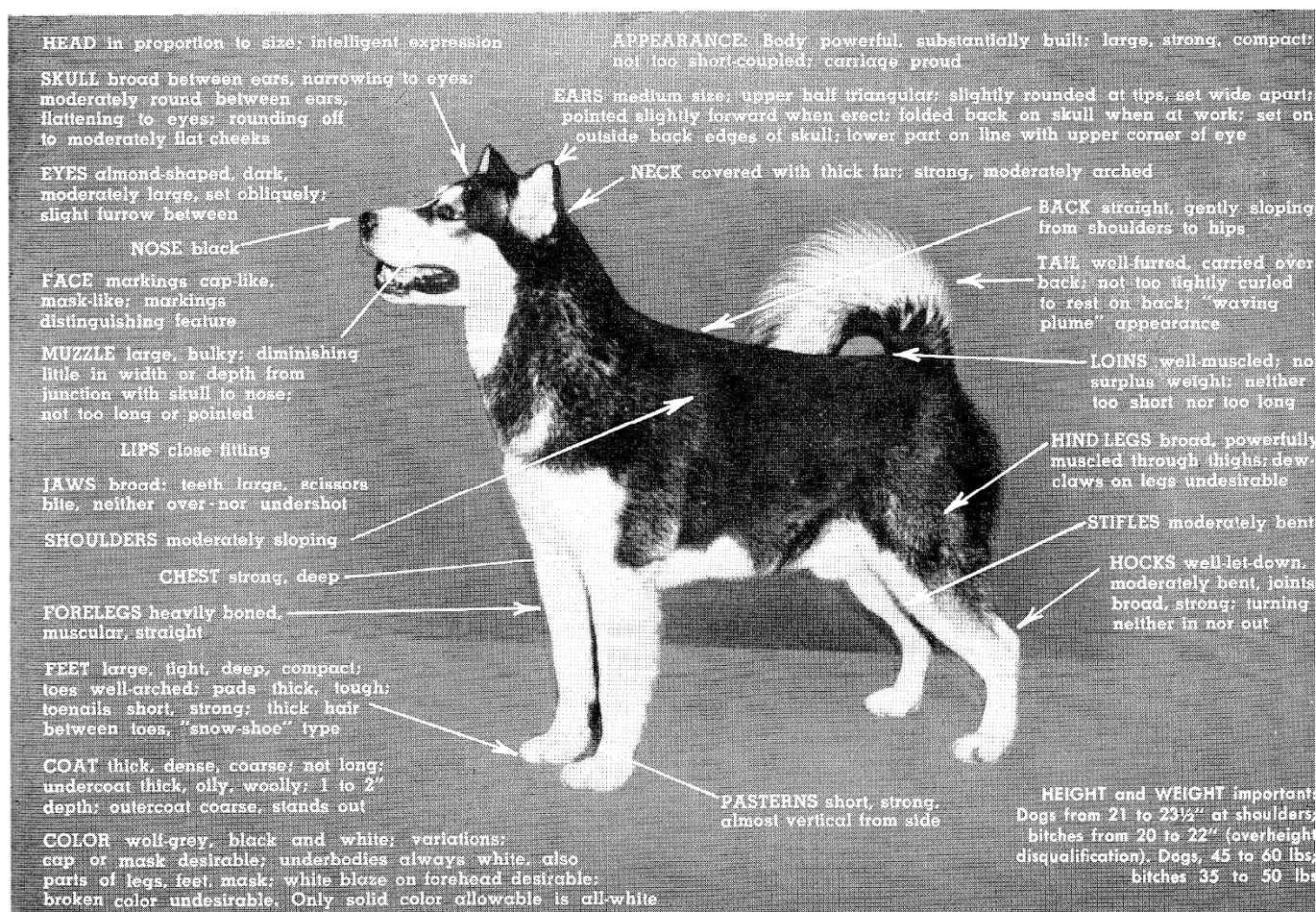
Substance seems to have become something of a buzz word with this breed. The Standards for the Akita and the Neapolitan Mastiff also call for heavy bone. Many other standards call for dogs to be well boned, have strong bone, have massive bone. They are not all asking for the same thing- they are calling for boning to be in context and proportion. Put THIS breed into context- a subsistence people's subsistence level dog.

The health of the breed is seriously compromised through lack of research, lack of care, and breeders desire to produce that "big winner". More attention needs to be paid to basic genetics, bloodlines and phenotype.

We've lost correct front end assembly because too many have been prepared to compromise on that which should never be compromised. Without a correct front, we can not get correct movement, and without correct movement we can not have a working dog of any value. And at the end of the day, if the Malamute in front of you can not be a working dog of value, can it be a Malamute of any value?

Bring it all back to balance- the dog too lightly built for sledging can not work. The dog too big and heavy to survive on a subsistence diet cannot work. The dog with a poor front that can not withstand hard work, can not work. The dog with the incorrect coat cannot survive, so cannot work.

Important: In judging Malamutes, their function as a sled dog for heavy freighting in the Arctic must be given consideration above all else.



ALASKAN MALAMUTE standard visualization, modeled by CH. TIGARA'S ESKIMO EDDY OF KAYUH

Commentary on some points of the Standard of the Alaskan Malamute

Prepared by Wendy Willhauck (Frostfield Alaskan Malamutes, USA)

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The Alaskan Malamute, a powerful and substantially built dog, is intended as the freighting dog of the North. It is important to remember that he is a dog developed to carry heavy loads over a long distance at a moderate speed, unlike the Siberian Husky which was developed to carry a light load over a long distance. Often people think of freighting dogs as being "giant" and "massive". This is not accurate. The Malamute should be a heavier and more powerful dog than are the other Northern breeds, but he is not a ponderous dog.

Attitude is very important in this breed. Our standard says that he "stands well over the pads. This stance gives the appearance of much activity and a proud carriage." His head is erect, and his eyes alert. One can see interest, intelligence, and curiosity. A Malamute should be happy and confident. The tail is a waving plume, and it is not uncommon to see a row of Malamutes set up for examination, most with their tails waving.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE:

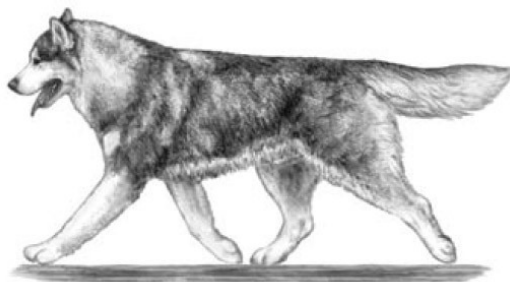
The desirable freighting sizes are: males, 25 inches at the shoulder, 85 pounds; females, 23 inches at the shoulder, 75 pounds. The standard states, "Size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement, and other functional attributes." This is absolutely true. However, one must remember that there is a reason for a desirable freighting size, and one must try to stay as close to that size as possible. Also, a 24-inch dog and a 22 inch bitch could certainly be as deserving of wins as a 26 inch dog and 24 inch bitch. Bigger is not necessarily better.

The standard states, "the length of body from point of shoulder to the rear point of pelvis is longer than the height of body." Since the Alaskan Malamute is an endurance animal, it is extremely important that the length of body be slightly longer than the height of the body. Also keep in mind that a long loin, which weakens the back, is a fault and a short back, which impedes movement, is also to be penalized.

The dog should be shown in excellent physical condition, and should carry no excess weight. Although the standard states that "heavy bone" is necessary, it is important that bone be in proportion to size. The dog must be balanced. A dog judge should be able to look at any animal and see proper balance.

HEAD:

A broad head with a large, bulky muzzle is very important in this breed. Pigment should be black. Brown pigment is acceptable in a red dog. The soft expression, which is a hallmark of the breed, comes from the dark, almond



shaped eyes set obliquely in the skull.

An important point is that although the ears are medium size, they are small in proportion to the head. The ears have the appearance when erect of standing off from the skull. "High set ears are a fault." This is important because this is one factor which differentiates the Malamute from the Siberian.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY:

When people discuss "proper type", they often discuss only the head. Proper body type is important as well. The strong, moderately arched neck and firm back gently sloping to the hips are extremely important. There should not be anything soft or flabby about the Malamute's body. He should look like an athlete - well muscled and sound in both body and mind. The well-furred tail should have the appearance of a plume waving. A snap or tightly curled tail is a fault. A fox brush tail like a Siberian Husky is also a fault.

FOREQUARTERS: The Standard states, "Pasterns are short and strong and slightly sloping when viewed from the side". It is important to realize that in order to maintain the true tight, deep and compact snowshoe foot, the slope of the pastern must be very slight.

COAT:

A proper Malamute coat is thick and harsh. A judge must be very astute in determining correct coat texture. A soft coat is incorrect. One can also often tell if the dog has been scissored which, of course, is not allowed.

COLOUR:

Malamutes range in colour from light grey to black, sable and red. The only solid colour allowable is the all white. All of these colours are equally acceptable. Dogs should never be penalized for their facial markings. Broken colours extended over the body, and uneven splashing are undesirable.

SUMMARY:

It is important to remember that the Malamute must be sound. He must be a strong, powerful dog who would be capable of pulling heavy loads over great distances. He must also have an attitude that would denote willingness to work with his master.

In old records of the Mahlemut (the original spelling) tribe, one marvels at the strength, endurance, friendliness, and beauty of their dogs. It is these attributes that we wish to preserve in the present day Malamute. We ask the dog show judges to help us in this task by rewarding those dogs that exhibit the positive qualities stated in the Standard.



Alaskan Malamutes: Those Perfect Markings!

Having seen many top winners with a variety of colours and markings over the past 30 years, I hardly thought that a dog might be denied a win based on his colour or so-called "less-than-perfect" markings. Dogs with every marking, from large nape spots to split bars on the face to asymmetrical white markings on one leg, have all finished championships, and some have gone on to successful campaigns as specials.

.At a recent show, a judge consulted the AKC standard to see if a particular dog whose markings included a half-collar should be disqualified. Another judge, commenting on a nationally televised dog show, described the lovely grey Malamute being exhibited in the group as "the correct colour". One can only hope this was an accidental omission of the words "one of", and not due to the mistaken belief that grey is the only proper colour.

A wide variety of colours and marking are allowed in the Alaskan Malamute. The standard states that the usual colours range from light grey through intermediate shadings to black, sable and shadings of sable to red. Colour combinations are acceptable in undercoats, points and trimmings.

White is the only solid colour allowed. Further, white is always the predominant colour on the underbody, is found on the legs and feet and is part of the facial markings. A white blaze on the forehead or a collar or nape-spot are considered attractive and acceptable. (Mantled colouring, where colour is broken by white or where white splashes over the body, is considered undesirable.)

The basic colours for the guard coat are black, white, red and grey (agouti). A true black and white Malamute will have hair strands that are black from base to tip. The undercoat will be black or a very dark charcoal. Grey or agouti dogs have hair strands containing bands of colour, with the lightest colour being at the base and the darkest colour, usually black, at the tip.

Depending upon the intensity and how these bands are distributed, the appearance of the coat colour can range from very light to very dark. For instance, a silver dog has light-grey colour-bands with a white undercoat. Intermediate grey dogs can vary greatly from light to dark, all with a white or cream undercoat. A seal Malamute has such a heavy concentration and length of black on the tips of the hair shaft that the dog appears black from a distance. Closer observation, revealing some lighter colour near the base and a cream or white undercoat, will distinguish a true black dog from a seal dog.

With white dogs, the hair is white from the base to the tip, although there may be varying shades of cream or biscuit. Red Malamutes can range from light reddish to a dark mahogany. They will have liver pigmentation of the lips and nose, with no black evident. Sable Malamutes may at first glance look like reds, but will have black or grey guard hairs with red or brown trimmings. These trimmings can be minor or very concentrated and dark. The undercoat will have a reddish tint, and the lips and nose will be black. Both the red and black factors are evident in a sable.

Below: a wide variety of markings are acceptable



Most, if not all, Malamutes have trimmings – shade of gold, cream, brown, buff or red, found on legs, ears, tails, face markings, and underbellies. Trimmings are located around the margins of colour where the light and dark shades meet, and frequently extend into the colour. It would not be unusual to observe a black and white dog with red or sable trimmings, or a grey and white dog with cream or brown trimmings. All are perfectly natural and accepted as the norm.

Chest markings may be solid white or may contain bands of dark colouring. A single curving band of dark colour is called a necklace. Eagle markings represent two bands of colour that form a pattern resembling an eagle emblem across the chest.

Malamutes may also have a white nape or withers spot, or a white collar that partially or completely circles the neck. Breeders use caution when breeding dogs with large nape spots or collar markings, due to the fact that those dogs have the ability to produce offspring with similar markings or even more substantial white that could be misplaced. Some breeders feel that no good dog can be a wrong colour, while others consider even a slightly asymmetrical marking to be unacceptable. From a showing or working standpoint, these markings are – or should be – immaterial. Even splash-coated dogs are described by the standard as only undesirable, and are not disqualified.

The variety of facial markings in the Alaskan Malamute is clearly what makes each dog a unique specimen. Facial

markings can range from all white (open face) to dark colouring covering the face (closed face), with the only white being dots over the eyes and on the muzzle and part of the cheeks. The face can have goggles, which are dark areas under the eyes, or “eye shadow markings” that are either faint in colour or quite dark and distinct. A cap denotes colour that covers the top of the head and ears and comes to a point in the centre of the forehead. Other Malamutes may have bandit-like masks, full masks (which include a dark bar down the nose), or a cap-and-goggles combination. The muzzle can be all white or it can have a dark bar down the nose, or even a split bar. The forehead may have a thin or bold blaze, a small strip, or a star. No one colour or facial marking is preferred over another.

Eyes are described as brown, with blue eyes being the only disqualification in the Alaskan Malamute standard. The 1982 standard stated that dark eyes are preferred, but that statement was removed in the 1994 revision. As a result, it should come as no surprise that breeder-judges nationwide often remark that the beautiful chocolate-brown eye seems to be disappearing in the breed.

The final paragraph of the Alaskan Malamute standard describes the most important factors in judging this breed. You will note that colour and markings are not even mentioned in that summary. All acceptable colours and markings are equally desirable and no preference should be given in judging. Ideally, judges should recognise that this variety is what makes our breed so interesting and a challenge to judge.

Vicky Jones, 295 Cannon Rd., Sharpsburg, GA 30277



Alaskan Malamutes: From the Ground Up

A spectator watching an Alaskan Malamute gait around the ring once commented, "My goodness! He looks like he's wearing snowshoes." Little did he know what an appropriate comment that was.

"A Malamute is built from the ground up" is a common adage that conveys the extreme importance of a Malamute's feet. His very survival in the Arctic depended on his ability to function in snow and ice. If his feet were small, flat, or splayed, he would be unable to travel or work for hours at a time, making him useless to those who relied on his abilities for their livelihood.

If you have ever tried walking in deep snow wearing regular shoes, you know that your weight will cause you to sink into the snow and force you to travel slowly and clumsily – or, in some cases, result in an inability to move at all. Wearing snowshoes allows your weight to be more evenly distributed over a much larger area, helping to keep you on top of the snow instead of sinking into it. This applies to the feet of a sled dog as well.

First and foremost, the Malamute's feet should be *large* and shaped similarly to a snowshoe. There is no place for small, delicate, flat, or splayed feet in the Arctic. The large feet should be compact, thick, tight, and deep, with a protective growth of short, bristle-like hair between the toes. The well-muscled toes should be tight-fitting, with no space between them.

Long or profuse hair on the paws or between the toes will be prone to collect ice or snowballs and, in some

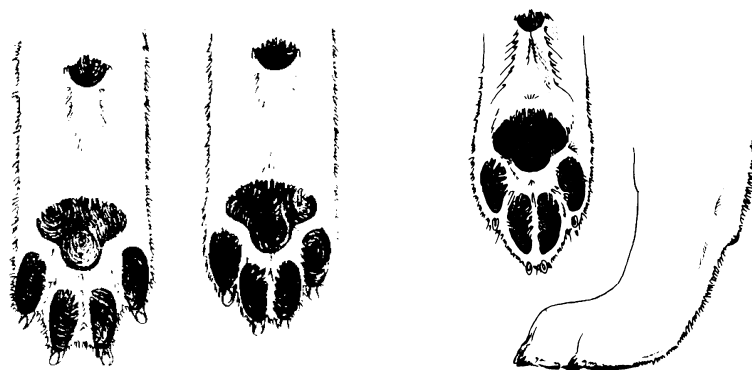
cases, may even render the dog incapable of walking or working.

The Malamute standard describes a dog who "stands well over the pads". That sentence refers to an assembly of legs and feet that display strength and fitness. Pasterns should have only a very slight bend for flexibility purposes. In fact, the original standard stated that pasterns should be "almost vertical when viewed from the side." Weak pasterns will prevent a dog from having the desired tight foot with strong toes.

This results in the appearance of standing on the backs of the footpads rather than well over the pads. The footpads must be tough, very thick, and well-cushioned. When the Malamute is standing, the rear footpads should not point upwards and be visible. The Malamute often uses his toenails to gain purchase on the slippery ice; therefore, the nails must be short and very strong.

Rear dewclaws are always removed, but there are differing opinions on whether or not to remove front dewclaws. Many breeders believe that the Malamute needs his front dewclaws to hold large bones and food, or for other purposes. Others believe that removal is in the dog's best interest, to avoid a dewclaw being accidentally ripped off while working in rough terrain. Either is acceptable in the show ring, and trimming of the hair on the feet is allowed in order to create a neat, clean appearance.

Vicky Jones, 295 Cannon Rd.
Sharpsburg, GA 30277, vykon@mindspring.com



Correct snowshoe foot



The Waving Plume

It has often been said that, when a particular breed characteristic begins to disappear, opinions form that the trait is no longer important. Tailset and carriage of the Alaskan Malamute has become such a prolific problem that it is not unusual to only find one or two correct tails in a ring of 25 or more dogs. Ringside observers, including some prospective judges, have frequently asked me what is wrong with a certain dog's tail, only to discover that the dog in question was the only one with a correct waving plume!

The standard states that the tail is moderately set and follows the line of the spine at the base. It is carried over the back and is not snapped or curled tight against the back. Likewise it is not short furred like a fox brush. The tail should be well furred and give the appearance of a waving plume. The 1935 standard gave the tail 10 points out of 100 on the scale of importance. In 1982 the description of the tail was clarified, however the numerical figure was dropped to 5 points on the scale. In retrospect

I feel that may not have been a wise decision, as it indicated to both breeders and judges that tails were the lowest importance. The current standard no longer uses a point scale but the description is complete and easy to understand.

Common faults include tails that are tightly curled or even double curled, tails that lay flat on the back of the dog, and tails that hang sharply down one side. In addition, some tails lack sufficient fur length, and many are set too high or too low to be carried properly. Another problem that unfortunately is gaining notoriety rapidly is the tail that is too short or stubby. Some actually give the appearance of being half-tails. Many of these short tails cannot curve towards the back at all.

The ideal Malamute tail will curve nicely over the back and only the hair on the tip of the tail may touch the back slightly. When standing naturally, the tail may hang down. This is not an indication of an incorrect tailset (in fact quite the opposite), but rather an expression of mood when the dog is bored, tired, resting, etc. When moving the Malamute may carry the tail up in the waving plume or may trail the tail behind. Malamutes that are concentrating hard on working at sledding or weight pulling will often trail their tails or carry them low. Tails also perform the function as "rudders" in balancing the dogs when making hard turns or negotiating uneven terrain. If you doubt that statement, watch any geriatric Malamute that is becoming weaker in the rear and is having more difficulty walking. Invariably the dog will use his tail like a rudder, stiffening it from side to side for balance and steering.

The tail of the Malamute is considered to be an important survival characteristic. A long, well-furred tail serves as an insulator from the cold. It is generally felt that the tail should be long enough to at least reach the hock or slightly below in order to perform properly and efficiently. Without sufficient length & fur, the Malamute cannot effectively use his tail to protect his nose and other vital organs in severely cold temperatures. In extreme cold, the tail can be tucked between or under the rear legs. The dog then folds into a tightly curled position, covering his nose & eyes with his tail. The tail also serves as a mood indicator and communication tool. It can display fear, playfulness, happiness, nervousness, and aggression, to name a few. There's nothing prettier than to see a Malamute gaiting around the show ring with a correct tail waving and wagging in the breeze.

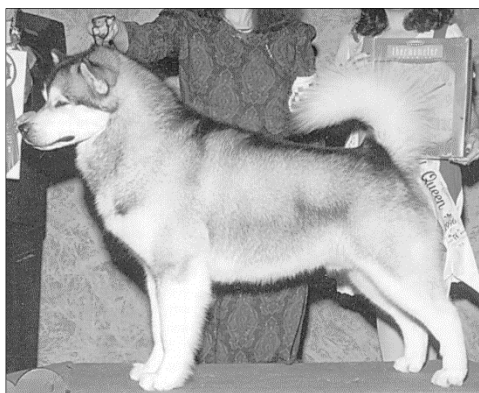
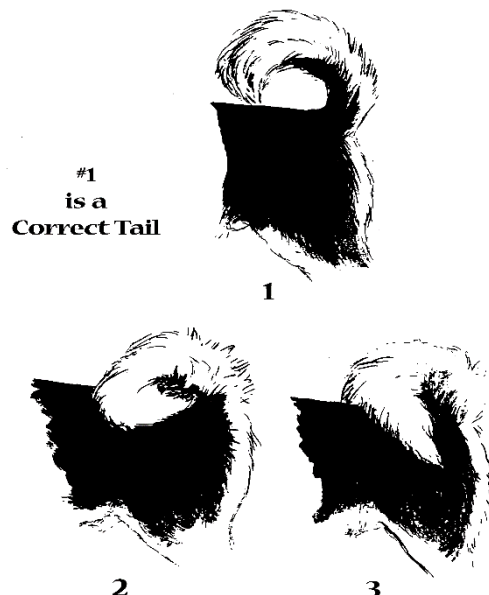
The argument that "they don't pull sleds with their tails" lacks merit. It can likewise be said that Malamutes don't pull sleds with their coats, ears, eyes, bites or heads, yet each of those features combined correctly give the Malamute breed type and are important elements in the standard of perfection.

Author: Vicky Jones; 295 Cannon Rd. Sharpsburg 30277

Originally published in the

AKC GAZETTE – ALASKAN MALAMUTES

July 2006



Comparison of Selected Northern Breeds

	<i>Alaskan Malamute</i>	<i>Siberian Husky</i>
Skull	broad	medium width
*Stop	slight break from a straight line	well defined
Muzzle	bulky	tapering
Lips	tight fitting	close fitting
Ears	medium, small in relation to head	medium, thick, well furred
*Ear Set	wide apart on the outside back edges of the skull	high set, pointing straight up
Eyes	almond, oblique	almond, oblique
Nose Pigment	snow nose acceptable, brown in red dogs, black in all others	snow nose acceptable pink in white dogs, liver in red dogs, black in all others
Bite	scissors, large teeth	scissors
Neck	strong and arched	med and arched
Ribs	chest well developed	well sprung, not barrel
Topline	back straight and gently sloping to hips	level from withers to croup
*Tail	waving "plume" over the back, not snapped	round brush over the back in sickle curve
Size	M-25", F-23", ideal but there is a natural range in size	M-21-23 1/2", F- 20-22"
Proportion	longer than tall	longer than tall
Bone	heavy	medium
Pasterns	short, strong, slight slope	strong, slight slant, flexible
*Feet	large, snowshoe, compact, thick pads, fur between toes	med, oval, compact, thick pads, fur between toes
Hocks	moderately bent, well let down	well defined and low to the ground
*Coat	Double: dense, oily, woolly undercoat, coarse guard coat	Double soft, dense undercoat, guard coat straight and smooth laying



	<i>Samoyed</i>	<i>Akita</i>	<i>Canadian Eskimo Dog</i>
Skull	broad	broad	massive, broad
Stop	well defined	well defined	elevated forehead
Muzzle	tapering	broad and full	tapered, medium length
Lips	flew not developed	not pendulous	
Ears	medium, thick, well furred	small in relation to head	short, thick and have slightly rounded tips
Ear Set	well apart but within the border of the outer edge of the skull	wide, carried slightly forward over eyes in line with back of neck	Turned forwards. Width of the forehead between the ears on the males will be from 13-15cm (5-6 inches). On females the distance will be from 11-14cm (4½ to 5½ inches).
Eyes	almond, slant up	triangular, small, deep set	Small, wide spaced and placed obliquely. Generally dark coloured, but hazel or yellow coloured eyes will appear.
Nose Pigment	black preferred but other colours not penalized	liver permitted on white dog black preferred	varies from black to light brown
Bite	scissors, strong teeth	scissors, strong teeth	scissor bite. large teeth with well-developed canine teeth
Neck	strong, will muscled	short, thick, muscular, crest	short, straight, thick and very muscular
Ribs	well sprung	well sprung	deep, wide and well muscled chest
Topline	withers highest, back level to loin, loin slightly arched croup, slightly sloping	level back	The hips are about the same height as the withers.
Tail	profusely covered with long hair, ver the back or side	hair straight, course and full carried over the back or against flank in a ¾, full or double curl	large and bushy and generally carried up or curled over the back
Size	M- 21-23 1/2", F- 19-21"	M-26-28", F-24-26"	M – 23-27½ inches, Weight 30-40 kg F -19½ - 23½ inches, Weight 18-30 kg
Proport-ion	just off square	longer than high	
Bone	heavy for the size	heavy	medium to large boned
Pasterns	strong, straight but flexible	15 degrees from vertical	
Feet	large, long, flattish, thick pads, feathers on feet	cat foot, thick pads	The feet are large, nearly round, well arched with thick pads being well furred between. However, under extremely cold winter conditions, this fur will grow to be very long so as to cover the bottom of the pads. The hind feet are similar in design to the front but slightly longer.
Hocks	sharply defined, 30% of the height at the hip	well let down	
Coat	Double: soft, thick undercoat coarse standoff guard coat	Double: soft, dense undercoat, coarse, standoff straight guard coat	Thick and dense, guard hairs being hard and stiff. The outer coat will vary from 7-15 cm (3-6 inches) in length. In males a mane-like growth over the shoulder and neck. Undercoat very dense

