

THE FIELD SPANIEL

PRESENTED BY THE

FIELD SPANIEL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Study Edition

About the Author of the Following Articles

Peggy Grayson of the United Kingdom is a long standing breeder and exhibitor of the Field Spaniel and is known for the dogs whocarry the Westacres prefix. She is the author of “The History And Management Of The Field Spaniel” and has written widely on the subject of Fields in many publications.

She is licensed to judge Fields Spaniels both in the UK and the United States.

Mrs Grayson is considered one of the foremost authorities in the world on the subject of the Field Spaniel and has been a mentor to many fanciers both in the UK and the US

THE FIELD SPANIEL by Peggy Grayson

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With the importation of so many foreign gundog breeds since the war, (WW II), a number of attractive native breeds have been sadly neglected. The Field Spaniel, whose popularity has risen and fallen alarmingly several times the past 70 years, is one of them. If you are wanting a gundog breed either for companionship, work or to have a bit of fun showing, no more adaptable animal can be found than the Field. The breed has a highly developed sense of humor, a real willingness to please, a healthy streak of naughtiness and a loving and affectionate nature,- guaranteed to melt the stoniest heart.

Most of today's stock will work and work well if given the chance. It's best to start them young as they are headstrong and keen, and need to learn the basics of obedience during puppyhood! They are completely untiring in the field, will face the heaviest cover and are good in water.

As show dogs, they always command attention. In recent years, many have done well in all-breed competition at Open shows, winning right to Best In Show (*as they have done here in the U.S.*). As a minority breed, you need a good specimen correctly trimmed, in spanking condition, sound and a good showman to catch the all-rounders' eye, and the ringside too. Most of (*the latter, even here in the States*)... hastily thumb through their catalogues to find out just what sort of spaniel it is.

Once you have had a Field as a pal, you will seldom change to another breed, They are devoted to their owners, but quite ready to welcome and entertain visitors with their winning ways, Easy to feed and enthusiastic motorists, they, like the proverbial White Horse, can be taken anywhere!

The modern Field has its roots in the last century, when it was the most popular spaniel for work or show. Its decline in the early part of this century (*20th*) was due to the breeders who bred it so long and low as to be virtually useless. After the 1914 war, the breed was revived and the Field Spaniel Society (UK) started in 1923. Mr. George Mortimer Smith, whose Wribbenhall dogs dominated the rings, was the "Father" of the modern Field; while Mr. R. R. Kelland and Major Beaumont saw to the working side.

In the 1930's and 1940's, the breed again declined, and it was Mr. & Mrs S. J. Barnett, of Pentwyn, who saved it again from extinction.

Another low came in the early 1960's. when Roger Hall Jones (Elmbury) and his mother. Mrs A. M. "Pat" Jones, MBE (Mittina), took an interest and once more the breed came alive.

Fields can offer all and more than their foreign cousins, so if you are contemplating a gundog, "Buy British!" Our Officers or Committee members will be glad to help in anyway they can.*(As will, here in the U.S., The Field Spaniel Society of America).*

Fields, though mostly seen as solid liver or black. can be bred in a variety of colours and all the partis and roans, though not as desirable are permissible. *(In the U.S. there is and should not be any discrimination shown towards dogs of these colors. The bi-colored varieties as they are known in the U.S. definitely have their own enthusiastic followers.)*

The adult male dog can weigh up to 60 pounds. In appearance, they are handsome and upstanding with a distinctive head and majestic carriage. Longer in body (than tall) and not so high on the leg as the English Springer, they are deeper and more developed in body. Their mostly non-trimmed coats require a good brushing a day to keep them smart. Trimming of the feet and under the ears is usually all that is needed. *(Today's, the 2000's, show Field gets just a bit more tidying up but not so much a to appear sculptured-A natural appearance is the most desired.)*

Fields are classified and can be seen on their benches at Crufts, W.E.L.K.S, Manchester Championship Show, both of the Birmingham shows, Windsor, Peterborough, Scottish Kennel Club, National Gundog, Blackpool, Midland Counties, and at most Gundog Open shows.

(In America the number of shows with a Field entry has risen from less than 10 in the early 1970's to 536 shows in 1997. Every year brings more enthusiastic fanciers to the Field Spaniel: but, hopefully never so many as to bring ruin ation to the breed)

The Essential Field Spaniel

by Peggy Grayson

Article originally published in the Field Spaniel Society (UK) yearbook 1991

This article is written primarily for the newer or novice owners, and for those who are hoping to judge the breed. Firstly, the Field Spaniel is a large spaniel: that does not mean he is tall, some are, but this is a throwback to all the English Springer blood brought in between the wars (WWI and WWII).

A well-proportioned male Field will weight up to 60 pounds, but he must be balanced, in hard condition and move freely and majestically, not in a heavy lumbering manner, nor in a joyful, short-striding bouncy way. The female will weigh less and although she must be feminine in appearance, must not be small, light boned, or weedy in appearance.

The correctly balanced Field has a perfectly laid-back shoulder, and stands with his front legs well under him, with a good forechest and depth of brisket. This gives him a large forehand, so it is most necessary that he is wide and strong in the loin and has well developed quarters with wide thighs, which must be well muscled, to enable him

to drive well on the move and propel himself forward at the right pace

The stifle of the Field is moderately developed. Any over-angulation of the hind leg is highly undesirable, as this changes the outline and also the mode of locomotion. The hind leg, as well as the front, must be well boned, strong at the hock joint and with rear pasterns perfectly straight from joint to ground.

The rib cage is long and well developed, but not over-sprung. The width of the quarters, when viewed from the rear, should be the same width as the rib cage at its widest part. The loin must not only be wide and well muscled, but also deep, as the dog must never look "cut up" in loin. but must present an all of a piece appearance. The topline of the Field starts at the nose and ends at the tip of the tail. It should be one continuous flowing line along the muzzle up between the eyes (where a moderate stop separates the eyes which are fairly wide spaced), sloping slightly up the skull to a raised (but not peaked) occiput, down over this to nip in at the base of the skull and then rises to a slight crest in the neck. The line should continue unbroken down the neck over the withers and onto the end of the tail without encountering any dip behind the withers, usually caused by slack muscles, or any lump at the base of the neck caused by upright shoulders.

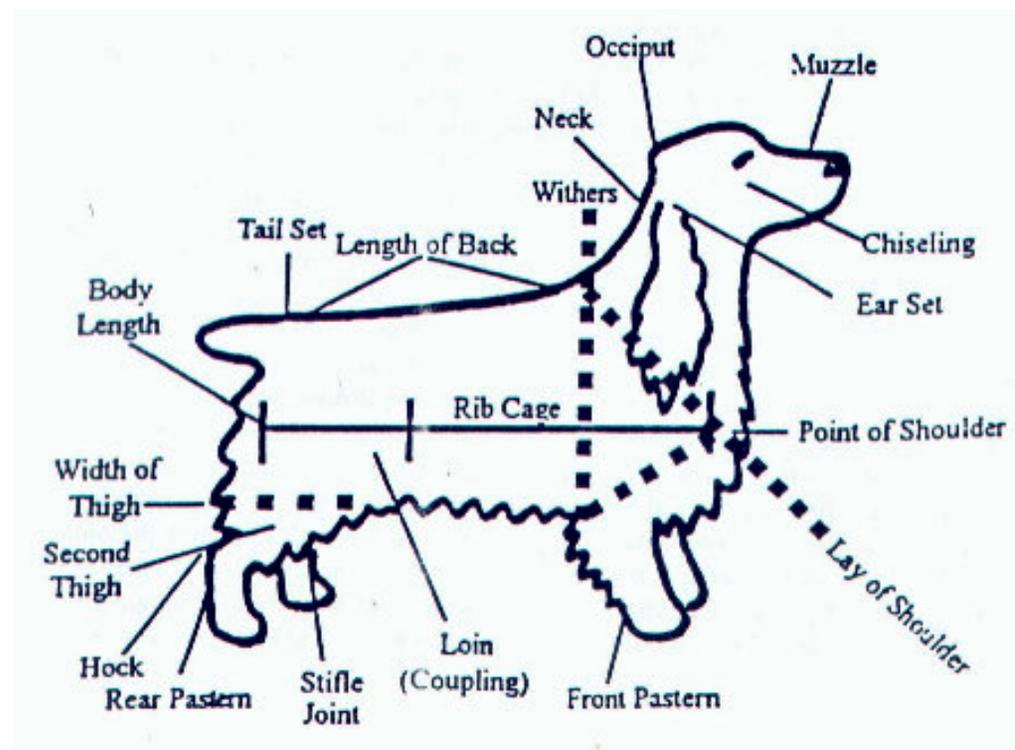
The length of the front leg is approximately one-third of the dog from the withers to ground. The bone of the legs must be well developed and flat, allowing the tendons to lie and work comfortably.

The head of the Field is very distinctive; the muzzle being longer than the skull, and well developed but not square. The curve from the lower lip gives the dog its distinctive and aristocratic appearance. The skull should never be coarse, nor should it be too fine. The chiseling below and above the eyes should be very delicate, giving that look of supreme quality. The skull should be well-worked but flat at the sides. Any prominent bones here are undesirable. The ears should be of quality leather and well clothed with silky hair, and set about level with the eyes; which are wide open almond shape with a gentle expression. The nose must be large and fleshy with well developed nostrils, to enable the dog to use his unique scenting powers to the full. A full mouth of large teeth is desirable, meeting in a Scissors bite. Fields with small teeth tend to be hard-mouthed when retrieving.

The coat of the Field should be composed of long, silky hairs, lying thick, flat and close. Short, hound-type coats with a high gloss are a throwback to the hound crosses of the last century, and are undesirable. The front and rear legs, the brisket and chest should be well-fringed. The rear pastern from hock to ground must be cleaned of hair the same is also true of the front pastern. All four feet are neatly trimmed to give the desired appearance. Clippers should never be used on the Field coat (*clippers may be used on the throat and ears when showing in the U.S.*); as this ruins the texture and gives a hard outline, causing the hair to grow in gray at a very early age, especially in livers.

Movement is a long, majestic stride, with the forelegs hanging straight from well-laid shoulders. There should be no bulge over the shoulders when the dog is viewed from the front, and there should be good width at the rear. All four feet should face forward. The movement should be thorough and true and, especially, not hurried.

The following illustration should give a clear idea of what to accept and what not to accept in the Field Spaniel when judging, choosing a puppy or using a stud dog. However, it is as well to remember that the Field Spaniel takes a long time to develop, especially the males, and complete development is unlikely to be reached much before four or five years of age. Very mature puppies tend to go coarse as adults. When judging the breed, the immature, but promising puppy with room for development is the one most likely to be the best in the long run.



THE COLOURED FIELD

Peggy Grayson

Reprinted from the FSSA Newsletter 19--. Editorial comments have been added in italics.

Regarding colour in Fields, you will find a good deal about This in my book **The History and Management of the Field Spaniel**. At one time there were far more coloured Fields about than there are today, when they only turn up on a hit and miss basis. From 1900 to 1916 there were far more coloured Fields in the Stud Book than blacks and there were just a few liver. The colours then encompassed orange and white, orange roan, lemon and white and lemon roan, all with a tan trim! We have not seen any of these colours since. I did once have a clear black white and tan, but lost her at five months with hard pad.*(a type of distemper)*

At present the colours found are liver, black (both solid colours can have a white shirt front, a frill or just a small spot) *(as can those with tan points.)*, and roan.

These *(the roans)* should be well roaned, but many today look very light

(sometimes termed ticked); although when the hair is turned back there is considerably more colour in the coat than appears at first glance *(a closet roan)*.

As long as all the pads of the feet are all brown the dog is a liver roan; if the pads are

mottled then the dog is technically a liver and white. The same goes for blue roan. They (*the blue roan*) should be the same colour as a blue roan Cocker, and have black pads.

Liver and tan and black and tan should have bright tan markings on lips and cheeks, a spot over each eye, tan on feet and inside leg as far as the pastern joint, and tan under the tail and inside the ears. Tan meeting over the top of the nose is a fault as is too much tan on the face. The markings should be clear and bright. Muddy tan mixed with black hair is wrong. Liver roan and tan are appearing in one or two litters, again (*in a liver roan & tan*) the tan should be bright.

The only colours not accepted are clear white and black, or clear white and liver. (*In the U.S. white areas must be roaned or ticked on the surface or underneath the hair when ruffled. However, no color in the white is not a disqualification in the States as it is in the UK.*)

Liver roans may crop up in any litter, particularly those with Rhiwlas in their pedigree. This line has a number of liver roans in it. With the amount of English Springer blood used in the 1920/30 era, plus the ESS cross in 1958, there is a lot of liver and white and black and white behind all the lines; and each generation brings in more of the past.

We seldom see a correct blue roan or, indeed, a deep liver roan. CH Adam of Elmbury carried the colour gene and produced two good blue roans to black bitches, as well as true liver roans (one of which won a CC).

In a black litter bred in the 1970's there was a blue roan; and once we had a blue roan and tan dog who did quite a bit of winning. He was by a black dog out of a liver bitch. Black and tan, blues, and blue and tan come through the black lines. One parent must be black to produce any of these colours. Liver roan can crop up anywhere, even from two blacks; as no black line of fields is pure. All are dilute (*in other words all lines are mixed*).

Fields with golden liver coats are throwbacks to all the Sussex blood in the lines; while mahogany is probably a throwback to the distant Irish Water Spaniel used in breeding in the past century (*1800's*). Once a colour is put in a breed it cannot be bred out; (*This is true only of recessive colors*) although it may be only seen at rare intervals it will crop up over the years. Field breeders should not seek to change the colours allowed in the breed just in a quest for something unusual.

A mating of two livers can only produce livers, liver and tan or liver roan. All liver is recessive to black. Two livers cannot breed a black no matter what people claim.

The tan gene was carried by Adam's sister, ShCH Anna of Elmbury, and it is possible to trace all the tan appearing back to her. During the 20's/30's the black and white ticked arrived in litters. This was the colour of CH Wribbenhall Whitewash, a pre-war(WWII) winner. In 1939/40 I had a very nice black and white ticked bitch, a granddaughter of Whitewash. In the 1970's I showed and won with a black and white ticked Field dog; bred and owned by Mr. L. French. This dog was bred from two blacks who were uncle and niece, and there was also a liver roan and a black and tan in the litter.

Some judges are very perplexed when confronted by a Field that is a colour other than liver or black mainly because there are not many coloured Fields being shown. I doubt any of the present day judges would ignore colour, however good the dog, as many are rather ignorant about the breed in any country, including some in the UK! The main thing is to get the judges knowing what a good Field should look like - the length of rib cage, the size of bone, the movement and the distinctive head. Those are the important things, colour is a very minor matter. In the past we have had very good Fields with the odd faint white splash on the face and several white toes, none of these mismarks put them down as they were topping good specimens of the breed.

PREFERRED BREED TYPE

Why The Stand-Out Best Dog Can Be A Loser

by

E. K. (Katie) Gammill

The Best of the Best or one that looks like the rest? Let's be honest. Something called "preferred type" is flooding the rings today and in many breeds, it has little to do with the Breed Standard. When "current type" does not equal correctness, the best dog can lose because in many rings, the fatal flaw is being a stand-out.

"The best dog you'll ever breed may be the hardest dog you ever finish!"

A dog show friend, absent from the sport for several years, attended some local shows with me. Welcoming the opportunity to view dogs in general after her sabbatical, she became visually distressed. Her despair increased when a "less than average" class dog received BOB. The waning quality in her beautiful breed breaks her heart. She stated it would be wasted effort to show a dog correct to the standard today, as some judges feel compelled to award dogs conforming to the majority of the entries.

Observing other breeds, she remarks on the lack of neck, restricted front movement and the lack of rear follow through; we discuss “gay tails” and breed type variances. We watch faulty movement and see coats dragging the ground. Weak pasterns and sickle hocks complete the picture. She wonders what causes this to happen to functional dogs in such a short time. It seems the correct dogs have fallen victim to what one may refer to as the “Perfection of Mediocrity”.

Today, many breeders and owners turn to performance, choosing not to participate in a “crap shoot” where such variety in type confuses both judges and ringside. I make this statement at the expense of being tarred and feathered but increasingly, the best dog you’ll ever breed may be the hardest dog you will ever finish. It will be the “odd man out” and look different from the majority of dogs represented in the ring. Why? Some judges, insecure in a breed and therefore lacking courage, choose to walk “different” dogs rather than stick their neck out. Understandable, but should those lacking confidence be passing judgment on another’s dog?

My old mentor said, “The pendulum of type swings to and fro, but those remaining true to the standard triumph in the end.” Those dedicated breeders have the knowledge to restore a breed to its initial form once it hits bottom.

Should a judge reward a dog to suggest it could possibly assist in correcting breed faults? NO! It is a breeder's responsibility to incorporate such animals into their programs, regardless of success in the show ring. Judges are to judge to the written standard to the best of their ability, fairly and efficiently. They avoid awarding "drags of a breed" when possible but judges have little insight into the Pandora's Box of breeding.

A respected dog person of long standing approached me with this statement while at a seminar. "A judge CAN NOT GO WRONG by putting up winners conforming to the majority of the type of dogs in the ring on a given day." My response was "Surely not!" Well, I believe it now! After observing an all breed judge from ringside, I watched two outstanding individuals "walk" because they looked different from the rest of the short neck, sickle hock, smaller than average dogs lacking side gait that toddled around the ring like fuzzy little caricatures of the breed.

This strange "look alike" perspective takes over in many breed rings and not just among judges. Asking a breeder what their standard said about head planes, the response was: "What are parallel planes?" We discussed the occipital bone, short and medium muzzles, balanced heads, etc. Reading a standard and applying it can be two different things.

Judges should have the ability to articulate why one dog wins over another. So is that why they make terminology common among standards - to make it easier for judges? If anyone can describe a bulldog and an afghan using the same language, please step forward. Removing the "point system" from the old standards has had a negative affect. In a final decision between two comparable individuals, one has an idea where to hang their hat regarding prioritizing.

Should we just BREED TO WIN or should we BREED TO THE STANDARD and expect judges to judge to the Standard

It is a "Judas Kiss" to any breed when a judge puts up a dog simply because it looks like the majority in the ring. It encourages people to breed to "winners" rather than to a breed standard. In judge's education, they address soundness but type takes priority. Educators assume that new applicants understand structure and corresponding movement. Type without soundness is as detrimental to a breed as soundness without type. A bad front and bad rear working in sequence produces "balance". Do two wrongs make a right? The goal is "a balance between type and soundness". A breed must be able to walk to the water bowl without falling over its own feet!

This brings us to the next question. Are not judges “protectors of the breed standards?” Judges education is NOT at fault. Perhaps the problem is what some judging applicants do NOT bring to the table! It is a privilege to pass judgment on a breed but one has the responsibility of understanding “Basic Dog 101”. The AKC’s required anatomy test neither assures someone’s knowledge nor is it any guarantee a judge has the ability to analyze structure and movement.

Some breeder judges today send dogs with a handler giving little thought as to their quality or future effect on a breed. Shouldn’t breeder judges be especially careful to send correct dogs for public observation? Breeders have a responsibility to put out “the best of the best” rather than a dog that wins simply because it “looks like the rest.” By so doing, they are sending false signals to both ringside and new judges.

When judges say, “This must be what the breeders want as the ring is flooded with this type” it is detrimental to any breed. It IS NOT about “what breeders want.” Breeders and judges have a responsibility to breed and judge to standard.

Should handlers show dogs for clients when they KNOW the dog or bitch is not a good representative of the breed? Breeders and exhibitors have a responsibility to promote only dogs that DO represent their breed standard and to sell as pets those who do not! A good handler should make every effort to finish a dog but they too are responsible and should be more selective regarding client dogs. Handlers who read the standard and who have the courage to turn down an inferior dog are to be admired.

Advertisement does not always mean a dog represents “breed excellence”. Handlers do not always present “good dogs”. Advertising carries some influence and if a judge selects winners on advertising alone, they do a disservice to the breed and it reflects on their ability as a judge.

“Priority judging” can be detrimental to breeds as Judges become caught up in selecting for individual virtues be it eye, ear set, feet, or coat color. That is why some specialty judges “put up pieces” rather than the whole package. Virtues are important, but a dog should “fill the eye”. A single virtue cannot **take** precedence over a plethora of faults! Priority judging explains why many judges take so long to judge a class.

Dismayed exhibitors approach me with serious concerns regarding the direction of our sport. Time and effort is required to understand what makes a breed “breed specific”, and what constitutes “breed excellence”. There is no short cut. Everyone is entitled to his/her opinion. However, it should be a knowledgeable opinion. Personal preference only enters in when two dogs are equal according to the breed standard.

Another issue is “spot entering”. Granted, today people enter under specific judges where they feel there is a chance of winning. However, why on a four-day weekend, do we see one point on Thursday, a major on Friday, one point on Saturday, and a major on Sunday? Should not one support the person who supports them by entering all four days? If there is a major, don’t break it by not attending. Don’t bump up a bitch or dog to BOB without first asking the other exhibitors their preference. Many people drive miles only to find someone failed to show up ringside or” bumped up” a new champion and broke the major. This co-operation is something we used to be able to count on. Today it is “iffy” at best. This is “sportsmanship”!

Watch dogs go around the ring. Some are structurally inefficient. Some shoulders do not open up, the dog reaches from the elbow. Ask yourself why one dog out-moves another. Go analyze short coated dogs.

Take this knowledge to your own breed ring and “look beneath the coat”. Understand top lines, body shape, breed specific movement and toy/moderate/giant. Do some study and then some soul searching. Ringside observers and breed enthusiasts look on in dismay today, wondering where the functional dogs of the past have gone. Sadly, some faults are so prevalent today they are viewed as “virtues”.

"Winning because of an exceptional breeding program takes the breed and breeders toward breed excellence. That should be the goal yesterday, and today."

Requested to address this issue, I decided to take time to sit back and see the “big picture.” The “big picture” is upon us, folks, and it is not pretty! My reason to become a judge was the challenge to select the best of the best according to a written standard. I love dogs! I love SOUND dogs with BREED TYPE! Both virtues, believe it or not, can be present in the same animal! Through combined efforts and a willingness to call “a spade a spade”, our breeds WILL survive. Breeding for the sake of winning is a downhill slide. This alone assures the future of our breeds. Turning things around will take dedicated breeders and judges, critical handler selection, and educated exhibitors. Our sport deserves nothing less than the best of our intentions.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS.

1. Why do breeder judges “put dogs with handlers when they know the animal does not represent breed excellence?”
2. Why do handlers accept such dogs knowing once they finish, they will be “petted out”?
3. Are you kennel blind and do you breed to standard?
4. Should breeders and newcomers read the standard prior to stud and bitch selection?
5. When will more mentors open up to newcomers?
6. And lastly, are “gas money” and “filler” dogs destroying our sport?

Putting a breed back on track requires **ETHICAL HANDLERS, DEDICATED BREEDERS, AN UNDERSTANDING OF BREED STANDARDS** and **KNOWLEDGEABLE JUDGES WITH THE COURAGE TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE SELECTIONS.** Being a judge is not for the faint of heart. Sending the best dog to the next level and being a part of its journey to the pinnacle of success is a thrill of a lifetime.

There is but **ONE** standard. “Preferred breed type” is like a flavor of the month, very fleeting! **BREEDERS, JUDGES AND EXHIBITORS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THEIR BREED STANDARDS. CURRENT FADS AND PERSONAL OPINIONS ARE FLEETING AND DESTRUCTIVE.**

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