

# Slovensky Klub Chovatel'ov Ridgebackov

## Judges Report By: Dawn Redman

Firstly I would like to express what an absolute pleasure and privilege it was to adjudicate at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Slovakia Show.

The overall quality of the Rhodesian Ridgebacks presented to me was extremely high, the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed type/style was appealing and the breed uniformity was noticeable throughout the breed classes. My congratulations to breeders on achieving such consistency. In my judging experience uniformity of type is not always evident, with extreme variance in overall type/style generally observed. The majority of exhibits entering the ring instantly portrayed to me the unique characteristics that distinctly proclaim Rhodesian Ridgeback.

I place great importance on temperament, a Rhodesian Ridgeback may be aloof with strangers, but when judging the breed in the show ring I expect dogs to be confident and comfortable enough to allow a hands on examination by the judge. Temperament of the majority of dogs presented was excellent, however I did observe some shyness and a couple of exhibits showed aggression towards me and were penalised accordingly.

I was able to find many beautiful desirable Rhodesian Ridgeback heads amongst my exhibits in both males and females. My ideal heads being of correct ratio (length of skull to breadth of skull and length of muzzle), strong underjaw and round eyes complimenting the desirable expression. I observed on some dogs presented eye shapes tending towards almond rather than round, and also a few dogs with eyes that were light in colour and not harmonising with their coat colour. I noted some exhibits lacking strength in underjaw, which detracted from what I was looking for in the ideal head piece. The correct scissor bite and dentition was generally correct as was ear size, shape and set.

The majority of exhibits displayed necks of fair length, free from throatiness and I found some beautiful examples of muscular arched necks. Forequarters angulation varied throughout the classes from correct forequarter angulation and placement, to exhibits with forequarters that displayed straightness in upper arm and a few that displayed forequarters placed too far forward. Mostly the exhibits when viewed front on, had the desired straight forelegs with strong bone and correct compact round feet with well arched toes.

Chest shape and depth overall was pleasing, the correct oval shape ribcage and depth of chest was evident, I did however observe some variation relating to lack of fill in front of chest and lack of apparent prosternum when viewed side on.

Top-lines varied amongst the exhibits; I was pleased to see many Rhodesian Ridgebacks with the ideal level top-line, strong and slightly arched over the loin. Some dogs presented weakness while moving, with top-line dipping/being swayed or being higher in hindquarter (bum high) in relation to forequarter. I noted overall that correct ratio of height to length of body was evident throughout the classes. Balance of angulation between forequarters and hindquarters was another area that varied amongst exhibits, the major award winning Rhodesian Ridgebacks I selected on the day displayed the forequarter/hindquarter balance/harmonization I was seeking. In relation to body underline, I ideally wanted mature dogs that displayed good depth of chest down to the elbow and brisket reaching back behind the elbow together with the presence of a well ribbed back ribcage giving

correct length of body and moderate tuck up into the loin. This was evident on my selected winning Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

Tail set was generally correct, I did however observe a few steep croups with low tail set, which affected hind movement on these exhibits, with them lacking the ability to produce ideal drive from hindquarter on the move.

I ideally like to view well angled strong hindquarters with good width across the first thigh, some of the exhibits presented lacked the desired width of thigh I was looking for. Muscular condition of hindquarter varied and I found the majority of dogs in good muscular condition produced sound movement moving away on the up and back movement.

Ridges overall were excellent, I observed a few offset ridges but mostly ridges were within the acceptable breed standard stipulation.

Coat and colour was uniformity correct, the brown nose exhibits all presented beautiful pigmentation and wheaten coat colour, the black nose exhibits were consistent in correct wheaten coat colour being within the light wheaten to red wheaten specification. However a few exhibits in my opinion carried too many black hairs through the coat which presented a distorted shade over the overall coat colour, the customary wheaten shading was not present leaving a solid colour base rather than an intermingled light and dark wheaten based variant. In my opinion correct wheaten is not a question of whether it is too dark or light but rather whether or not the wheaten variance (light and dark) is evident thus preventing the overall overview being of a solid block of colour.

The adage that form follows function is one I apply when judging. Rhodesian Ridgebacks that are exceptional in their breed characteristic conformation should be able to perform their original function, therefore when evaluating the breed on the move I want to see a typical endurance style of movement, effortless, efficient and exhibiting purposeful reach and drive, correct foot fall and no energy wasting action. Rhodesian Ridgebacks were bred for endurance and should be able to trot all day long with minimum effort. I was pleased to find many exhibits that portrayed the movement I was looking for, and in particular my best of breed winner possessed movement that I felt was outstanding from all angles.

My class winning dogs and place getters were all of pronounced quality and combined my judging goal of form follows function. It was exhilarating from a judges prospective to detect many quality younger dogs that are up and coming through the breed. This is very exciting and predicts a bright future for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed. The younger dogs did challenge the mature dogs for top honours and I feel sure these younger dogs will be in the spot light taking top honours very soon.

My best Rhodesian Ridgeback male and female were both outstanding breed representatives, being sound in both structure and movement and displayed exquisite Rhodesian Ridgeback breed type and unique characteristics.

My overall best of breed exhibit was a magnificent handsome upstanding male brown nose. He demonstrated correct size and bone, overall balance, correct ridge, sound conformation and wonderful movement. He glided around the show ring with effortless powerful strides holding everything in place structurally whilst exhibiting purposeful ground coverage. He was presented in wonderful muscular condition and displayed strength combined with elegance, clean flowing lines and the amalgamation of balance and harmonisation between the various points expected for correct Rhodesian Ridgeback breed conformation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my ring stewards for their work and diligence over the two judging days, it certainly contributed to a tremendous judging environment. I also extend my appreciation to the exhibitors who accepted my judge's decisions in a good sporting manner and to the show committee for the hard work they contributed to staging the event. A special thankyou to Alexandra our host who was absolutely wonderful throughout out visit. The hospitality shown to us and the event experience was outstanding and I will fondly remember the experience as a wonderful judging privilege, as well as adjudicating over some amazing dogs and meeting wonderful people.

I deeply appreciate the beautiful gifts presented to me. I will always have fond memories of judging at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Slovakia show.

Best wishes

Dawn Redman