
The Irish Setter Illustrated Standard

Published by the
Irish Setter Club of America, Inc.



Standard approved by the
American Kennel Club
August 1991

THE IRISH SETTER

*Illustrated
Standard
Introduction*

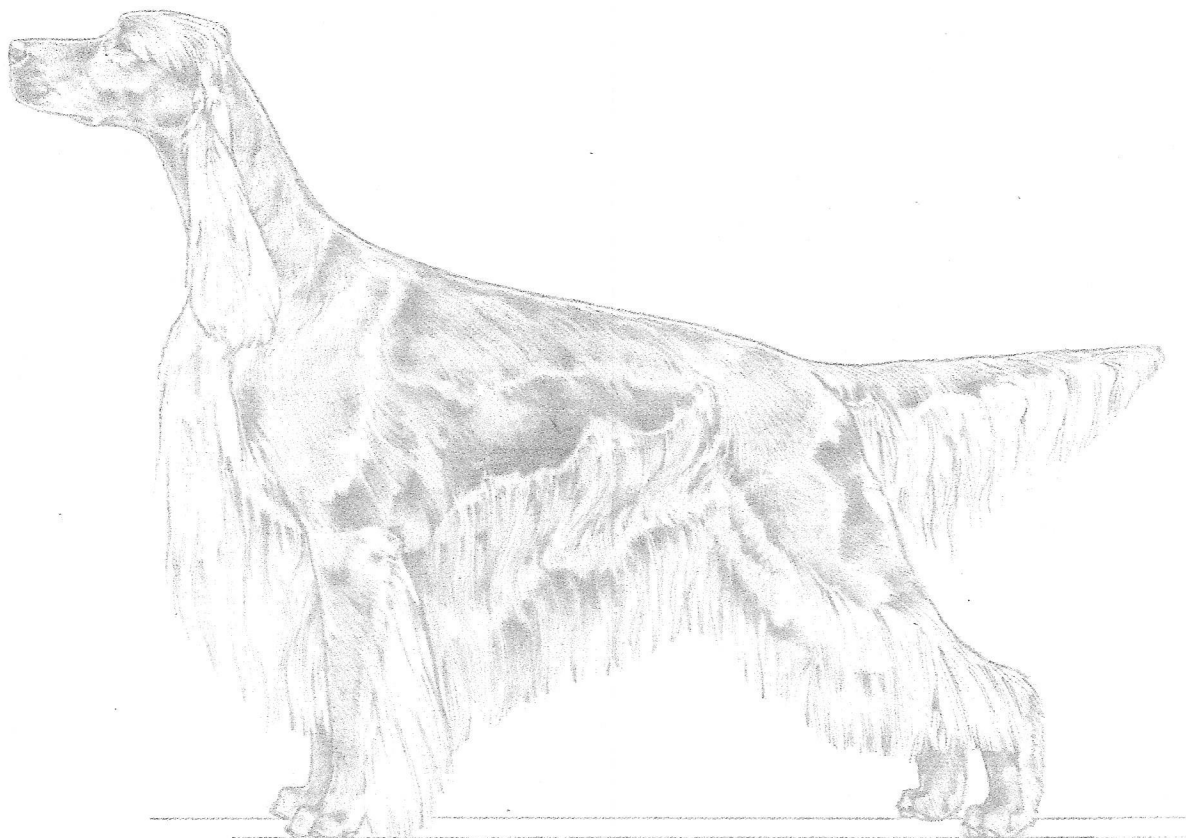
The Illustrations which accompany the text in this standard for the Irish Setter have been drawn to provide a visual tool for understanding the breed. They do not, nor are they designed to, change the standard in any way. It is hoped that by studying the standard and the pictures, and by looking at many Irish Setters in the flesh, one will develop an eye for the breed and a better appreciation of this glorious dog.

The standard appears in boldface type. The explanations appear in lighter type, accompanying the illustrations wherever possible.

General Appearance

The Irish Setter is an active, aristocratic bird dog, rich red in color, substantial yet elegant in build. Standing over two feet tall at the shoulder, the dog has a straight, fine, glossy coat, longer on ears, chest, tail and back of legs. Afield, the Irish Setter is a swift-moving hunter; at home a sweet natured, trainable companion.

At their best, the lines of the Irish Setter so satisfy in overall balance that artists have termed it the most beautiful of all dogs. The correct specimen always exhibits balance, whether standing or in motion. Each part of the dog flows and fits smoothly into its neighboring parts without calling attention to itself.



James G. F. Jones

This is the correct Irish Setter. It is balanced, elegant, yet substantial in build. It is not overdone anywhere. All parts fit smoothly into one another. Angulation in front and rear are approximately the same. The coat enhances the elegant quality of the dog and must be shining, reflective of good health and vitality.

Size, Proportion, Substance

Size

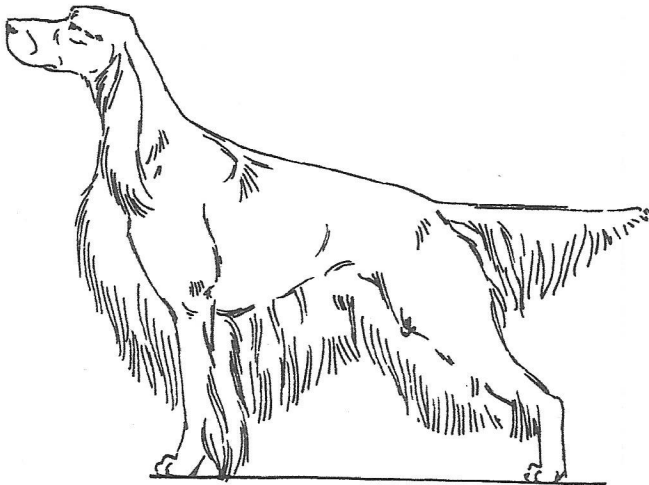
There is no disqualification as to size. The make and fit of all parts and their overall balance in the animal are rated more important. Twenty-seven inches at the withers and a show weight of about 70 pounds are considered ideal for the dog; the bitch 25 inches, 60 pounds. Variance beyond an inch up or down is to be discouraged.

Proportion

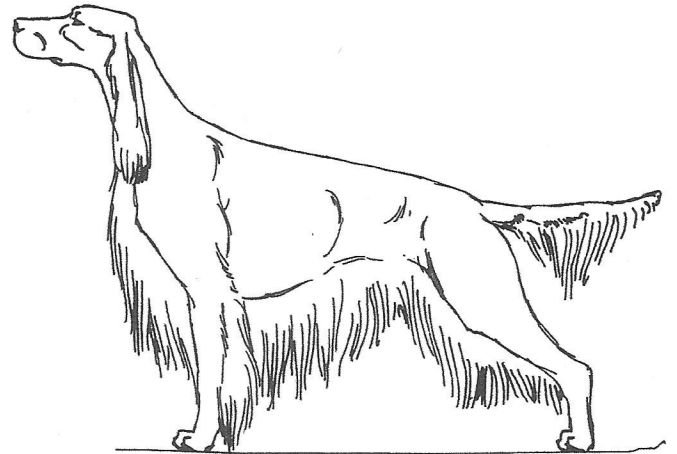
Measuring from the breastbone to the rear of thigh and from the top of the withers to the ground, the Irish Setter is slightly longer than it is tall.

Substance

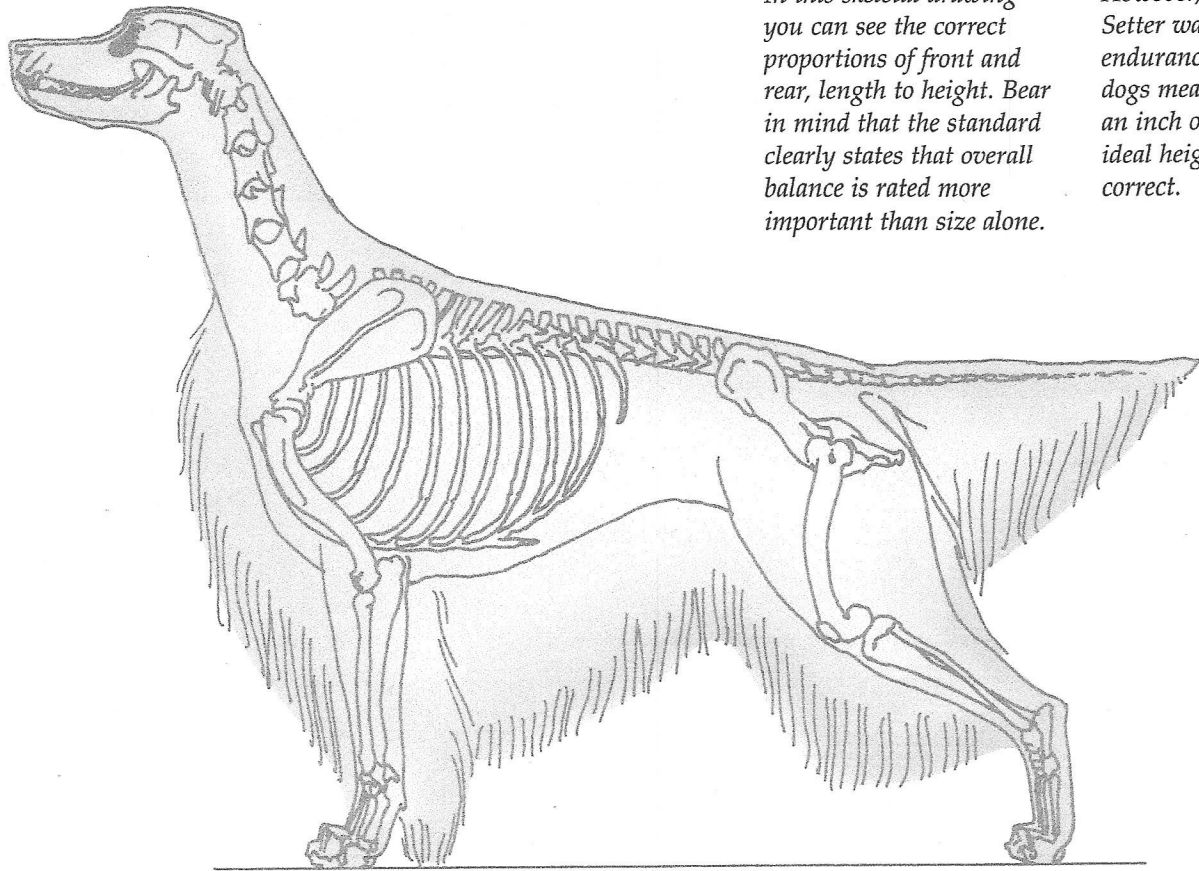
All legs sturdy with plenty of bone. Substance in the male reflects masculinity without coarseness. Bitches appear feminine without being slight of bone.



This dog is too short in back or too long on leg.

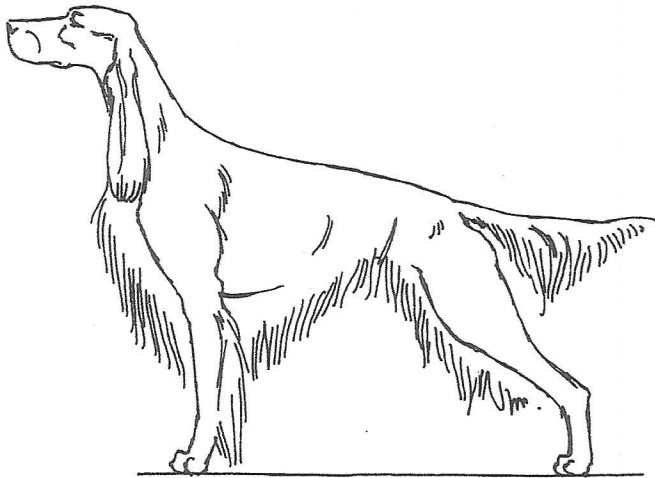


This dog is too long in back or too short on leg. Often a dog which is long in back will not have a firm topline.

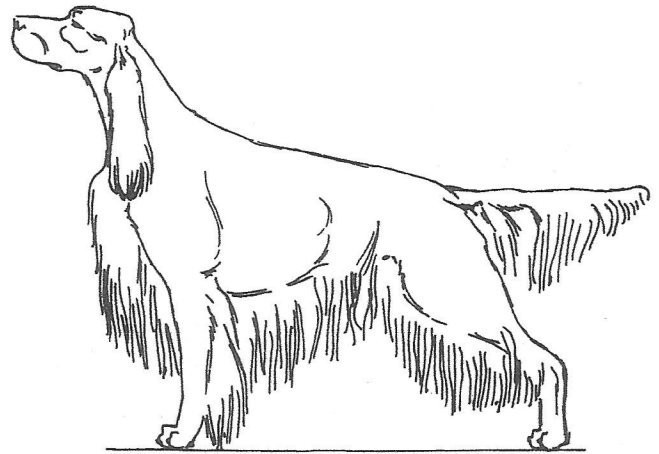


In this skeletal drawing you can see the correct proportions of front and rear, length to height. Bear in mind that the standard clearly states that overall balance is rated more important than size alone.

However, because the Irish Setter was bred for endurance in the field, dogs measuring more than an inch over or under the ideal height are not correct.



This dog is underdone and weedy. Note the extreme tuck-up and lack of substance in body and leg bones.



This dog is overdone, somewhat coarse and cloddy without elegance.

Head

Long and lean, its length at least double the width between the ears. Beauty of head is emphasized by delicate chiseling along the muzzle, around and below the eyes and along the cheeks. Expression soft, yet alert. Eyes somewhat almond shaped, of medium size, placed rather well apart, neither deep set nor bulging. Color dark to medium brown.

Eyes Eyes somewhat almond shaped, of medium size, placed rather well apart, neither deep set nor bulging. Color dark to medium brown.

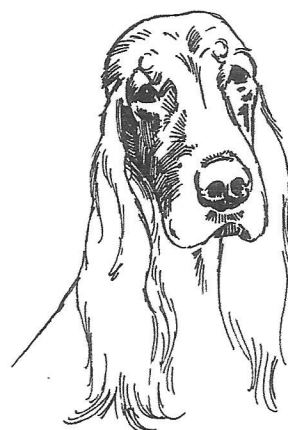
Ears Ears set well back and low, not above level of eye. Leather thin, hanging in a neat fold close to the head, and nearly long enough to reach the nose.



This dog's eyes are set too wide and they are round, giving a startled expression.



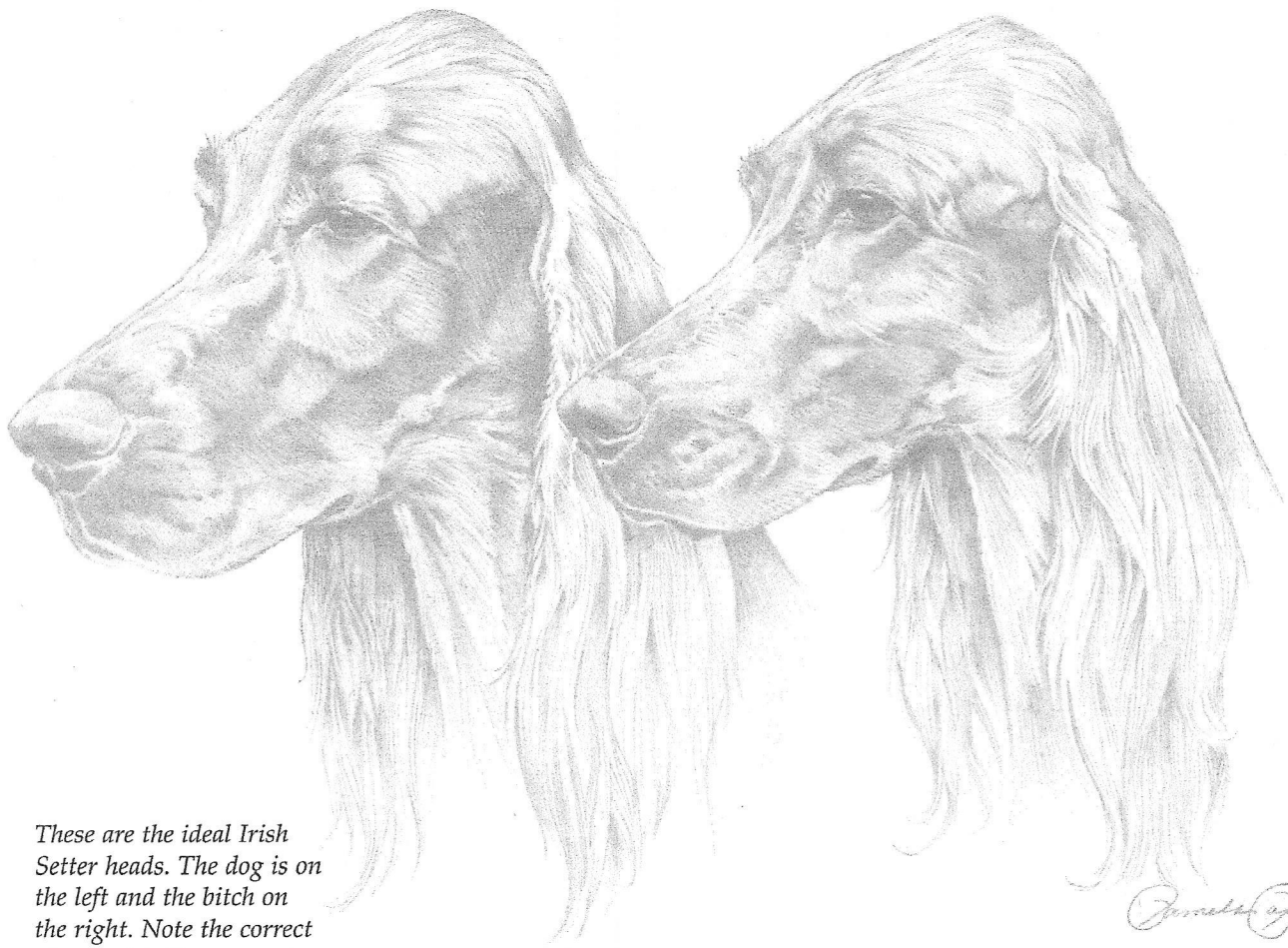
This dog's eyes are slanted, which is incorrect. It also has high-set, short ears.



This shows small, triangular eyes, which are incorrect. The ear-set is correct, with the ears framing the face in a pleasing fold.



This shows a dog which is apple-headed, or domey, with too much prominent skull from the eyes to the occiput (rear of skull).



These are the ideal Irish Setter heads. The dog is on the left and the bitch on the right. Note the correct planes, chiseling, ear set and large nose. The bitch is somewhat more refined. There is not much chance of mistaking one for the other.

James Quinn



This front view of the head shows the correct soft expression and proper shape and placement of the eyes.

Skull

The skull is oval when viewed from above or front; very slightly domed when viewed in profile. The brow is raised, showing a distinct stop midway between the tip of the nose and the well-defined occiput (rear of skull). Thus the nearly level line from occiput to brow is set a little above, and parallel to, the straight and equal line from eye to nose.

Muzzle

Muzzle moderately deep, jaws of nearly equal length, the underline of the jaws being almost parallel with the top line of the muzzle.

Nose

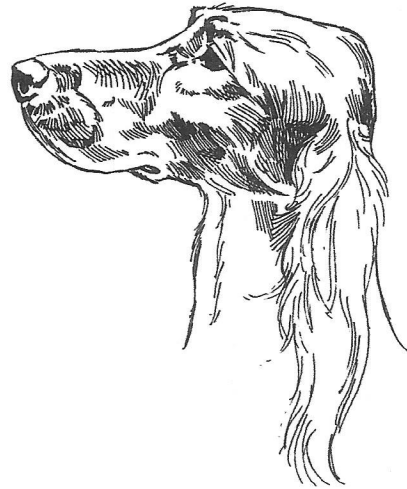
Nose black or chocolate; nostrils wide. Upper lips fairly square

Teeth

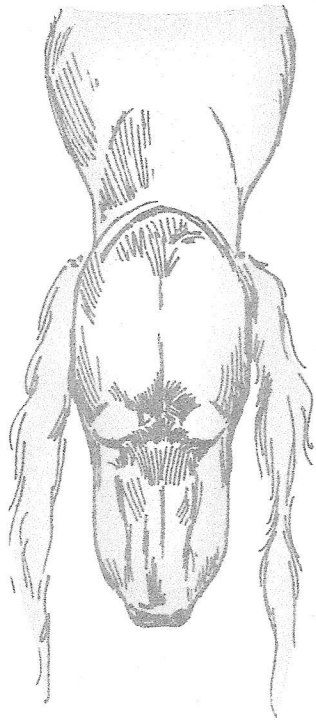
but not pendulous. The teeth meet in a scissors bite in which the upper incisors fit closely over the lower, or they may meet evenly.



This head lacks stop and also drops off in backskull.



This dog has a snipey muzzle.



Above left shows the proper configuration of the head when viewed from above. Note that there are no protruding skull bones on the side of the head. Above right is a correct head in profile. Note the parallel planes and the equal distance from nose to stop and stop to occiput.



This dog's head is too heavy. Although in proportion, it is too short and deep, with too much flew.

Neck, Topline and Body

Neck

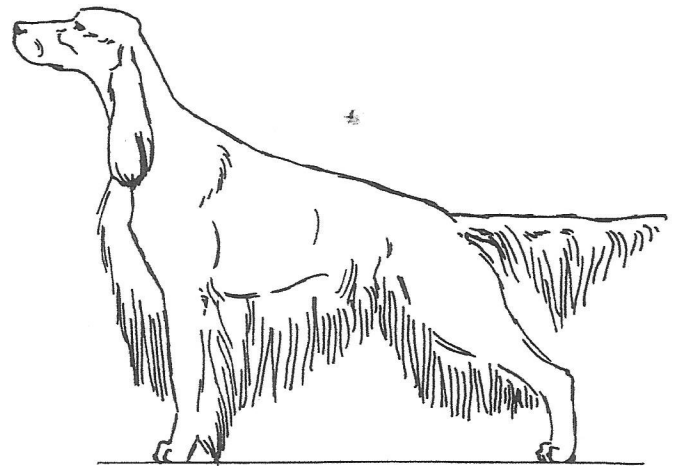
Topline

Body

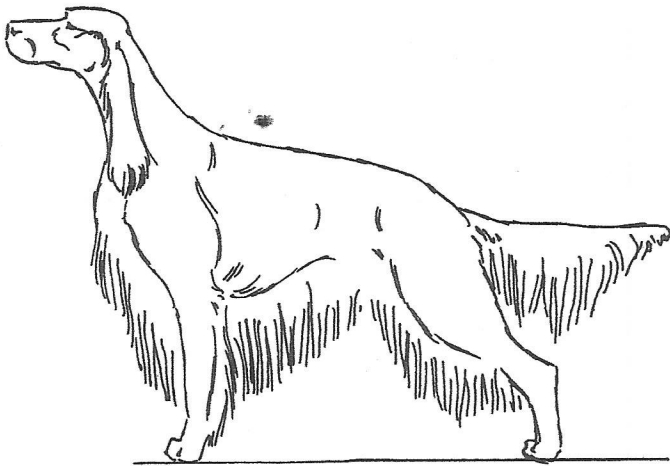
Neck moderately long, strong but not thick, and slightly arched; free from throatiness and fitting smoothly into the shoulders. Topline of body from withers to tail should be firm and incline slightly downward without sharp drop at the croup. The tail is set on nearly level with the croup as a natural extension of the topline, strong at root tapering to a fine point, nearly long enough to reach the hock. Carriage straight or curving slightly upward nearly level with the back. Body sufficiently long to permit a straight and free stride.



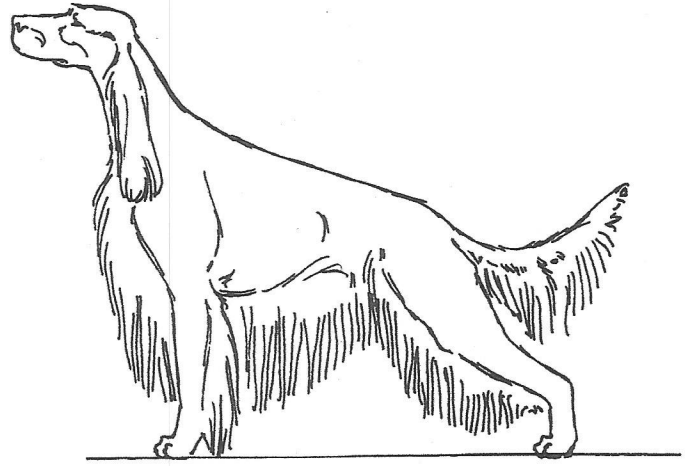
This dog has a stovepipe neck in which the neck fits into the shoulders at a steep angle, giving an unpleasant, choppy outline.



This dog has an exaggerated topline, sometimes termed a "ski slope" topline.



This shows a dropped croup.



This dog's tail is set on too low and is carried too high, giving a choppy appearance to the outline.

Chest and Forequarters

Chest

Deep, reaching approximately to the elbows with moderate forechest, extending beyond the point where the shoulder joins the upper arm. Chest is of moderate width so that it does not interfere with forward motion and extends rearwards to well sprung ribs. Loins firm, muscular and of moderate length.

Loins

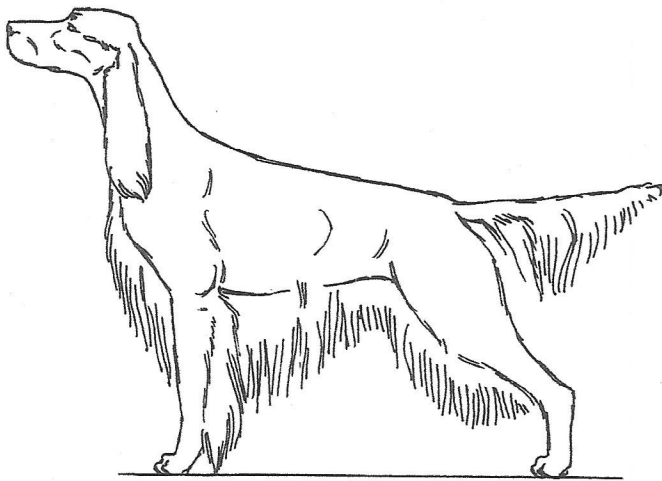
Forequarters

Shoulder blades long, wide, sloping well back, fairly close together at the withers. Upper arm and shoulder blades are approximately the same length, and are joined at sufficient angle to bring the elbows rearward along the brisket in line with the top of the withers. The elbows moving

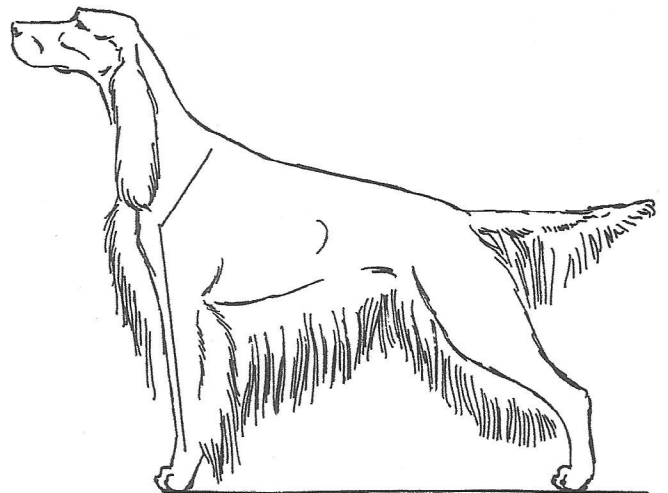
Forelegs

Feet

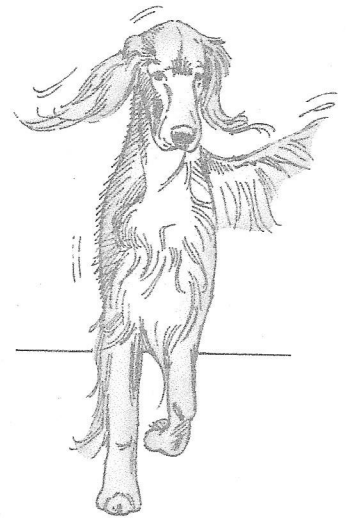
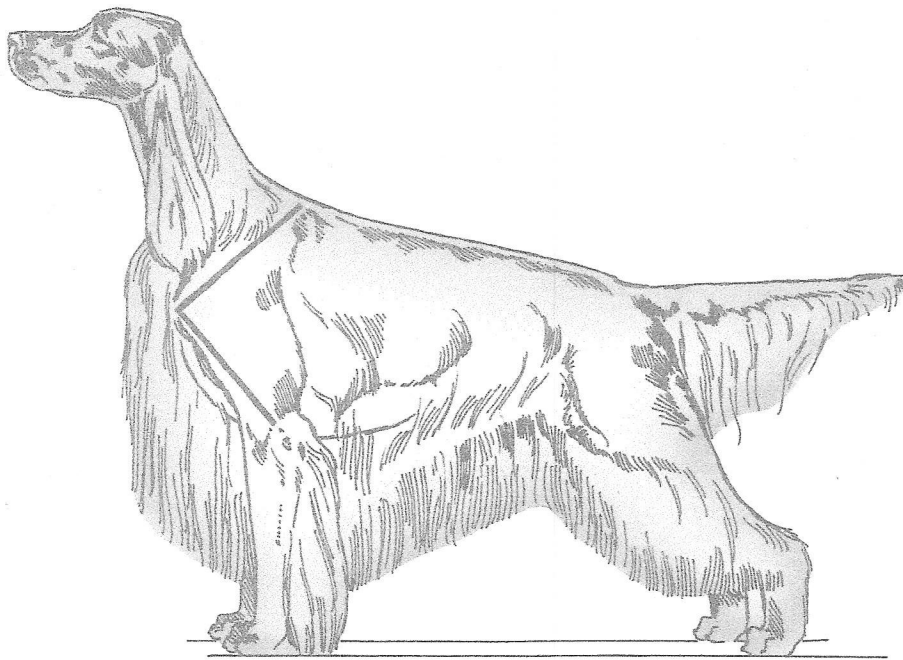
freely incline neither in nor out. Forelegs straight and sinewy. Strong, nearly straight pastern. Feet rather small, very firm, toes arched and close.



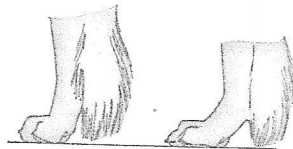
This dog's chest is too shallow and it has an exaggerated tuck up.



This dog has a steep shoulder blade and a short, straight upper arm. Both are incorrect.



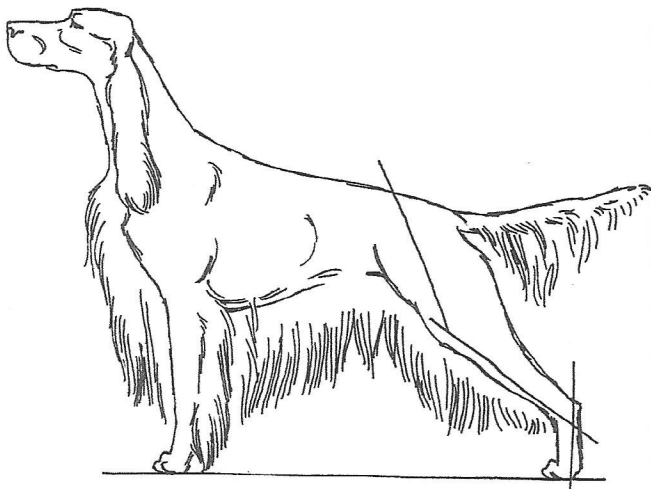
The dog at the left has a correct shoulder and upper arm assembly. At the right is a correct front, showing moderate width of chest and a straight and true forward stride. In the center are a correct foot (left) and an incorrect foot (right). Hare toes or feet which are splayed, flat, or thin are not correct. Also not correct: flat feet or a dog down on its pastern (as shown).



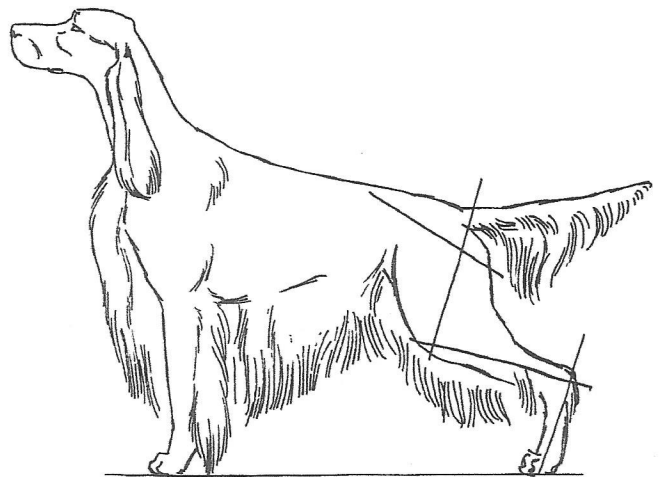
This shows a dog out at the elbows. Consequently, it is paddling.

Hindquarters

Hindquarters should be wide and powerful with broad, well developed thighs. Hind legs long and muscular from hip to hock; short and perpendicular from hock to ground; well angulated at stifle and hock joints, which, like the elbows, incline neither in nor out. Feet as in front. Angulation of the forequarters and hindquarters should be balanced.



This rear lacks substance through the thigh. It is straight in stifle with inadequate angulation.



This dog is overangulated. The second thigh is too long. This dog is also unbalanced front and rear; and it is sickle-hocked.

Coat and Color

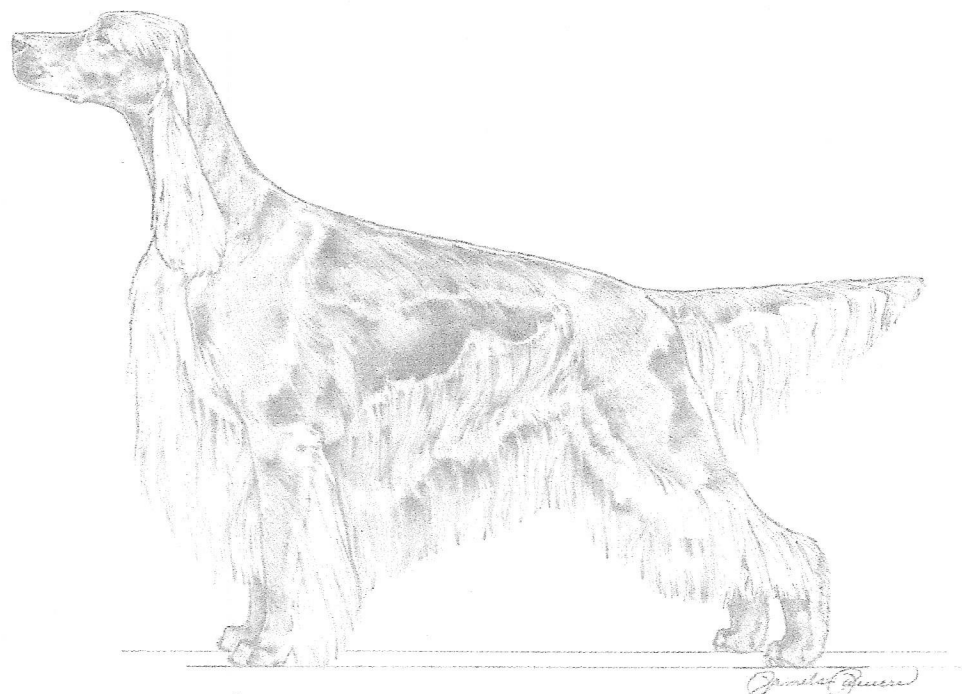
Coat

Short and fine on head and forelegs. On all other parts of moderate length and flat. Feathering long and silky on ears; on back of forelegs and thighs long and fine, with a pleasing fringe of hair on belly and brisket extending onto the chest. Fringe on tail moderately long and tapered. All coat and feathering as straight and free as possible from curl or wave. The Irish Setter is trimmed for the show ring to emphasize the lean head and clean neck. The top third of the ears and the throat nearly to the breastbone are trimmed. Excess feathering is removed to show the outline of the foot. All trimming is done to preserve the natural appearance of the dog.

Color

Mahogany or rich chestnut red with no trace of black. A small amount of white on chest, throat or toes, or a narrow centered streak on skull is not to be penalized.

This shows correct length and lay of the coat. Although this dog is trimmed, the appearance is of a naturally growing coat. No clipper or scissor marks should be apparent. Dogs whose color has been altered by artificial means should be severely penalized. Many Irish Setters have a dark body coat and light feathering. This is perfectly acceptable. Many also have lighter coloring on the tops of the ears and on the skull. This is not a fault and should be neither penalized nor dyed.



Gait

At the trot the gait is big, very lively, graceful and efficient. At an extended trot the head reaches slightly forward, keeping the dog in balance. The forelegs reach well ahead as if to pull in the ground without giving the appearance of a hackney gait. The hindquarters drive smoothly and with great power. Seen from front or rear, the forelegs, as well as the hind legs below the hock joint, move perpendicularly to the ground, with some tendency towards a single track as speed increases. Structural characteristics which interfere with a straight, true stride are to be penalized.



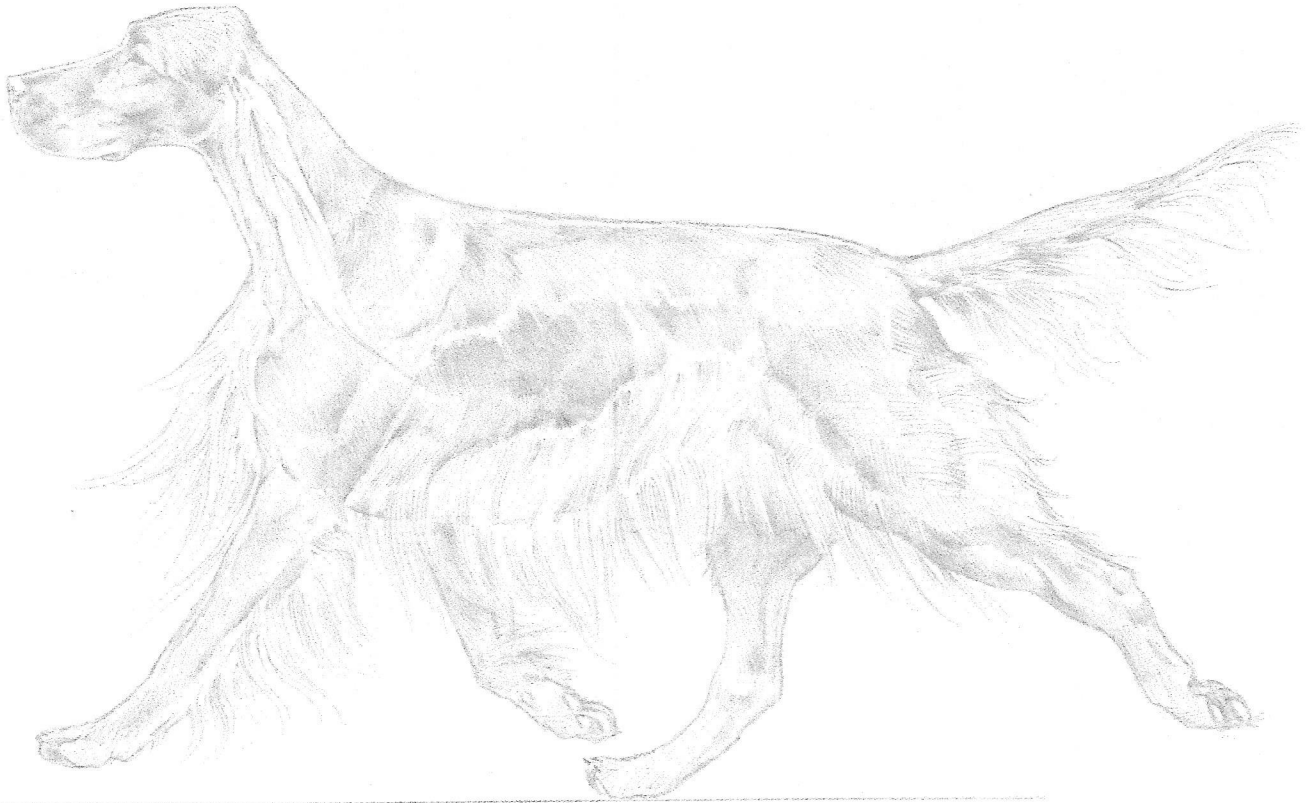
This dog is bowlegged and toeing in.



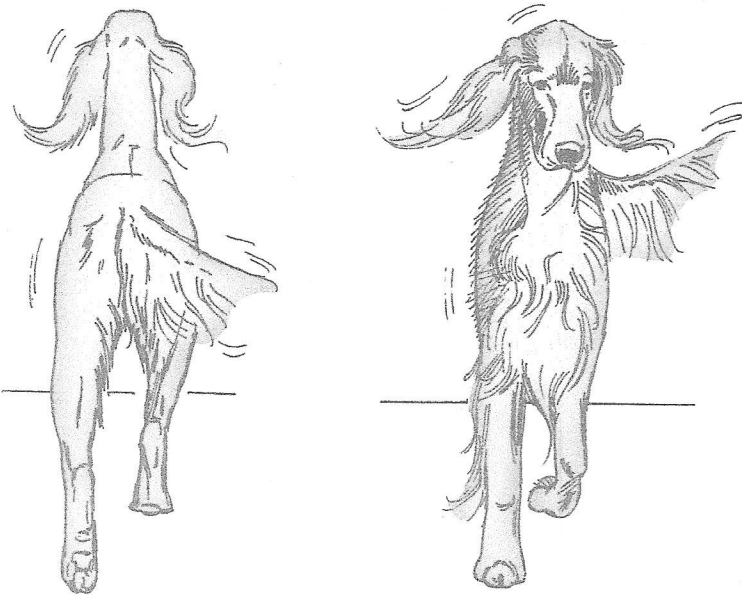
This dog is cowhocked.



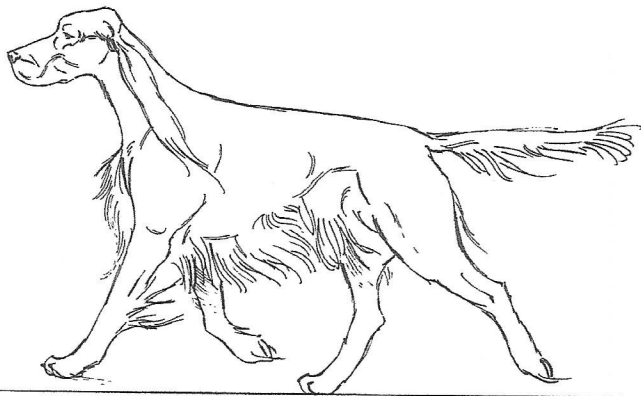
This dog is out at the elbows.



This dog, seen from the side, is moving correctly. The front and rear angulation are approximately the same.



These dogs are gaiting correctly.



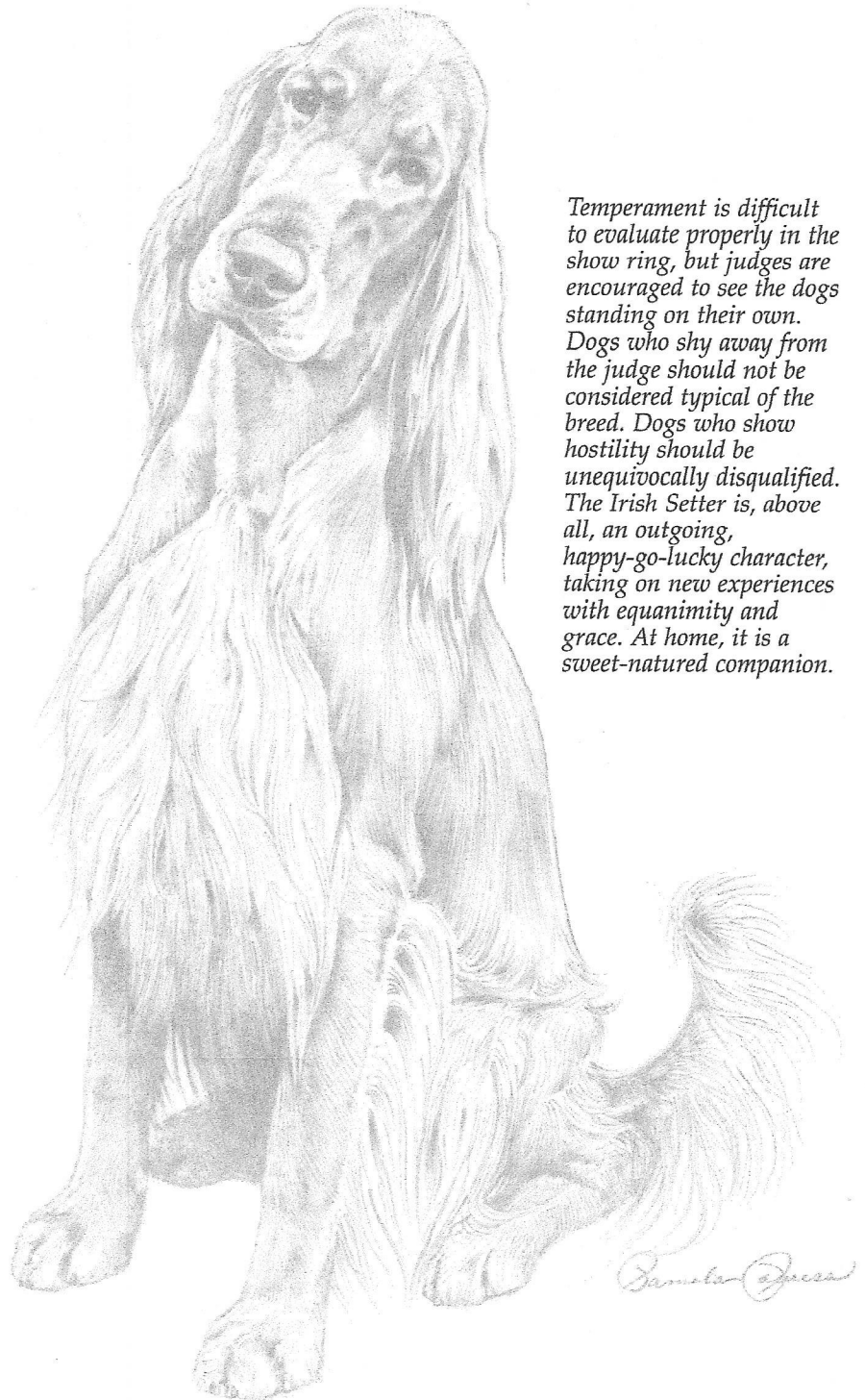
*This dog has no front reach
or rear drive.*



*This dog is hackneying in
front and overreaching
from the rear.*

Temperament

The Irish Setter has a rollicking personality. Shyness, hostility, or timidity are uncharacteristic of the breed. An outgoing, stable temperament is the essence of the Irish Setter.



Temperament is difficult to evaluate properly in the show ring, but judges are encouraged to see the dogs standing on their own. Dogs who shy away from the judge should not be considered typical of the breed. Dogs who show hostility should be unequivocally disqualified. The Irish Setter is, above all, an outgoing, happy-go-lucky character, taking on new experiences with equanimity and grace. At home, it is a sweet-natured companion.

The Irish Setter is a loving companion at home.

REFERENCES

THIS IS THE IRISH SETTER, video
produced by The American Kennel Club,
260 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

THE OFFICIAL BOOK OF THE IRISH
SETTER, by Connie Vanacore, TFH
Publications, Neptune City, New Jersey,
07753 (approved by the Irish Setter Club
of America)

