

# THE GREAT DANE



A STUDY OF THE APOLLO OF DOGS

# HISTORY



The dogs we know today as the Great Dane traces it's history to the “Mastiff” type dogs pictured in carvings and writings dating back to 3000 B.C. The breed was cultivated in Germany and became their National dog in 1870. In the mid 1800s, some US fanciers imported dogs primarily from Germany and refined the breed characteristics, eliminating the short legs, coarse bodies and aggressive behaviors.

# HISTORY

Once a fierce guardian and hunter, the Great Dane is now a loyal and adaptable companion.



## ESSENCE OF THE BREED

The essence of Great Dane type is created by:

- balanced combination of a sculptured headpiece;
- long, tapered, clean neck;
- well developed body;
- strong bone;
- glossy coat of correct rich color;
- movement with precision and grace.

A substantial deficiency in any of these attributes will result in a lack of true Dane type – a “common looking” dog. The presence or absence of breed type is the single most important factor in assessing the overall quality of the Great Dane. **Type includes the combination of proper head, structure, balance, and movement.**

# Physical and Mental Characteristics Create Breed Type



- Regal Appearance, Dignity, Strength with Elegance.
- Spirited, Courageous, Never Timid or Aggressive, Always Friendly and Dependable.
- Great Size, Strength and Balance. Always a Unit.

- Moving with Reach and Drive.
- Great Masculinity in Dogs, Femininity in Bitches.



# SIZE, PROPORTION AND SUBSTANCE

## DOG

- Not less than 30" at the shoulder.  
Danes under minimum height must be disqualified.
- Average height 34 inches.
- The dog is more massive than the bitch.
- Coarseness or lack of substance equally undesirable.
- Coarseness is not a substitute for substance.
- All other things being equal, the larger Dane is preferred, but great height at the expense of overall soundness and balance is not desired.



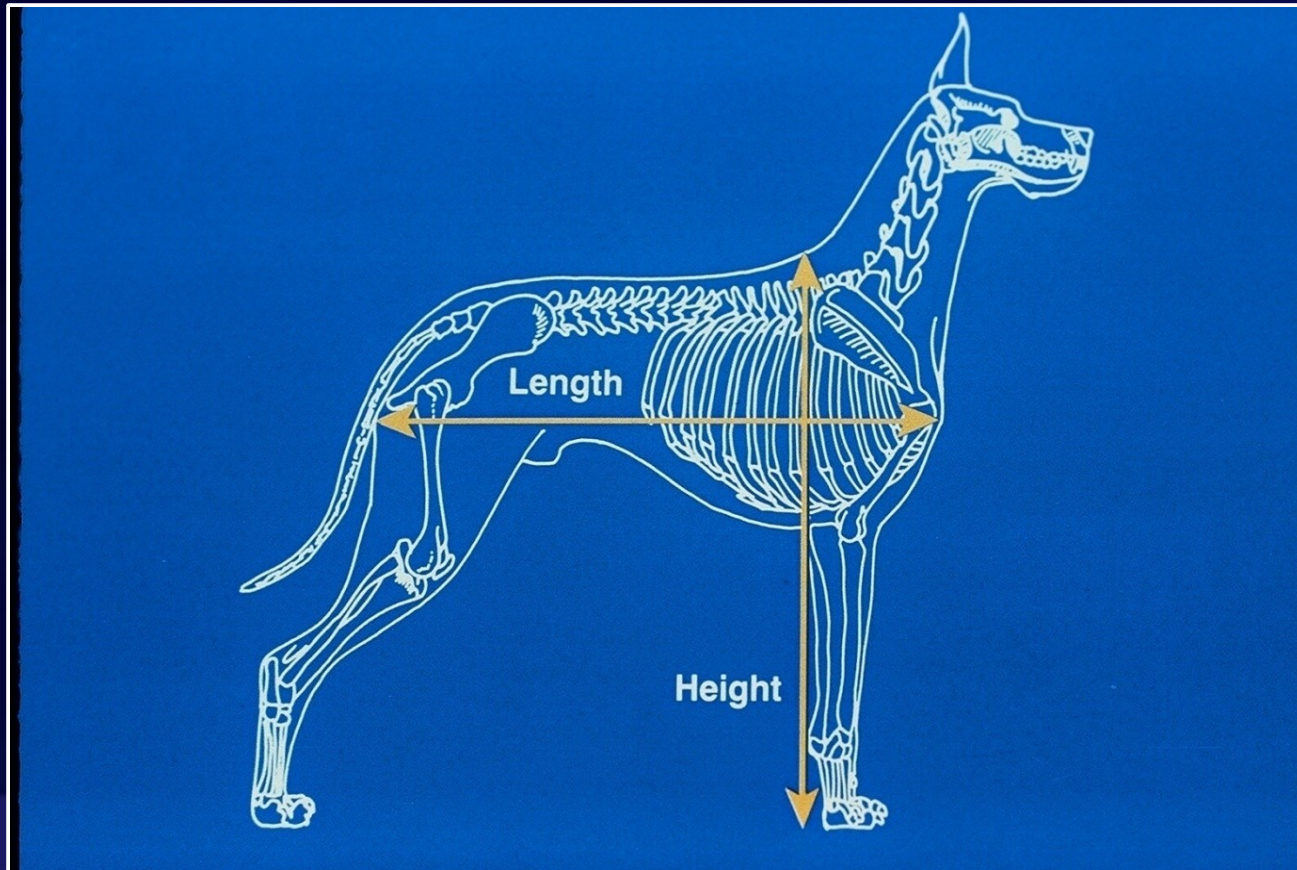
# SIZE, PROPORTION AND SUBSTANCE

## BITCH

- Not less than 28” at the shoulder  
Danes under the minimum height must be disqualified.
- Average height 32 inches.
- May be somewhat longer in body than the dog providing she is proportioned to her height.
- Bitches must convey an impression of femininity.
- All other things being equal, the larger Dane is preferred but great height at the expense of overall soundness and balance is not desired.



## A SQUARE BREED



Squareness is measured from the withers to the ground, and from the point of shoulder to the back of the upper thigh.

# HEADS

- Rectangular
- Long
- Distinguished
- Expressive
- Finely Chiseled
- Pronounced Stop
- Parallel planes
- Flat on all sides
- Strong Square Broad Muzzle
- Length of Muzzle and Skull to be Equal (a long narrow head is as faulty as a short face blocky head)
- Tight Almond eye
- High set ear cropped or uncropped

# HEADS

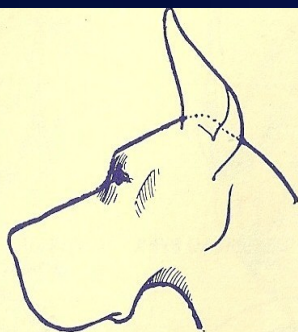


CHART 49. CORRECT  
DOG'S HEAD



CHART 50. CORRECT  
BITCH'S HEAD

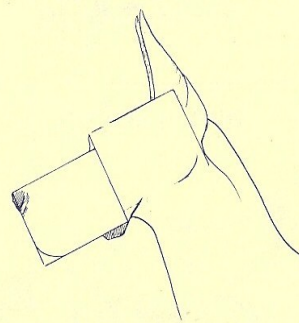


CHART 51. CORRECT  
PROPORTIONS

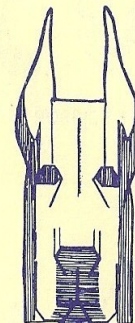


CHART 52. CORRECT  
SKULL

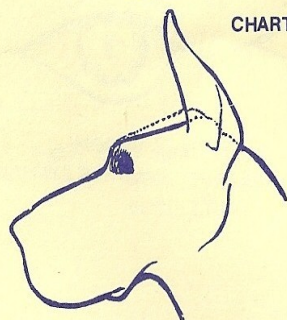


CHART 53. FOREHEAD DROPPING,  
BRIDGE OF NOSE DROPPING

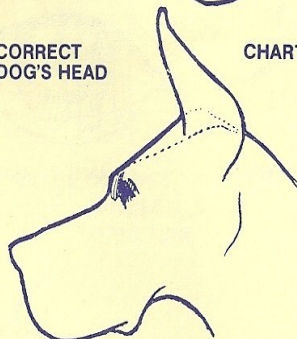


CHART 54. FOREHEAD RISING,  
BRIDGE OF NOSE RISING

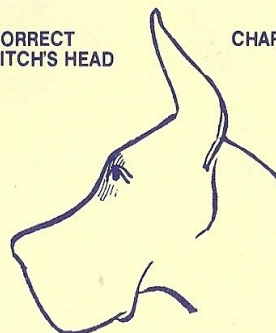


CHART 55. DISH-FACED

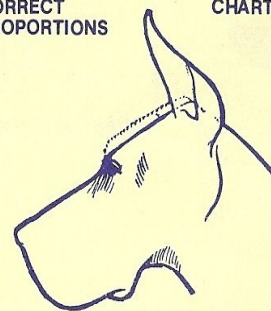


CHART 56. NO STOP

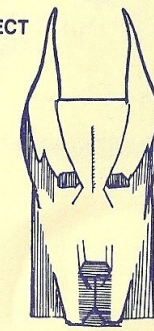


CHART 57. SKULL TOO WIDE  
(WEDGE-HEAD)

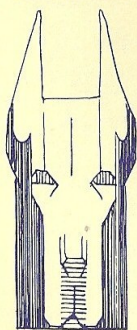


CHART 58. NARROW FOREFACE



CHART 59. APPLE-HEAD



CHART 60. CHEEKY HEAD

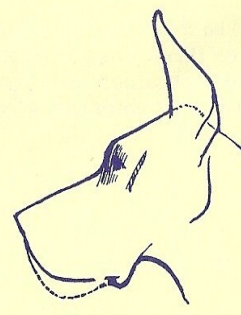


CHART 61. SNIPEY HEAD



CHART 62. FLUTTERING LIPS

# THE HEAD STUDY: DOGS



Chantel Photo 2010













# THE HEAD STUDY: BITCHES



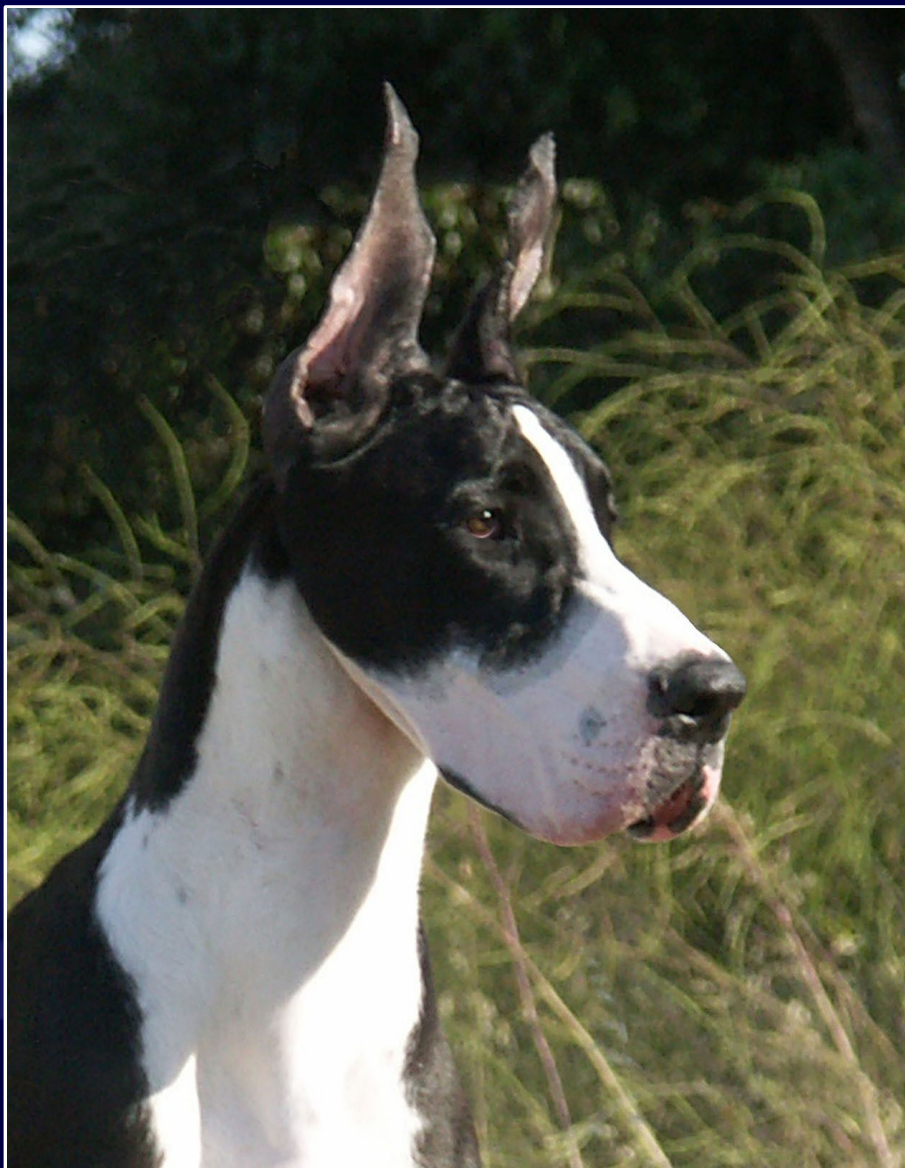
*Photo by Zeli*















# EYES

Eyes shall be medium size, deep set and dark, with a lively and intelligent expression.

The eyes are almond shaped and relatively tight with well developed brows. Haws and mongolian eyes are very serious faults.

In Harlequins and Merles the eyes should be dark, but Blue eyes and eyes of different colors are permitted. In Blue Great Danes a somewhat lighter eye is acceptable.



## THE CROPPED EAR



If cropped, the ear length is in proportion to the size of the head, and ears are carried uniformly erect.

## THE UNCROPPED EAR



Ears are set high, medium in size, folded forward close to the cheek. The line of the folded ear should be level with the skull. Lack of ability to hold the ear erect at the base of the natural ear will give a hound look and should be faulted.

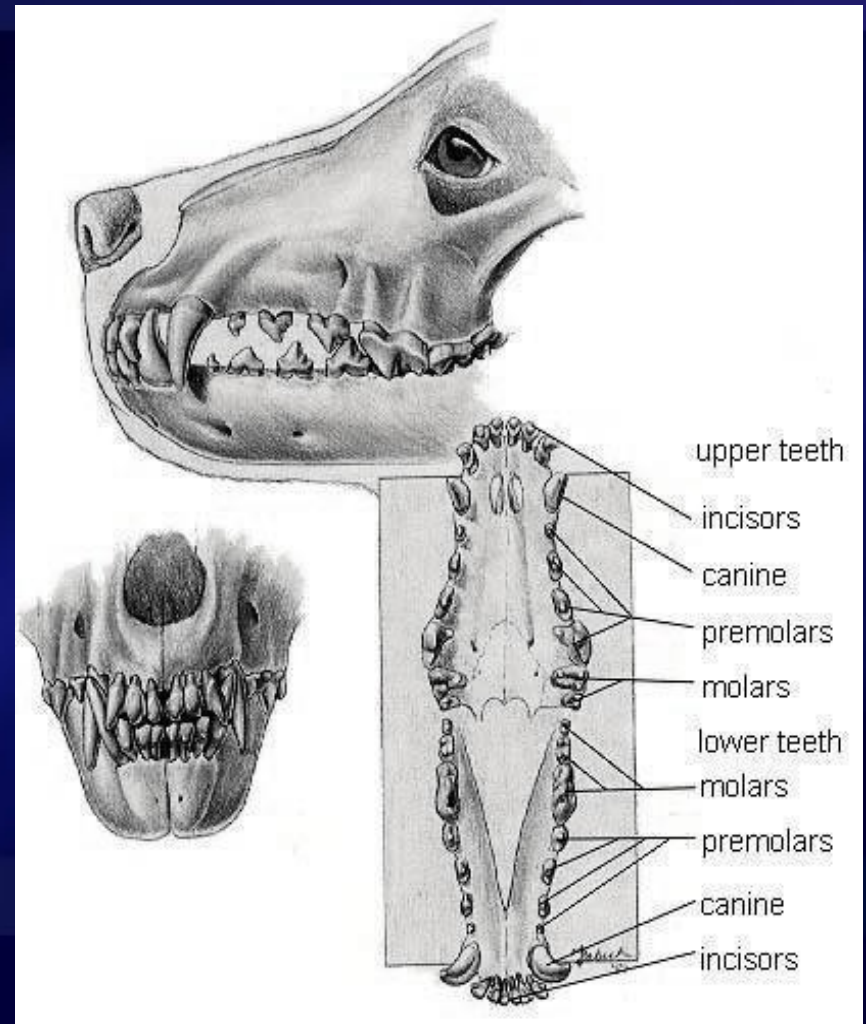
# NOSE



The nose shall be black, except in the Blue Dane, where it is a dark blue black. A black spotted nose is permitted on the Harlequin and Merles; a solid pink colored nose is not desirable. **A split nose is a disqualification.**

# TEETH

Teeth shall be strong, well developed, clean and with full dentition preferred. Scissors bite preferred. Undershot jaw and wry mouths are very serious fault. Overshot bites are a serious faults. Even bites, misaligned or crowded incisors are minor faults. The jaw should not be narrow.



## NECK, TOPLINE AND BODY

The elegance of the breed is created here. The neck shall be firm, high set, well arched, long and muscular. From the nape, it should gradually broaden and flow smoothly into a short level back with a broad loin. The chest shall be broad, deep and well muscled. The forechest should be well developed without a pronounced sternum.



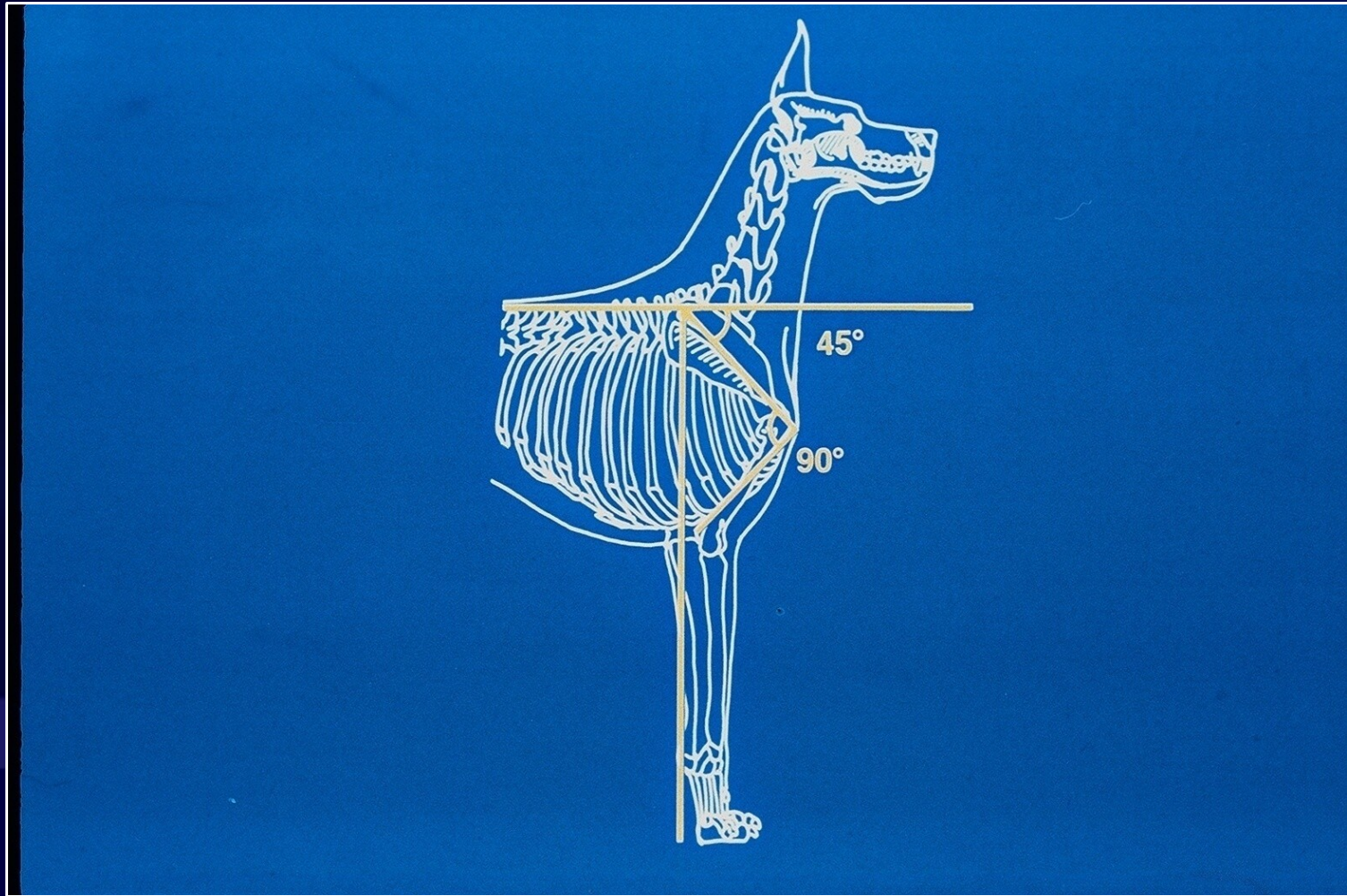
## **NECK, TOPLINE AND BODY**

The brisket extends to the elbow, with well sprung ribs. The body underline should be tightly muscled with a well-defined tuck-up. The croup should be broad and very slightly sloping. The tail should be set high and smoothly into the croup, but not quite level with the back, a continuation of the spine. The tail should be broad at the base, tapering uniformly down to the hock joint. At rest, the tail should fall straight. When excited or running, it may curve slightly, but never above the level of the back. A ring or hooked tail is a serious fault. A docked tail is a disqualification.

## **FOREQUARTERS**

Forequarters shall be strong and muscular. The shoulder blade must be strong and sloping forming a right angle at its articulation with the upper arm. The elbow should be one-half the distance from the withers to the ground. Pasterns slope slightly. Front legs straight and parallel. Correct placement and angulation of the shoulder and forearm give the dog greater reach.

# CORRECT SHOULDER ANGULATION





## FEET AND TOES



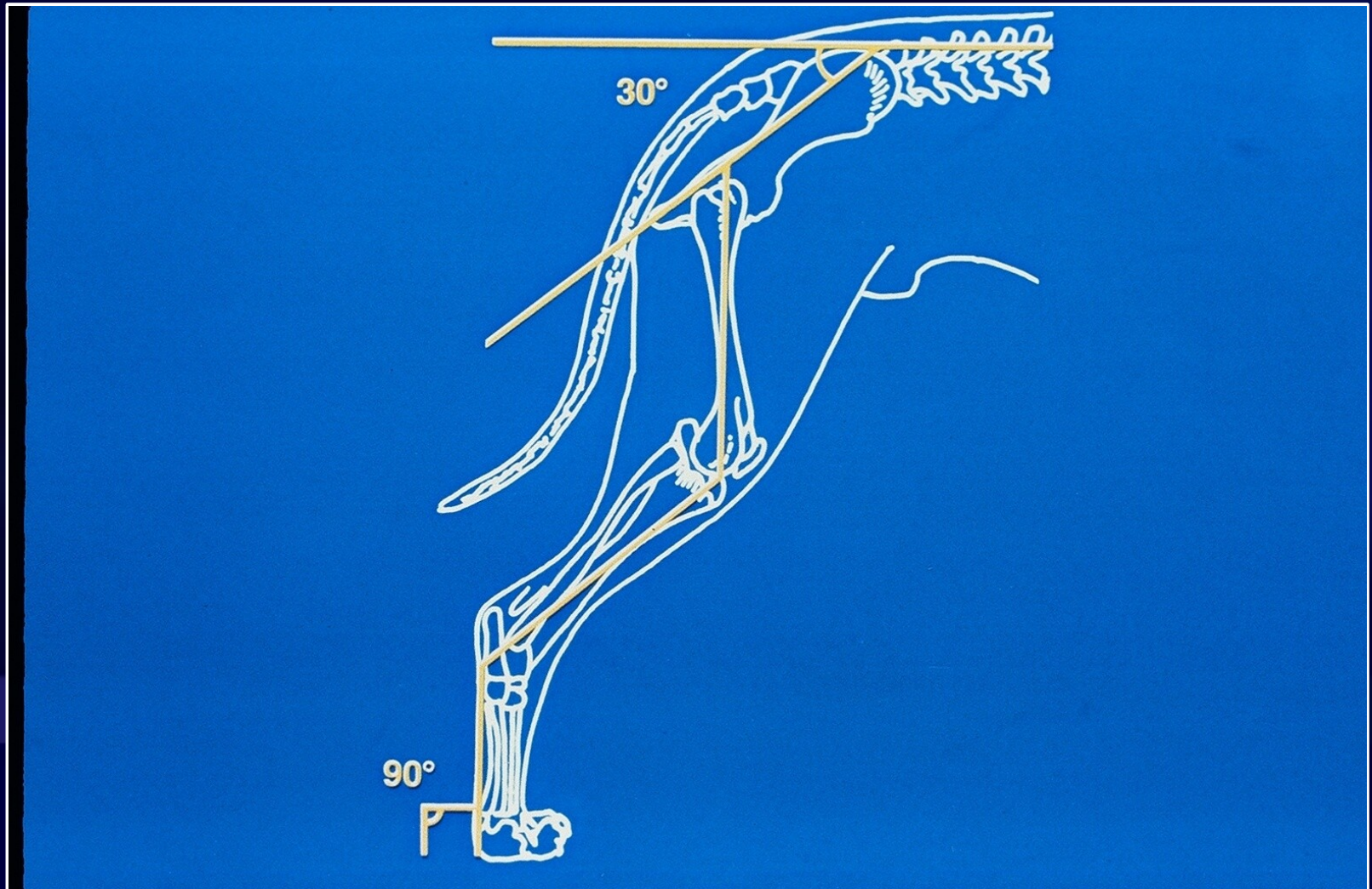
The feet should be round and compact with well arched toes, neither toeing in, toeing out, or rolling to the inside or outside. The nails should be short, strong and as dark as possible, except they may be lighter in Harlequins, Mantles and Merles. Wolf claws are a serious fault.

# HINDQUARTERS

Hindquarters shall be strong, broad, muscular and well angulated, balancing with the shoulder assembly plus have well let down hocks. The rear quarter provides the powerful drive to move the body forward.



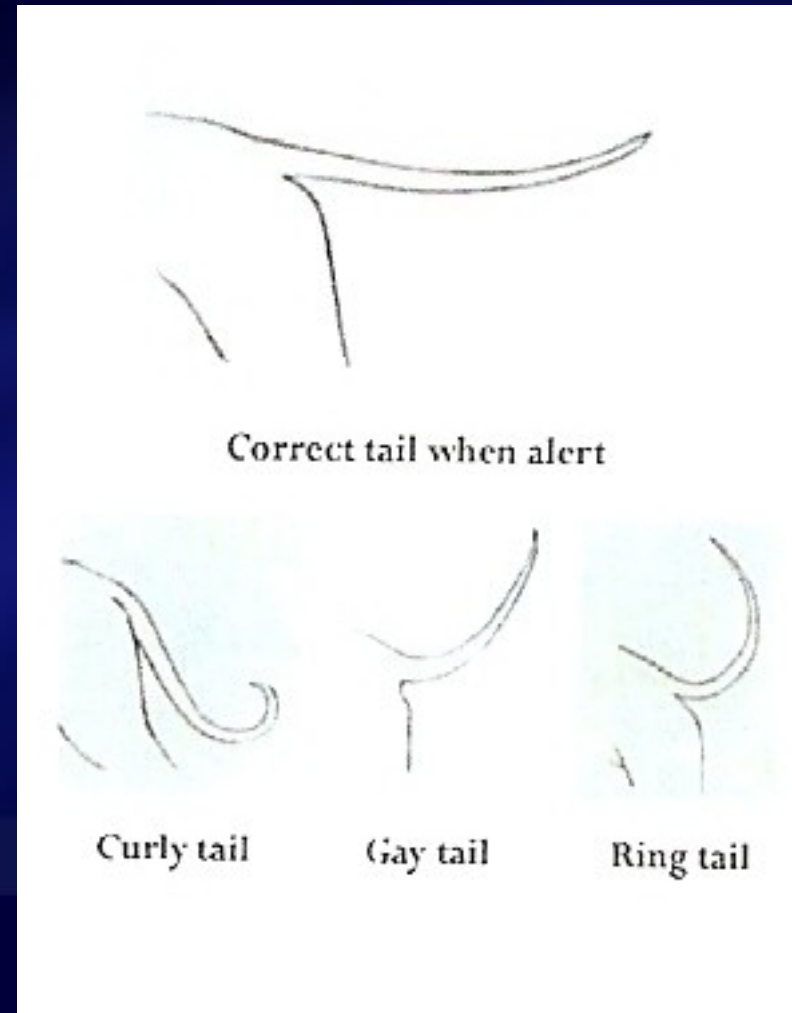
# CORRECT REAR ANGULATION



# TAIL

At rest, the tail should fall straight. When excited or gaiting, it may curve slightly but never above the level of the back. A ring or hooked tail is a serious fault.

**A docked tail is a disqualification.**



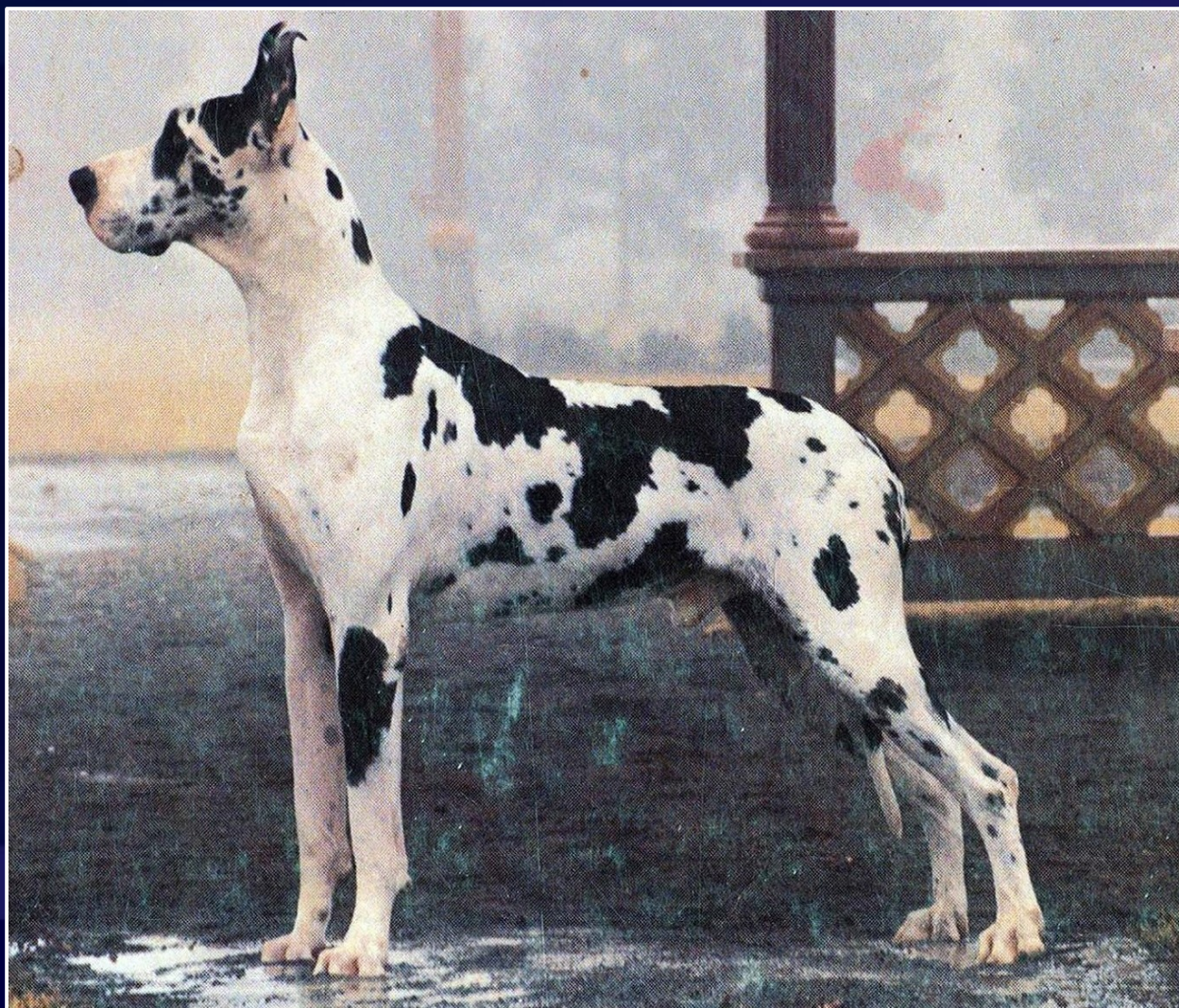
# THE GREAT DANE: DOG













*CHantel Photo 2011*



# THE GREAT DANE: BITCH















# COAT

- The coat is short, thick and lies flat with a glossy appearance.
- Trimming of stray hairs to neaten appearance is acceptable.
- Blues occasionally will be seen with a sparse coat similar to that seen in the Doberman. This is not desirable.
- Blacks occasionally will be seen with brownish color due to sun burning of the coat. Check the base of the coat to be certain that it is not poor coat color.
- It is not unusual to have puppies in a first coat shed appearing “moth eaten.” This is usually noticeable in the neck area.

# THE GREAT DANE: COLOR, MARKINGS, AND PATTERNS

## FAWN

- Yellow gold with black mask.
- Black on eye rims and eyebrows and may appear on ears and tail tip.
- The deep yellow gold must always be given preference.
- White markings at chest and toes and black-fronted; dirty colored Fawns; are not desirable.



# BRINDLE

- Base color yellow gold and always brindled with strong black cross stripes, in a chevron pattern with a Black mask.
- The more intense the base color and the more distinct and evenly brindled, the more preferred will be the color.
- Black on eye rims and eyebrows, and may appear on ears and tail tip.
- Too much or too little brindling are equally undesirable.
- White markings on the chest and toes; or a black-fronted; dirty colored Brindles are not desirable.



# BLACK

- The color shall be glossy black.
- White markings at chest and toes are not desirable.



# BLUE

- The color shall be pure steel-blue.
- White markings at chest and toes are not desirable.



# HARLEQUIN

- Base color shall be pure white with black torn patches irregularly and well distributed over the entire body.
- A pure white neck is preferred.
- Merle patches are normal.
- No patch should be so large that it appears to be a blanket.
- Eligible, but less desirable, are black hairs showing through the white base coat which give a salt and pepper or dirty appearance.



# HARLEQUIN

All are in the acceptable range of variations as defined in the standard.



Ideal



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

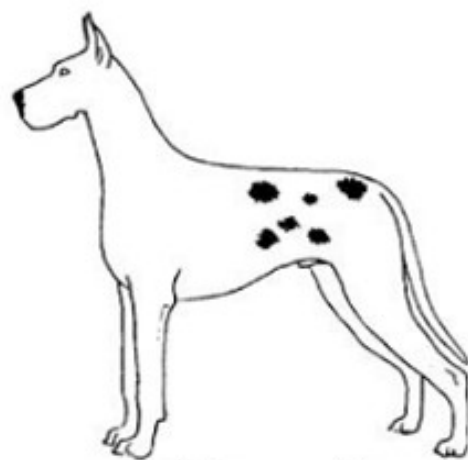


Figure 5

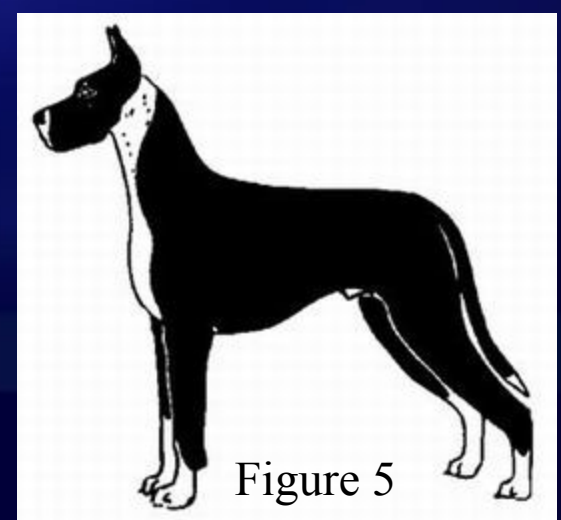
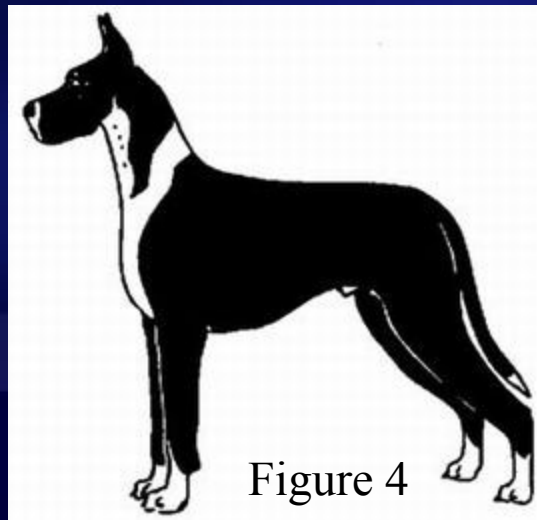
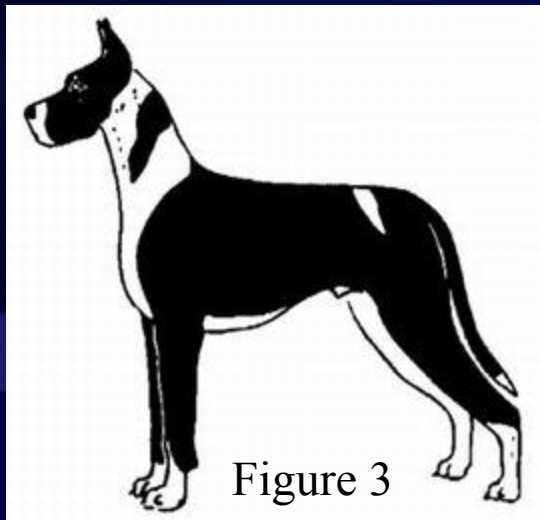
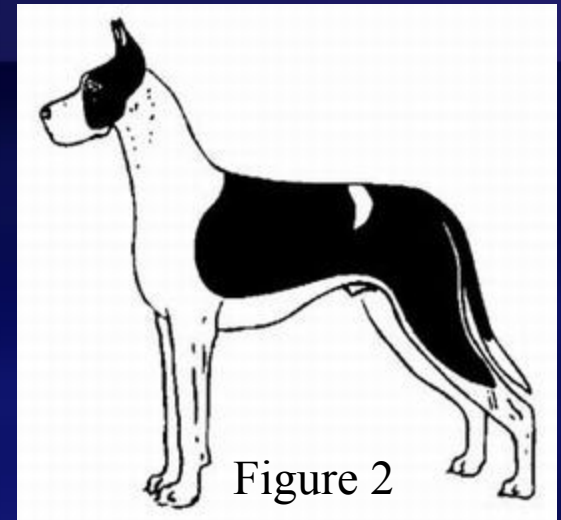
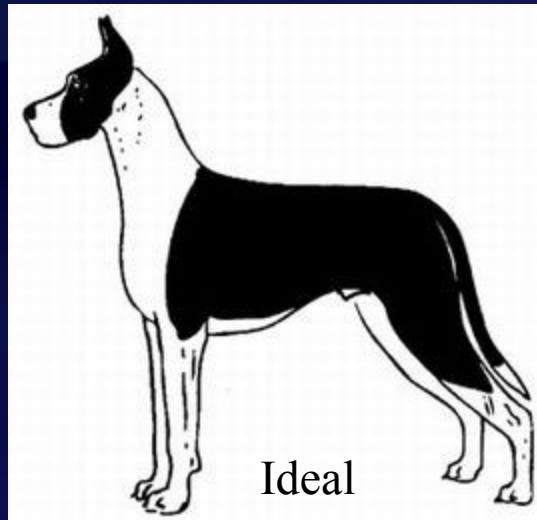
# MANTLE

- The color shall be black and white with a solid black blanket extending over the body.
- Black skull with white muzzle, white blaze optional.
- Whole or partial white neck.
- White chest.
- White on whole or part of forelegs and hind legs; a white tipped black tail.
- A small white marking in the blanket is acceptable. Black pigment may be seen on the skin in white areas.



# MANTLE

Figures 2 through 5 are in the acceptable range of variations as defined in the standard.



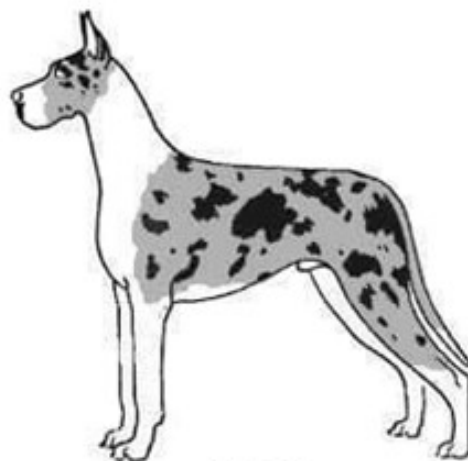
# MERLE

- The color shall be a pale gray to a dark gray base color with torn patches within.
- May be a solid Merle (white on chest and toes is permissible.)
- Merle with a Mantle pattern (solid merle blanket extending over the body; merle skull with a white muzzle; white blaze is optional; whole or partial white neck; a white chest; white on whole or part of the forelegs and hind legs; white tipped merle tail.)
- A small white break in the blanket is acceptable. (Black pigment may be seen on the skin in white areas.)
- Merlequin, a white dog with ONLY patches of merle.



# MERLE

All are in the acceptable range of variations as defined in the standard.



Ideal

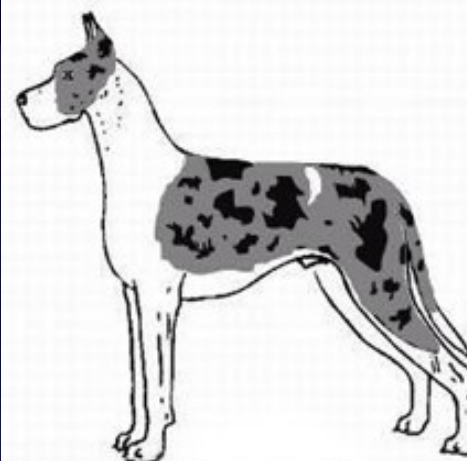


Figure 2

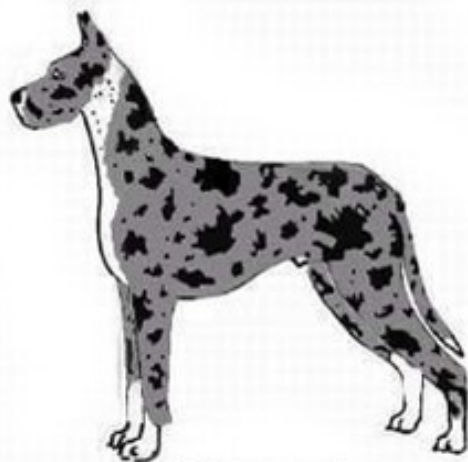


Figure 3

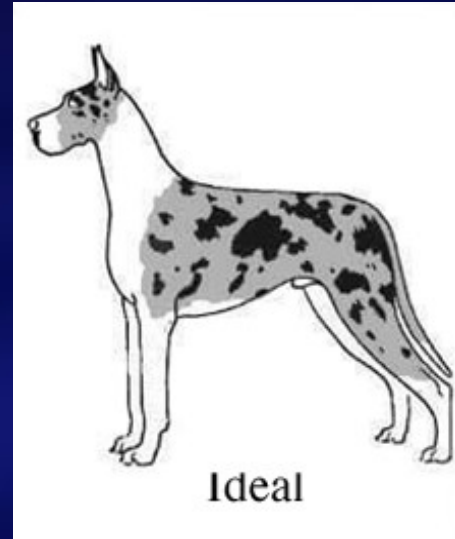
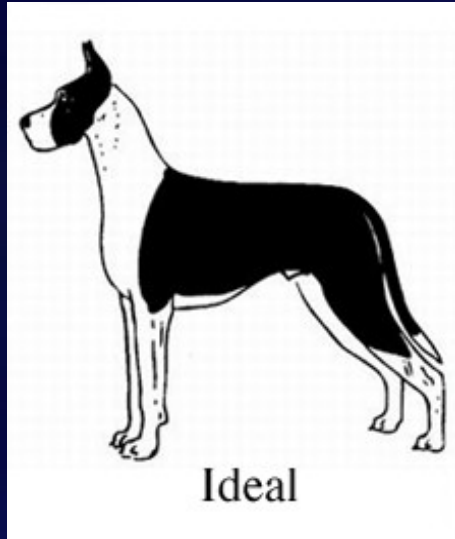
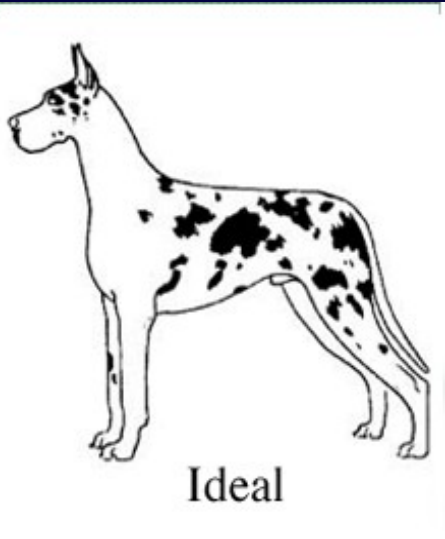


Figure 4



Figure 5

## COLOR FAMILY



**Harlequin**

**Mantle**

**Mantle Merle**

**Solid Merle**

## **COLOR, MARKINGS, AND PATTERNS**

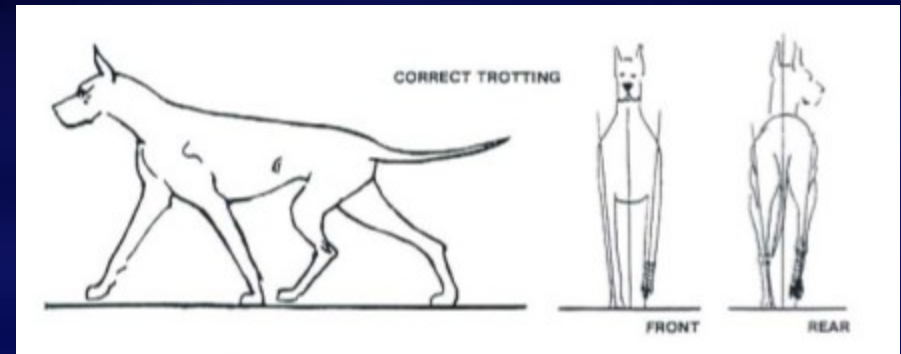
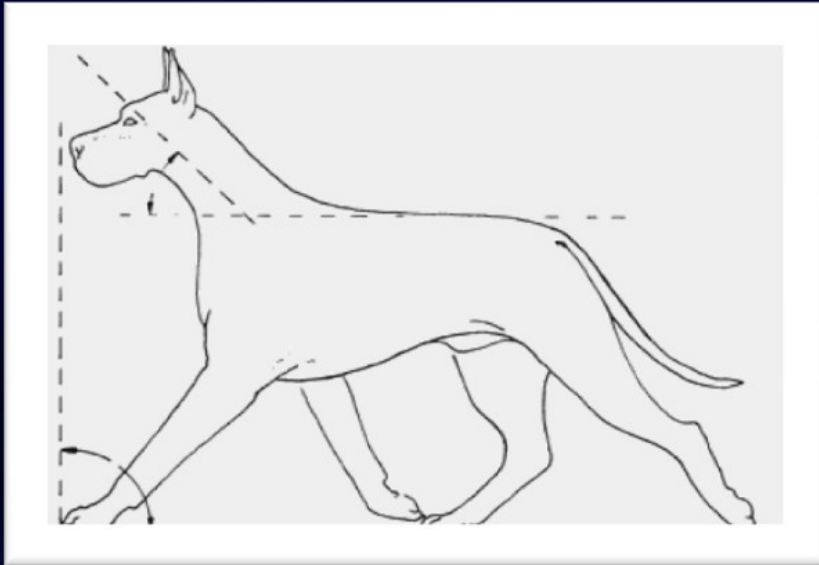
Any variance in color or markings as described in the AKC Standard shall be faulted to the extent of the deviation. Any Great Dane that does not fall within the color classifications of the AKC Standard must be disqualified.

# MERLE DISQUALIFICATION



**MERLEQUIN**

# GAIT



The gait denotes strength and power, with long easy strides, resulting in no tossing, rolling or bouncing of the top line or body. The back line shall appear level and parallel to the ground. The long reach shall strike the ground below the nose while the head is carried forward. The powerful rear drive should balance the reach. As speed increases, there is a natural tendency for the legs to converge toward the center line of balance beneath the body. There should be no twisting in or out at the elbow or hock.



# TEMPERAMENT

Spirited, courageous, always friendly and dependable, never timid or aggressive.



# DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Danes under minimum height. (Male – 30”, Female – 28”)
- Split nose.
- Docked tail.
- Any Great Dane which does not fall within the described color classifications must be disqualified. (Any variance from color or markings as described shall be faulted to the extent of the deviation.)
- Merlequin

# FAULTS

- Faults of color with the exception of serious deviations should not be considered as important as faults of structure and type.
- THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE DOG IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE.

This educational presentation must always be viewed with the  
Official AKC Breed Standard.

## SCALE OF POINTS

Quotation from the opening paragraph of the English Standard:  
“The standard of any breed is the blue-print to which all breeders and judges must adhere at all times. Never must any attempt to make the standard fit the dog be tolerated.”

Please note that the American Standard no longer recognizes the scale of points, however it has been included within this presentation to assist you in assigning proper priorities in your evaluation of the Great Dane.

• General Conformation 30 points

- General appearance
- Color & Markings
- Size
- Condition of coat
- Substance

• Movement 28 points

- Gait
- Rear End
- Front End

• Head 20 points

- Head Conformation
- Teeth
- Eyes
- Nose
- Ears

• Torso 20 points

- Neck
- Loin & Back
- Chest
- Ribs & Brisket

• Tail 2 points

• Total 100 point



CosmicCreations



