

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE ENGLISH SETTER**

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and
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in conjunction with
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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH SETTER AND HISTORY OF THE BREED

The mild sweet disposition of the English Setter, together with its beauty, intelligence and aristocratic appearance in the field and in the home, has endeared it to both sportsmen and lovers of a beautiful, active, rugged dog. They are referred to as 'The Gentleman's Gentleman' and are ideal for children.

The English Setter was trained as a bird dog in England, approximately 400 years ago. There is some evidence that the old English Setter was originally produced from crosses of the Spanish Pointer, the Large Water Spaniel and the Springer Spaniel.

The major credit for the modern English Setter goes to Edward Laverack, who, in about 1825, obtained from Rev A Harrison 'Ponto' and 'Old Moll'. Rev Harrison had kept the breed pure for 35 years or more and from these two setters, Laverack, through a remarkable process of inbreeding, produced many setters of the Laverack or 'bench' type as we know it today.

Purcell Llewellyn was mostly responsible for the development of the 'field' type English Setter. He purchased some of Laverack's best show dogs and crossed them with his own mixes of English Setter and with Gordon Setters to produce a speedier, more reliable field dog with a keener nose.

These Llewellyn field dogs were smaller than the Laverack dogs. They were white for the most part with large black patches and often with flecking on the head, muzzle and legs. Their heads were thicker through the skull. The muzzle in comparison to the length of skull was shorter than similar measurements for the Laverack type. The muzzle was inclined towards snipiness.

'Belton' was the name of a village in Northumberland, (a county in the far north of England on the Scottish border) and refers to the spotting effect of English Setters, known as flecking. Mr Laverack was the first to use the term 'belton' and it is referred to as 'his' word for flecking. Flecking was the preferred marking for which Laverack strived.

The dog should be well groomed and should look as natural as possible without a shaved appearance. All dead coat should be removed to leave the coat smooth and silky. It is common practice for the rear pasterns, throat and the top of the ears (one third down) to be trimmed.

- **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

Of medium height, clean in outline, elegant in appearance and movement.

First and foremost, the English Setter is an aristocratic and noble breed, showing elegance and balance in a top show specimen combined with that most important prerequisite of substance and correctly articulated limbs, making it capable of performing in the field the tasks for which it was originally bred. The English Setter has a gentle disposition, friendly manner and soft yet alert expression.

- **CHARACTERISTICS**

Very active with a keen game sense.

The English Setter should show enthusiasm in work and play, and display good scenting powers plus a keen game sense from an early age.

- **TEMPERAMENT**

Intensely friendly and good natured.

There is a gentle kindness towards man and they adore company of any kind. They are extremely biddable and tractable by nature.

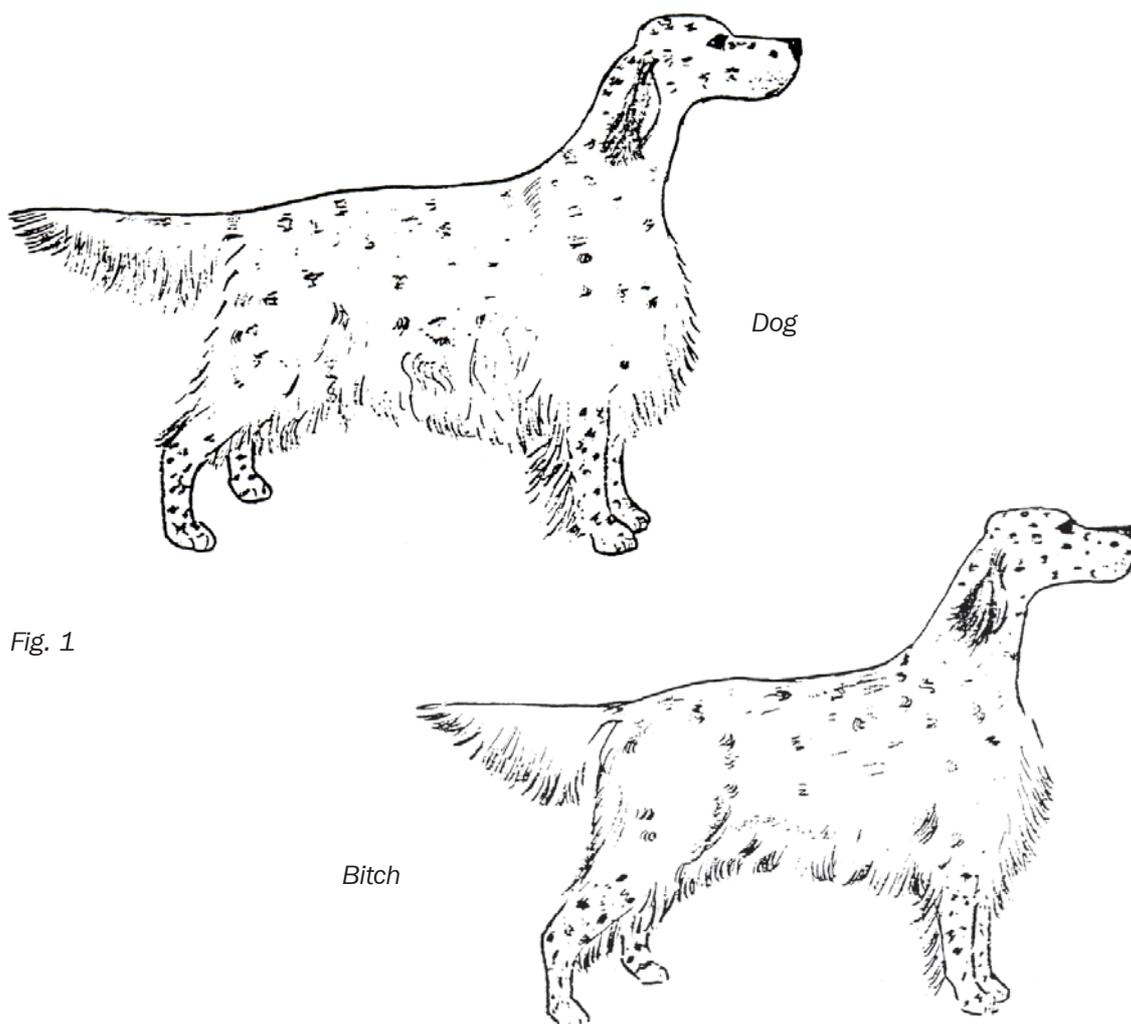


Fig. 1

• HEAD AND SKULL

Head carried high, long and reasonably lean, with well defined stop. Skull oval from ear to ear, showing plenty of brain room, a well-defined occipital protuberance. Muzzle moderately deep and fairly square, from stop to point of nose should equal length of skull from occiput to eyes, nostrils wide and jaws of nearly equal length, flews not too pendulous; colour of nose black or liver, according to colour of coat.

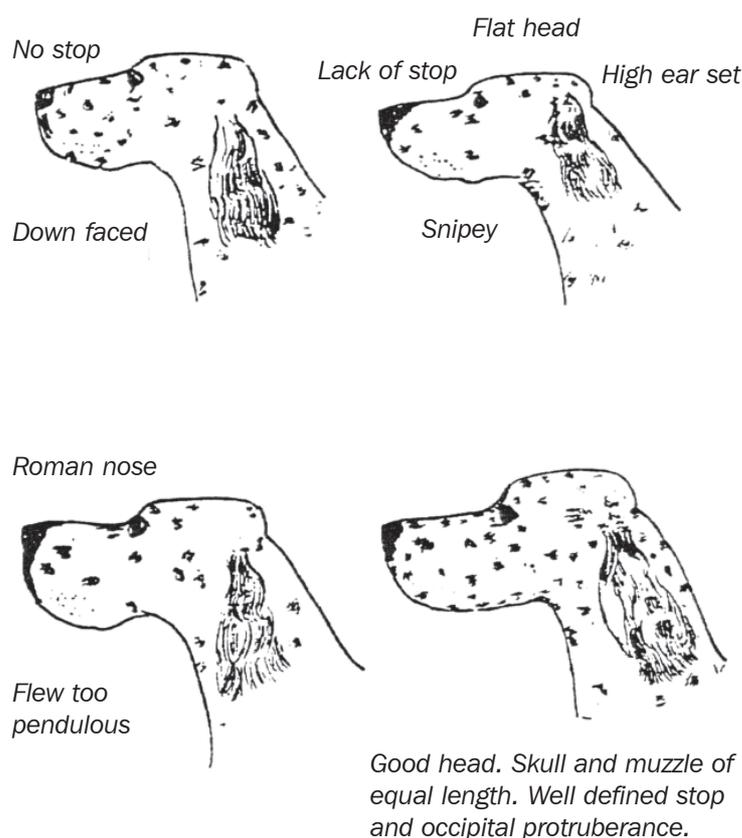


Fig. 2

The English Setter that moves with head naturally high on a loose lead and when running free is a fine sight. The size of the head should be proportional to the body. The skull when viewed from above should be oval, i.e. long, with little difference between the width at base of skull and width at brows. The skull should be medium width only, with no suggestion of coarseness.

The muzzle should be of equal length to the skull and moderately deep. The flews should be neither pendulous nor snipey. As the English Setter is a scenting breed, it should have a good size of nose with well developed nostrils.

• EYES

Bright, mild and expressive. Colour ranging between hazel and dark brown, the darker the better. In liver belttons only, a lighter eye acceptable. Eyes oval and not protruding.

The darker the eye in an English Setter the more preferred it is. The light eye is recessive in orange belttons, also lemon, blue and tricolour. The lighter eye is only acceptable in the liver belttons, as the gene determining liver colouration precludes dark eyes.

The shape of the eye is more oval than round, but not almond. The lids, particularly the lower, should fit tightly so haw is not exposed. The eyes should be fairly large and neither deep set nor protruding. Eyelids rims should be darkly pigmented.

● **EARS**

Moderate length, set on low, and hanging in neat folds close to cheek, tip velvety, upper part clothed in fine silky hair.

Ears should be set at eye level and approximately two-thirds the distance back from stop to occiput. They should be nearly long enough to reach the nose. The leathers are fine, not heavy or thick and the tips are covered with short, velvety hair, the longer hair falling from the upper part of the ear.

● **MOUTH**

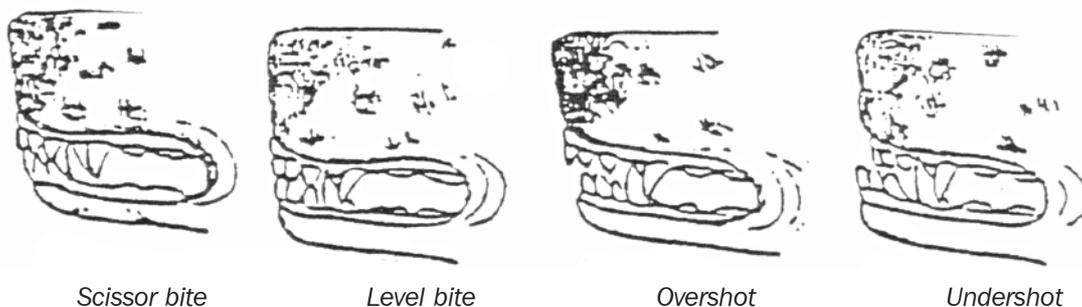
Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Full dentition desirable.



Wry mouth

This is self-explanatory. Overshot, undershot and wry jaws are faults and should not be perpetuated.

Fig. 3



● **NECK**

Rather long, muscular and lean, slightly arched at crest, and clean cut where it joins head, towards shoulder larger and very muscular never throaty nor pendulous below throat, but elegant in appearance.

The neck of the English Setter should be inclined to long rather than short or stuffy. It is elegant in appearance, but muscular and powerful at the same time. A neck well arched at the crest gives the strong and flowing neckline which blends skull to shoulders without abrupt juncture and allows the English Setter an elegant, graceful carriage. There should be no heavy dewlap although there is always some throat in any dog.



Fig. 4

Well arched neck

Ewe neck

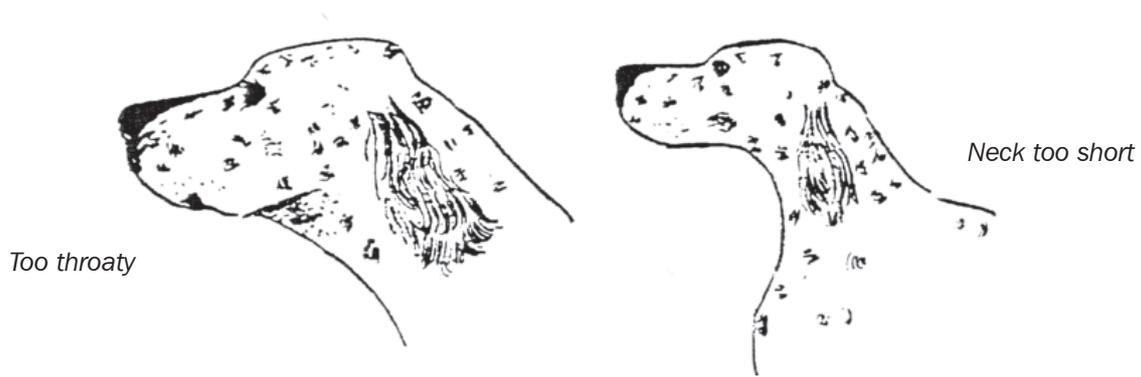


Fig. 4a

● FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders well set back or oblique, chest deep in brisket, very good depth and width between shoulder blades, forearms straight and very muscular with rounded bone, elbows well let down close to body, pasterns, short, strong, round and straight.

The shoulder blade and upper arm should be of commensurate length, joining in such a way that results in a well angulated front, ensuring good reach of stride. Correct angulation will result in the elbows being placed well under the dog, i.e. in line with the wither when viewed in profile.

The elbows should neither point out nor turn in. The forelegs should be straight with no tendency to bow or turn out at the pasterns.

When viewed from the front, the width between the forelegs should be maintained to the point of shoulder and then curve in a lateral plane so that the two shoulder blades, when they nearly meet at the top of the shoulder (i.e. wither), should be close together. When viewed from the front the width of chest should be in proportion to, and in balance with, the rest of the dog. When the dog is standing with his head up the withers should not protrude, i.e. the shoulder should lie flat against the body so that the neck and shoulders flow together.

The forelegs are straight and of good rounded bone, perpendicular to the ground when viewed from the side, straight and parallel from in front. The pastern is short with flexibility, and at a slight angle away from the perpendicular.

When examining the forechest, one should feel under the coat for the prosternum bone which should protrude. The front angulation must be complementary to the rear angulation.

Once again, overall balance must be stressed.

Fig. 5

Good assembly



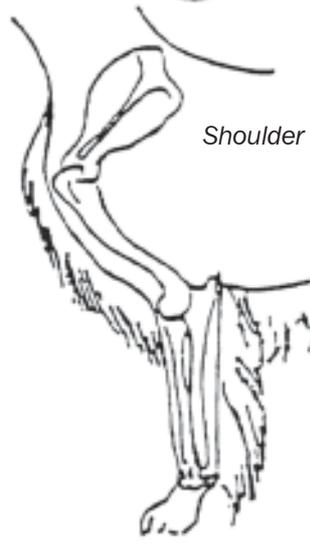
Lack of angulation



Upper arm too short



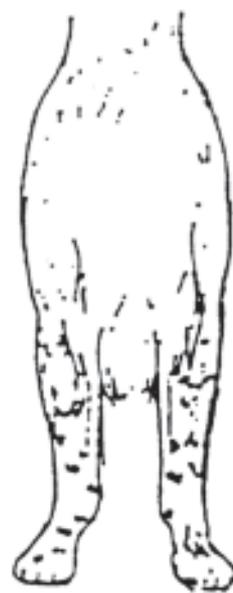
Shoulder blade too short



Good front



Out at elbow



Tied at elbow

● **BODY**

Moderate length, back short and level with good round widely-sprung ribs and deep in back ribs, i.e. well ribbed up.

The overall length of the English Setter's body is moderate, that is avoiding extremes or excess. The length of back, i.e. from wither to the last rib/loin is short. The ribs are to be well sprung and display depth in the back ribs. Barrel ribbed or slab sided dogs are both incorrectly built. The spring or curve of rib should be minimum at the front, maximum about the centre and less again towards the loin, similar to the structure of a boat. The chest should be deep, reaching to the elbow.

The backline should be level without any suggestion of a dip behind the wither, or excessive slope towards the rear.

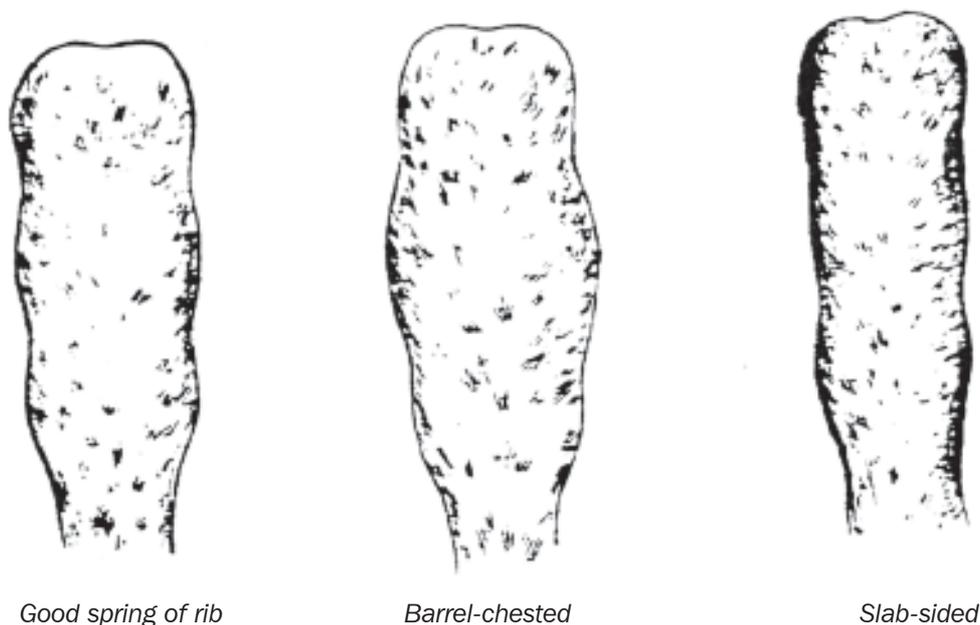
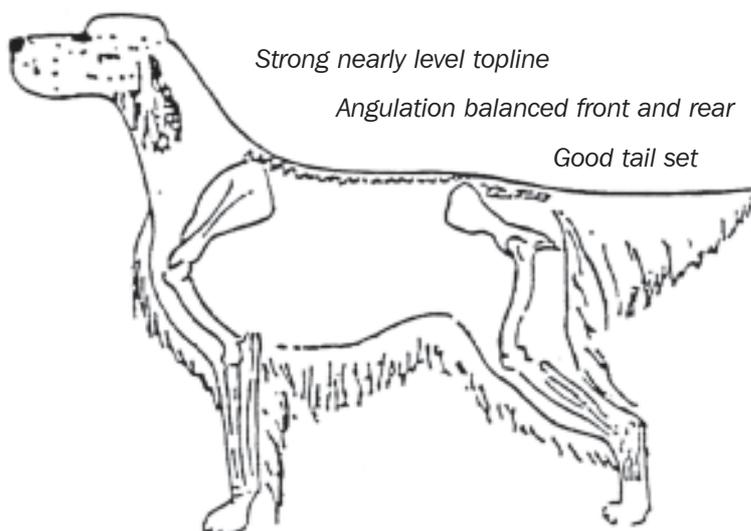


Fig. 6



● **HINDQUARTERS**

Loins wide, slightly arched, strong and muscular, legs well muscled including second thigh, stifles well bent and thighs long from hip to hock, hock inclining neither in nor out and well let down.

The hindquarters consist of the loin; the croup i.e. the section of the vertebral column immediately in front of the dog's tail; the pelvis; the hind legs. The bones of the tail are attached to the rear of the croup, and the carriage of the tail, e.g. high, erect, horizontal, low, is dependent on the angle at which the croup is set to the pelvis.

The loin should be short without any dip, well muscled and slightly arched. There should be no sign of a hump or quarters higher than the wither.

The setting of the pelvis is crucial to correct hind angulation, from which the driving force of the dog originates. If the pelvis setting is too flat, the angle between the long bones of the hind legs will be too wide, and the dog's ability to reach well forward will be affected adversely. If it is set too steeply, then the thrust of the hind legs will be directed upwards instead of forwards. The pelvis of the English Setter tends to the horizontal, but the setting must not be so flat as to result in loss of angulation and hence drive.

Fig. 7

The angulation must be complimentary to the forequarters with stifles well bent and the whole of the hind leg long from hip to hock. A powerfully built structurally sound hindquarter is mandatory for drive and length of stride.



Well bent or well angulated hock

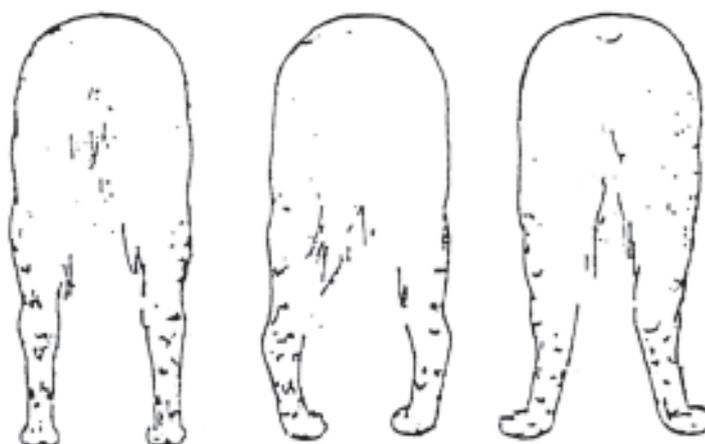
Sickle hock

Straight stifles and weak hocks will inhibit the freedom of action which should be characteristic of the breed. Over-angulation behind is as serious a fault as lack of angulation. If the second thigh is too long, the hocks will project too far to the rear of the dog resulting in lack of control and sometimes cow-hocks as well.

Fig. 7a

The hocks should be perpendicular to the ground, neither turning in (cow-hocked) nor turning out when viewed from the rear. A short rear pastern is preferred.

A sickle hocked dog stands with his pasterns angled slightly forward, never standing well up on his hocks. Sickle hocked action is stiff with no use of the hock joint.



Good rear

Hocking out

Cowhocked

The whole hindquarter of the English Setter when viewed in profile should be broad, with a good covering of well developed muscle, particularly in the second thigh from where most of the power of movement originates. Earlier Standards described the English Setter hindquarters as 'rugged', conveying the impression of great strength.

A correctly conformed hindquarter will enable the dog to move forward with drive and control. In conclusion, sound hip joints complement correct angulation.

● FEET

Well padded, tight, with close well arched toes protected by hair between them.

The feet should not be too large but in proportion. An English Setter's feet must have strong, thick pads, well arched and closely set toes which provide flex and absorb strain. They should not be rounded like that of a cat.

Fig. 8



Toes arched, closely set

Splayed

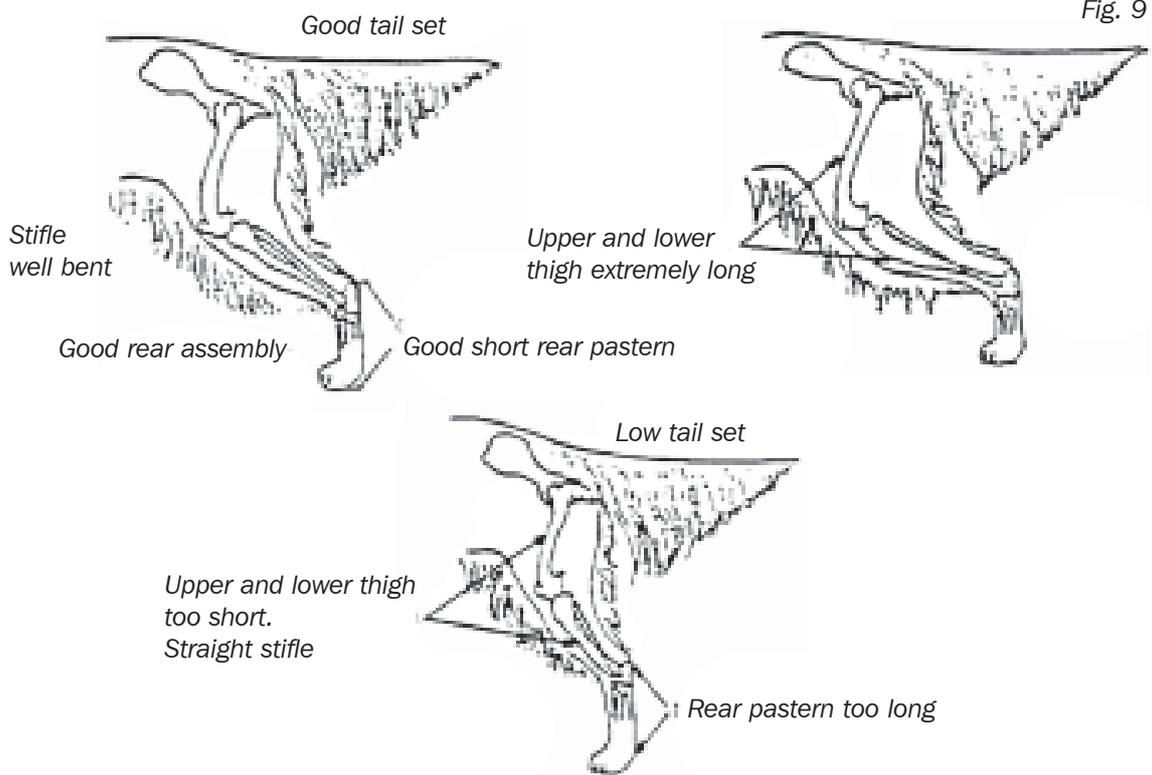
Down at pastern

● TAIL

Set almost in line with back, medium length, not reaching below hock, neither curly nor ropy, slightly curved or scimitar-shaped but with no tendency to turn upwards; flag or feathers hanging in long pendant flakes. Feather commencing slightly below the root, and increasing in length towards middle, then gradually tapering towards end, hair long bright, soft and silky wavy but not curly. Lively and slashing in movement and carried in a plane not higher than level of back.

The tail is ideally of medium length reaching to the hock joint only. It should be set on the body ALMOST in line with the back. The tail and its 'set on' acts as the dog's rudder and therefore any great deviation, either high or low effects the overall balance of the dog.

The tail is scimitar shaped, that is slightly curved with greater thickness at the root whilst tapering to a thinner tip. The word 'scimitar' refers to the actual shape of the tail underneath its graduated feathering. On the move the tail should be used in a lively, slashing action, but ought not be carried above the level of the back, and certainly not drooping or clamped between the legs.



● **GAIT/MOVEMENT**

Free and graceful action, suggesting speed and endurance. Free movement of the rear pastern showing powerful drive from hindquarters. Viewed from rear, hip, stifle and hock joints in line. Head naturally high.

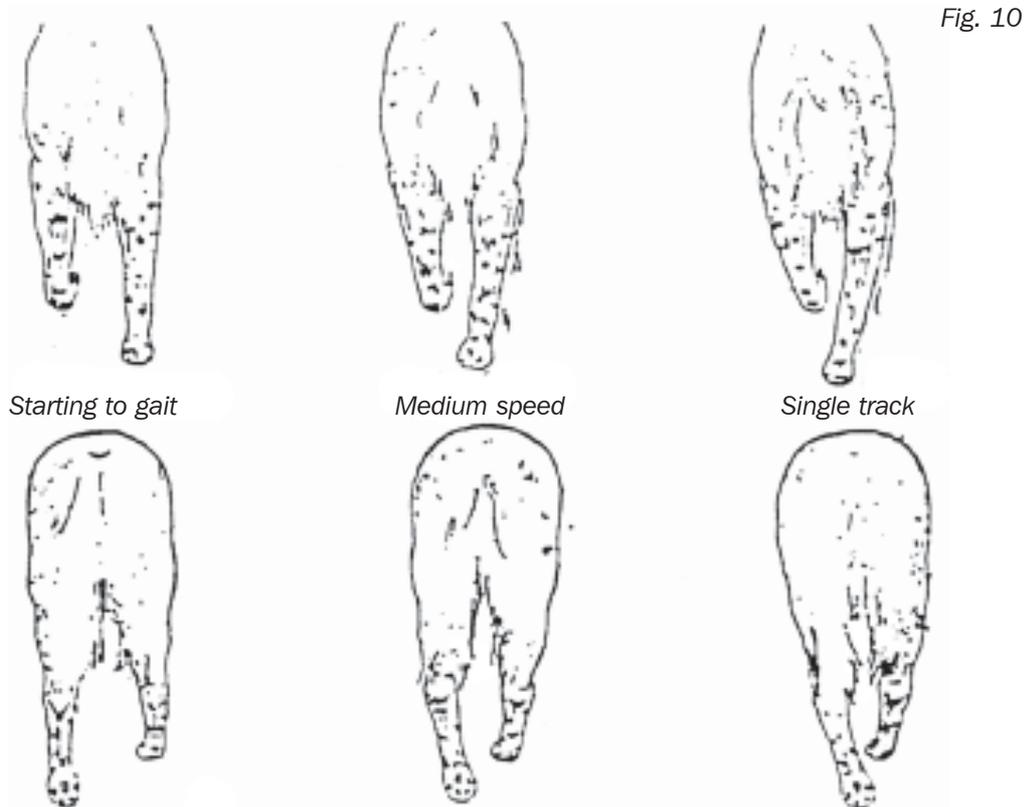
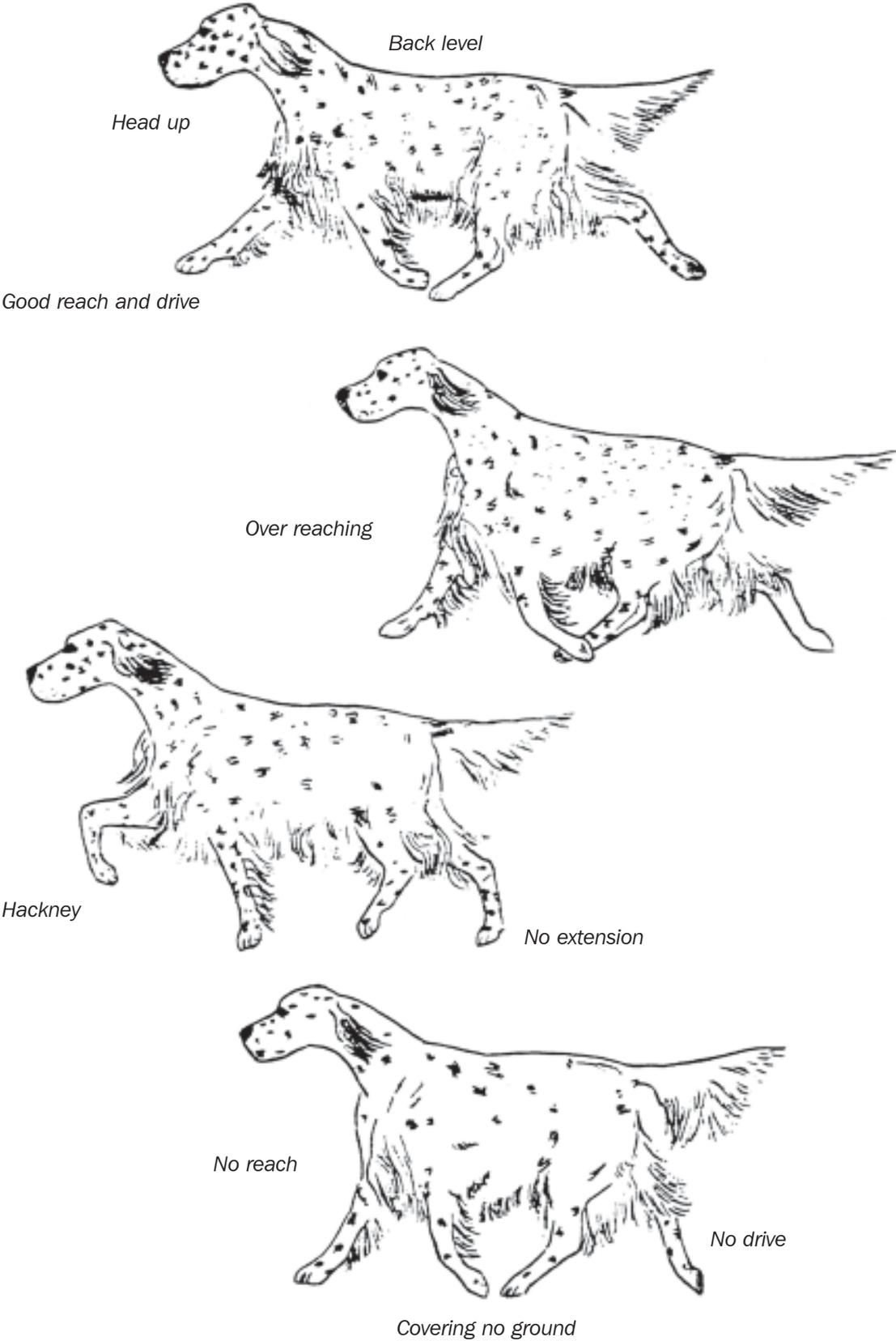


Fig. 11



The gait should be free and effortless, exhibiting agility and movement with a well balanced ground covering stride, showing good reach in the front and strong propulsion from the rear. When standing, the dog's weight should be evenly distributed at the four corners of his body. His legs are parallel in this position and appear to remain parallel as he starts to walk. To maintain his balance as he gathers speed, the legs, both front and rear, angle inward to the centre line of the body of the dog, while the topline remains firm and level. The legs will move well forward and back without any deviation of the rear pasterns from the straight line of advance.

When viewed from the front, elbows should be held close to the body neither turning in nor out. There should be no crossing of one foot over the other, i.e. 'weaving or 'paddling', and hackney front action is incorrect and the result of faulty conformation and/or lack of balance with the dog's hindquarters. Rotation or excessive lifting of the hind leg is objectionable.

The English Setter should have a long, low, ground-covering stride, without wasted motion. Correct movement is facilitated by good angulation. The swing and reach of the forelegs should coordinate with the action of the rear. The backline should be smooth and level without bounce or roll. The joints should flex easily and smoothly, providing strong thrust from the rear limbs. Balance facilitates good foot timing. The feet should move close to the ground and in line with the leg ahead or behind. Carriage should be bold, confident and alert with head up and tail wagging in time to his movement.

● COAT

From back of head in line with ears slightly wavy, not curly, long and silky as is coat generally, breeches and forelegs nearly down to feet well feathered.

The texture of the coat is ideally silky, but will vary slightly from animal to animal. A wavy coat is correct, but there should be no tendency to curl.

● COLOUR

Black and white (blue belton), orange and white (orange belton), lemon and white (lemon belton), liver and white (liver belton) or tricolour, that is blue belton and tan or liver belton and tan, those without heavy patches of colour on body but flecked (belton) all over preferred.

All of the colours set down in the Standard are equally correct and permissible.

The term 'belton' refers to the flecking of the coat with colour. The ground colour is white, and for blue beltons the black hairs fleck through the white giving a marbled appearance. In the case of lemons, oranges, etc., the lemon or orange hairs take the place of the black ones. Sometimes the black, lemon or orange hairs predominate so that practically no white appears, and such marking is called 'roan'. The flecking must however be present in 'roan' animals. With tricolours the tan markings are located on the muzzle, over the lower limbs and there should be a tan spot over each eye.

Solid patches appearing on the head and ears should not be penalised. Dogs with heavy body patches are not desirable but should be placed over a specimen of inferior type and structure.

- **SIZE**

Height:	Dogs	65-69 cms (25½-27 ins)
	Bitches	61-65 cms (24-25½ ins)

Too great a deviation from these height specifications in either direction will result in a specimen that does not meet the breed prescription 'of medium height'. It is important that dogs look like the male gender and bitches the female gender. When the Challenge winners come before the judge for Best of Breed, they should both be representative specimens not only of the breed but of their sex.

- **FAULTS**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Self explanatory

- **NOTE**

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

● SUMMARY

Each of the Setter breeds has some similar characteristics, however, the differences between the breeds should be recognised and remembered. The stamp of an English Setter as an individual Setter breed goes much further than its colour.

The breeder who has a genuine commitment to the English Setter will always keep in mind the origins of the breed, irrespective of whether or not his dogs will ever be called upon to put in a day's work beyond the showing.

A point to note – the English Setter is a slow maturing breed, so judges should make allowance for legginess in puppies.

Fig. 12

