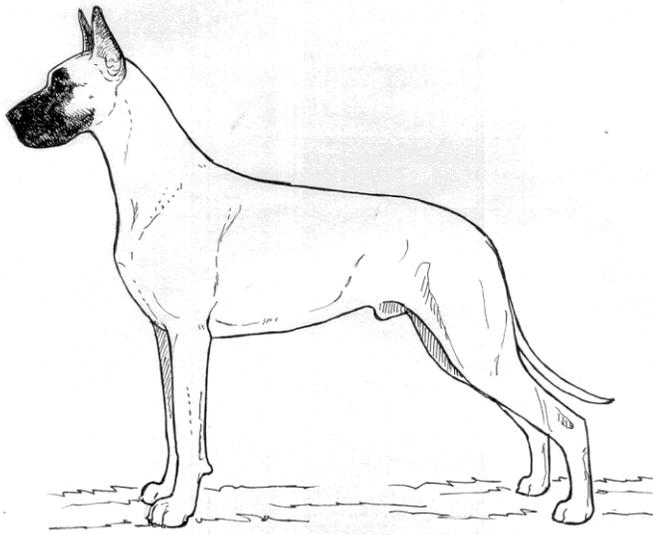


# GREAT DANE

## Official UKC Breed Standard

Revised July 1, 2009



The goals and purposes of this breed standard include: to furnish guidelines for breeders who wish to maintain the quality of their breed and to improve it; to advance this breed to a state of similarity throughout the world; and to act as a guide for judges.

Breeders and judges have the responsibility to avoid any conditions or exaggerations that are detrimental to the health, welfare, essence and soundness of this breed, and must take the responsibility to see that these are not perpetuated.

Any departure from the following 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.

### HISTORY

The ancestors of the Great Dane include British mastiffs and possibly wolfhounds, brought to Europe, first by the Romans and later by German aristocrats seeking to improve their hunting dogs. Despite its name, the Great Dane is a German breed. During the 15th and 16th centuries, German forests were filled with game, and hunting wild boar with dogs was a favorite pastime of German nobility. Each lord kept large numbers of boarhounds, which they carefully bred to improve their size, power, and endurance. When game in the forests began to dwindle, the large breeding kennels disappeared but the Great Dane continued to be a favorite with German aristocrats. Great Danes were exhibited at the first German dog show in 1863, and the first Danes were imported into the United States not long thereafter. In this country, Great Danes are

### Guardian Dog Group

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popular family companions for people who admire their regal appearance and affectionate personalities.

The Great Dane was recognized by United Kennel Club in 1923.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Great Dane is a very large, short-coated dog, with smooth, well-defined musculature. The body is square, but females may be somewhat longer in body than males. The length of the front leg (measured from point of elbow to the ground) is approximately equal to one-half of the dog's height at the withers. The head is long, rectangular, and finely chiseled. Ears are medium in size, high set, and may be drop or cropped. The tail is a natural extension of the spine, thick at the base and tapering to a point. Gender differences are apparent in this breed. Typically the male is proportionately taller and heavier than the female. The female appears feminine in comparison to the dog. The Great Dane combines great size with dignity and elegance, giving rise to its nickname, the Apollo of dogs.

### CHARACTERISTICS

The Great Dane is spirited, courageous, friendly, and dependable. Great Danes are easygoing dogs, affectionate with family members and self-confident with strangers. The Great Dane has a stable, easy-going nature, preferring to lounge on the couch near a loved one to almost any other pastime. They are good with children but their great size makes them more suitable for older children and teenagers. Great Danes are easily trained but need consistency.

### HEAD

The Great Dane head is proportionate to the size of the dog, long, rectangular, narrow and finely chiseled, especially below the eyes. Viewed from the side, the skull and muzzle are of equal length, straight, parallel to one another, and joined by a strongly pronounced stop. Viewed from above, the planes of the skull and foreface are parallel and the bridge of the nose is very broad. Gender difference is readily apparent. A correct head is essential to Great Dane breed type.

**SKULL** - The skull is narrow, long and nearly flat, with parallel sides. Cheeks are clean and cheek muscles are not prominent. Supraorbital ridges are well developed.

**MUZZLE** - In profile, the muzzle is long, equal in length to the skull, and deep. The underline of the lower jaw is nearly parallel to the bridge of the muzzle. The end of the muzzle is blunt, and almost perpendicular to the

upper and lower lines of the jaw, forming a distinctly rectangular muzzle. The bridge of the muzzle is very broad, so that the end of the muzzle, viewed from the front, appears almost square. Mouth is dry. Removal of whiskers is permitted but not preferred.

*Faults:* Muzzle too long or too short; loose, fluttering lips.

**TEETH** - The Great Dane has a complete set of evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite.

*Minor Faults:* Crowded lower incisors; level bite.

*Serious Faults:* Overshot, undershot, or wry mouth.

**NOSE** - The nose is black, except for blue Danes where the nose is a dark blue-black. A black spotted nose is acceptable, but not preferred, on a harlequin Dane.

*Fault:* Pink nose.

*Disqualification:* Split nose.

**EYES** - Eyes are medium in size, almond-shaped, tight, and dark brown. A slightly lighter shade of brown is acceptable, but not preferred, in the blue Danes. Light-colored eyes, eyes of different colors, and walleyes are permitted in the harlequin Dane but not preferred.

*Faults:* Round or protruding eyes; yellow eyes; eyes too close together.

*Serious Faults:* Visible haw; obliquely set Mongolian eyes; functional abnormality of eyelids or eyelashes.

**EARS** - Ears may be cropped or natural, with no preference. Ears are high set and of moderate thickness. Natural ears are medium in size and fold forward close to the cheek. The top line of the ear fold is level with the skull. Cropped ears should be in proportion to the size of the head and stand erect, but a dog with properly set ears must not be penalized for an imperfect ear crop.

*Faults:* Any deviation from the standard that contributes to a hound-like appearance.

## **NECK**

The neck is long, well arched, and muscular. From the nape, the neck gradually broadens and flows smoothly into the shoulders. The underline of the neck is clean.

*Faults:* Short, thick neck; ewe neck, goose neck.

## **FOREQUARTERS**

Shoulder blades and upper arms are long and slanting, forming an angle of approximately 110 degrees.

**FORELEGS** - The elbows are close to the body. A line drawn from the upper tip of the shoulder blade to the back of the elbow joint will be perpendicular to the ground. The forelegs are straight with strong, slightly sloping pasterns.

*Faults:* Toeing in or out; down in pasterns.

## **BODY**

The Great Dane is a square dog. Its height, measured from the withers to the ground, should equal its length of body, measured from prosternum to point of

buttocks. The length of the forelegs (measured from point of elbow to the ground) should approximately equal one-half of the dog's height. The topline of the Great Dane flows smoothly from the withers to a short, level back. The ribs extend well back and are well sprung out from the spine. The loin is short and broad, with a well-defined tuck-up. The croup is broad and very slightly sloping. The chest is broad, well muscled, and deep, extending to the elbows. The forechest is well developed. The body underline is tightly muscled.

## **HINDQUARTERS**

The hindquarters are strong, broad, and muscular. The angulation of the hindquarters is in balance with the angulation of the forequarters.

**HIND LEGS** - The hind legs are strong and well angulated. When the dog is standing, the short, strong rear pasterns are perpendicular to the ground and, viewed from the rear, parallel to one another.

*Faults:* Steep croup; lack of rear angulation; over-angulation; cow hocks; open hocks.

## **FEET**

Feet are round, tight, and well arched. Nails are strong and as dark as possible, except that they may be lighter in harlequins. Front dewclaws may be removed.

*Faults:* Hare foot; splay foot.

*Serious Fault:* Rear dewclaws.

## **TAIL**

The tail is a natural extension of the topline. It is thick at the base and tapers to the tip. A tail of the correct length extends to the hock but never below. When the dog is relaxed, the tail hangs down naturally. When the dog is moving or alert, the tail may curve slightly upward but never above the level of the back.

*Serious Faults:* Ring or hooked tail.

*Disqualification:* Docked tail.

## **COAT**

The coat is short, close, and thick with a smooth, glossy appearance.

## **COLOR**

The following are the only allowed colors, markings, and color patterns:

**Brindle:** Strong black stripes in a chevron pattern on a yellow gold background. Preference shall be given where the base color is more intense and the brindling is more distinct and even. A black mask is preferred. Black should appear on the eye rims and eyebrow, and may appear on the ears and tip of the tail.

*Faults:* Too much or too little brindling; white markings on the chest and toes; black-fronted or dirty colored brindles.

**Fawn:** Yellow gold with a black mask. Black should appear on the eye rims and eyebrow, and may appear on the ears and tip of the tail. Preference is given to a deep yellow gold.

*Faults:* White markings on the chest and toes; black-fronted or dirty colored fawns.

**Blue:** Pure steel blue.

*Faults:* White markings on the chest and toes.

**Black:** Glossy black.

*Faults:* White markings on the chest and toes.

**Harlequin:** Black torn patches irregularly and well distributed over a white background. The black patches should never be so large as to give the appearance of a blanket, nor so small as to give a dappled effect. The presence of a few small gray patches or single black hairs showing through the white background, giving a dirty effect, are allowed but not preferred.

**Boston:** A solid black blanket extending over the body and skull with the following white markings: white muzzle, white collar, white chest, white on part or on the whole of the fore and hind legs, white tip of the tail. A full white collar is preferred. A small white marking in the blanket or a break in the white collar is acceptable. This color pattern is sometimes known as "Mantle."

*Disqualification:* Any color, marking, or color pattern not described above; albinism.

## HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

The Great Dane is a giant working breed and should always appear well proportioned for its size. A mature male may not be less than 30 inches at the shoulder. A mature female may not be less than 28 inches, although 30 inches or more is preferred.

## GAIT

When trotting, the gait is effortless, with long, easy strides, and showing good but not exaggerated reach in front and drive behind. When moving, the backline remains level with only a slight flexing to indicate suppleness. Viewed from any position, legs turn neither in nor out, nor do feet cross or interfere with each other. As speed increases, feet tend to converge toward centerline of balance.

## ELIMINATING FAULTS

*(An Eliminating Fault is a Fault serious enough that it eliminates the dog from obtaining any awards in a conformation event.)*

A mature male Great Dane under 30 inches at the shoulder; a mature female Great Dane under 28 inches at the shoulder.

## DISQUALIFICATIONS

*(A dog with a Disqualification must not be considered for placement in a conformation event, and must be reported to UKC.)*

Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchid.

Viciousness or extreme shyness.

Split nose.

Docked tail.

Color other than those described in "Color" paragraph.

Albinism.

*The docking of tails and cropping of ears in America is legal and remains a personal choice. However, as an international registry, the United Kennel Club, Inc. is aware that the practices of cropping and docking have been forbidden in some countries. In light of these developments, the United Kennel Club, Inc. feels that no dog in any UKC event, including conformation, shall be penalized for a full tail or natural ears.*