

The Heart of the Matter
Judging the Manchester Terrier
By Mari-Beth O'Neill

In the United States it was two breeds, the Manchester Terrier and Toy Manchester Terrier with interbreeding permitted by the American Kennel Club until 1959. At this time it was designated as one breed with two varieties, Standard 12- 22 pounds and the Toy under 12 pounds, within each variety class divisions exist, 12-16 pounds and 16-22 pounds in Standards, 7-12 pounds and under 7 pounds in Toys. In England it has remained as two separate breeds, Manchester Terrier and the English Toy Terrier (Black and Tan).

Judging the Manchester Terrier

The Manchester Standard is consistent for both Varieties, the differences being the size which is based upon weight with no reference to height and the allowance of different ear types in Standards.

The first impression of the dog is its overall balance and proportion, as a smooth coated dog there is not a place to hide faults. The Manchester Terrier, overall, is slightly longer than tall. The height, measured vertically from the ground to the highest point of the withers, is slightly less than the length, measured horizontally from the point of the shoulders to the rear projection of the upper thigh. The bone and muscle of the Manchester Terrier is of sufficient mass to ensure agility and endurance. One is able to assess the majority of the aspects of this breeds conformation through observation of the dog standing naturally on the ground and in motion, particularly in profile. The outline of the Manchester Terrier is one of smooth lines. A clean, dry, wedge shaped head in profile and from a head on view, supported by a graceful slightly arched neck, leading to the level backline to a slight rise over the well muscled loin falling slightly to the tail set on the rounded croup and well let down hocks. The tail is carried as an extension of the topline, level off the back. The substance of the dog is to be of sufficient mass to ensure agility and endurance.

It is recommended to observe the breed moving in profile to continue the initial assessment of balance and proportion. Take the class, whether one or multiples, around the ring, at this time you are observing whether or not the gait is free and effortless, the natural topline(s) of the dog(s) and the tail carriage. Tail carriage is an indicator of the structure of the rear assembly. A properly made dog will move effortlessly with good reach, head may drop and extend forward, supported by the balanced driving action of the rear quarters. A dog with a short mincing step or a jaunty action upon further examination will be found to be straight in the shoulders and or the hind quarters.

The observation of the topline and tail carriage provides insight to the correct structure of the body and the angulation of the croup. The back is to be level with only a very slight hint of a rise over the loin which is a result of muscling, not an actual curve in the vertebral column. The tail is to be an extension of the spinal column and should actually be slightly below the level of the loin carried straight out. An enthusiastic dog may carry the tail slightly elevated and a relaxed dogs tail carriage may be slightly lower than straight off the back. A high tail set at the same level as the loin, will result in a higher tail carriage even to the extent of appearing straight up or curled over the back. These are to be faulted. If uncertain as to the dog being enthusiastic, observe the carriage of the tail with the dog standing naturally.

The breed is to be examined on the table. A minimal light touch is all that is necessary. You may wish to look at the over all outline, the dog in profile; however this is best observed when the dog is standing naturally on the ground. Approach the dog from the front, first observing the head. The head is a clean, long, dry, flat wedge in profile as well as head on.

The expression is a combination of the alert bright, dark, nearly black obliquely set almond shaped eyes and the ear set and carriage. The expression is keen and alert. Eyes that protrude or are rounder in shape and lighter in color diminish the alert keen look of the breed. A high set well carried ear enhances the expression, even providing a slight wrinkling between the ears. The Standard may be exhibited with a cropped ear, which is described as long and pointed set well up on the head. A natural ear which is wider at the base tapering to pointed tips or a button ear wider at the base set well on top of the head with the pointed tip facing directly downward. The Toy may have only a natural erect ear. In both varieties the ear leather must be substantial enough to support the carriage. Toy breeders have been very successful in breeding a smaller ear set well on top of the head. Only on occasion will you see a button ear on Standard.

The breed does not require excessive touching while examining on the table. What you see is what you get. The standard calls for a scissors bite, level being acceptable. In that the function of this breed was to kill rats, a strong powerful jaw is essential and full dentition is required. When checking the dogs bite, you will initially be surprised at the large strong teeth the breed maintains. This is true in both varieties. Strength of jaw and presence of strong under jaw is supported by the large strong teeth. It is necessary to count that there are six incisors in a straight line in both the upper jaw and lower jaw between large well developed canines. Then check to see if there are the appropriate 4 premolars on each side of the upper and lower jaws. The most frequently missing teeth are incisors, which create a narrower point of the muzzle and premolars. Full dentition supports the strength of the jaw which is essential to support the dogs function.

Continue your examination with a light touch. Locate the top of the shoulder blades with the thumb and index finger of the right hand, note where the elbow is in relation to the highest point of the shoulder blade. At the same time with the left hand place the index finger on the point of the shoulder blade and the thumb on the elbow, you are now assessing the length and angle of the upper arm. The greatest fault in all breeds today is shoulder angulations and length and angle of upper arm. The Manchester standard describes the length of the shoulder blade and upper arm as relatively the same. The upper arm should have a return to the elbow which allows the dog to reach forward when moving. The straight short upper arm produces the short mincing step so frequently seen.

In you running of your right hand down the back of the dog you have also assessed the coat texture which is described as smooth, short, dense, tight, glossy and not soft. In judging the breed you will observe variations in the density of the coat in both Toys and Standards, it is not uncommon to see dogs lacking in coat on the back of the ears, the throat and down the back of the legs, with very thin coat on the remainder of the body.

The Manchester is to be black and tan, the predominate color being black with rich tan distinct mahogany markings located on the sides of the muzzle down the throat ending in a v, small spot on the cheek and spot above each eye. On the chest, the two tan markings are called rosettes. The tan on the feet on the front legs extends up to the pastern and on the rear up the legs to the stifle joint on under the tail. The tan markings should be clear and distinct. The characteristic black penciling on each toe and clear distinct thumbmarks on the pastern are a hallmark of the breed. Very dark dogs, smutty, or when the tan markings are not clear is a fault. In judging you will see a range of shades in the tan markings, as well as a range of clear distinct penciling and thumbmarks to the point of only a few black hairs being present as opposed to a clear distinct mark as large as a thumb. Rarely will a final judgment of the breed be based on the markings alone.

White on any part of the coat measuring as much as one half inch at its longest dimension is a disqualification. Any black and tan breed, may see this mention of white, first appearing on the chest as a small spot and then on the feet and extending outward. Color is to be black and tan any color other than black and tan is a disqualification. As a black and tan breed, blue is a dilute which may occur in a very rare occasion. A blue was exhibited at the National Specialty in 1981; the judge excused the dog from the ring for lack of merit, not being black and tan. Following the club immediately proposed a revision to the standard to make any color other than black and tan a disqualification.

Good temperament is essential as in all breeds. You are more apt to see a dog that is skeptical and uncertain of being examined on the table. With consideration to young puppies, minimal tolerance should be given to older dogs that will not stand for examination. As with any breed, do not push to try to examine a dog that will not stand. These dogs need to be excused, mark the judges book accordingly, excused unable to examine. The breed is generally amiable with each other. Toys especially become very attached to their owner and caution should be taken in approaching a dog being held in the arms of the handler. Never go back to a dog on the ground. If a reassessment of a characteristic is desired, ask the exhibitor to put the dog back on the table.

The sizes variation between the two varieties is based on weight. It takes a well trained eye to become comfortable with assessing what a dog may weigh. It is not recommended to pick a dog up. The disqualification for oversize is in the Standard Variety is over 22 pounds. In Toys, a dog over 12 pounds is considered to be entered in the wrong class. Dogs entered in the Open Classes that are divided by weight must also be assessed as being entered correctly. If you question the size of a dog, it is your responsibility to weigh it. As a judge of a weighable breed you need to be familiar with the procedure and the equipment provided to weigh a dog. In most cases today, the Superintendents have a form of digital scale. They are also required to carry a weight to determine that the scale has been calibrated properly. If requested, the scale is normally brought to the ring for the judge to weigh the dog in question, on occasion; the Superintendent may request that the weighing take place where they are located to prevent moving the calibrated scale.

You must also be familiar with the right of an exhibitor to protest a dog in the ring for. You are only determining that the dog is within the size range, it is not necessary to record the actual weight. Upon completion of the weighing, advise the exhibitor if the dog weighs in, if a Standard weighs out, the dog is disqualified and dismissed from the ring. A Toy that is over twelve pounds is excused; the notation in the judges book is excused entered in the wrong class. It is the judges responsibility to also note in the judges book if the dog has been weighed and is within the weight for the breed.

If the dog is unable to be weighed because the correct equipment is not available, a notation is to be made in the judges book, scale not available from the Superintendent proceed to evaluate the dog as if it were within the standard. If a dog is unable to be weighed because it will not stand still on the scale to obtain an accurate reading, the dog is to be excused, mark the book appropriately, unable to weigh, excused.

Your examination is complete and it is time to place the class, rewarding those that conformation comes closest to the description provided by the breed standard. Prioritizing faults as they obstruct the ability of the dog to perform its function of being an agile rat hunter with strong effective jaws.