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 Reverend John Russell was a 19th century parson
with a passion for fox hunting, for which he developed a
well-known strain of fox hunting terriers. From this
strain was developed the Parson Russell Terrier and the
Jack Russell Terrier. The Jack Russell Terrier was a
smaller, longer-bodied, shorter-legged dog that was
used almost exclusively to hunt vermin and bolt rabbits.
For years, Jack Russell Terrier breeders referred to
these dogs as “puddin’ dogs” or “puds,” and some-
times just “shorties.”

In England, Ireland, and Australia, the longer-legged
square dog is known as the Parson Russell Terrier while
the lower, longer dog is called the Jack Russell Terrier.

UKC recognized the short-legged dogs as Russell
Terriers on January 1, 2001; and on January 1, 2009
revised the breed name to Jack Russell Terrier.

GENERAL APPEARANCE
The Jack Russell Terrier is a small, agile, active hunting
terrier, built to go to ground. The length of back from
withers to set-on of tail is slightly longer than the dog’s
height at the withers. 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 body is capable of being spanned by an
average man’s hands placed behind the front legs. The
head is moderately broad, with a flat skull, a well-
deined stop, and a powerful muzzle that is slightly
shorter than the skull. Ears are button or drop, and very
mobile. The tail is straight, set high, and, if docked, is
normally docked to a length where the tip is level with
the top of the ears. The skin is thick, and the coat,
whether wiry or smooth, is always dense. The Jack
Russell Terrier is solid white, or predominately white
with black, tan or brown markings. The Jack Russell
Terrier should be evaluated as a working terrier, and
exaggerations or faults should be penalized in
proportion to how much they interfere with the dog’s
ability to work. Scars should neither be penalized nor
regarded as proof of a terrier’s working abilities.

CHARACTERISTICS
The Jack Russell Terrier is a bold, friendly, active and
alert hunting terrier, built for work underground. This
breed is notoriously fearless and requires little
encouragement to go to ground. Aggression towards
anything other than legitimate quarry detracts from the
dog’s ability as a working terrier, and should be
discouraged as much as possible. This is a high-energy
breed and is happiest in an environment where there is
lots of regular activity.

HEAD
The head is proportionate to the size of the body. When
viewed from the front, it should resemble a triangle. When
viewed from the side, the muzzle is slightly
shorter than the skull and joined by a defined stop. The
planes of the skull and muzzle are parallel.

SKULL - The skull is flat and moderately broad, tapering
slightly toward the muzzle. Cheeks are well developed.
Serious Faults: Apple or domed skull.

MUZZLE - The muzzle is strong, with powerful, muscular
jaws. There is a minimum of falling away under the eye,
giving a moderately chiseled look. Lips are tight and
darkly pigmented.
Fault: Weak jaw.
TEETH - The Jack Russell Terrier has a complete set of comparatively large, evenly spaced, white teeth meeting in a scissors bite. Disqualifications: Undershoot or overshot bite.

NOSE - The nose is black and fully pigmented. Disqualifications: Brown or liver nose; absence of pigment.

EYES - Eyes are deep set, almond shaped, dark in color, with a mischievous, intelligent expression. Eyelids are tight. Eyerims are black. Faults: Light eyes; full, round eyes; triangular eyes. Disqualification: Blue eye.

EARS - The Jack Russell Terrier has small, V-shaped button or drop ears of great mobility. Ear leather is soft and fine. Dogs with button or drop ears may occasionally hold an ear erect. This shall be severely penalized in the show ring but does not disqualify the dog for registration purposes.

Serious Fault: Heavy, hound-like ears. Disqualification: Permanently erect ear. This disqualification shall not apply when the erect ear is the result of accident or injury.

NECK
The neck is clean, muscular, and of sufficient length to enable the dog’s mouth to extend beyond its forepaws when working underground. The neck gradually widens from the nape and blends smoothly into the shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS
Shoulders are long, sloping, smoothly muscled, and well laid back. The upper arm is sufficiently long to ensure that the elbows are set well under the body, and forms an apparent 90-degree angle with the shoulder blade.

The forelegs are strong, straight, and moderately well boned. The elbows are set close to the body, but able to move freely in action. The pasterns are short, powerful, straight, and flexible. When viewed in profile, the pasterns are nearly erect. Faults: Bowed legs; fiddle front; down in pasterns; toes turned out; knuckling over or any other misalignment of joints; out at elbow.

BODY
A properly proportioned Jack Russell Terrier is slightly longer than tall. The length of back from withers to set-on of tail is slightly longer than the height, measured from withers to ground. The Jack Russell Terrier is perfectly designed to go to ground. This requires a chest of sufficient depth to give good heart and lung room, but without so much depth and width that the dog is encumbered underground. The well-sprung ribs extend well back, but must be capable of being spanned behind the shoulder by an average man’s hand. The chest must be capable of being compressed so that the dog is unhindered when working underground. The back is of moderate length, and level, blending into a muscular, slightly arched loin with slight to moderate tuck-up. Skin is thick. Serious Faults: Barrel ribs; chest too deep or too broad.

HINDQUARTERS
The hindquarters are strong and muscular. The bone, angulation, and musculature of the hindquarters are in balance with the forequarters. The stifles are well bent, and the hocks are well let down. 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: Cow hocks; straight stifles.

FEET
The feet are fairly round, moderately small, well arched, and tight. Pads are hard, tough, and well cushioned. Dewclaws may be removed. Serious Faults: Thin feet; splayed feet.

TAIL
The tail is set on high and, if docked, is customarily docked to a length so that the tip of the tail is level with the top of the ears. When moving or alert, the tail may be straight or with a slight curve forward and carried erect or gaily. When the dog is at rest, the tail may drop.

COAT
The Jack Russell Terrier comes in three coat types. All are dense, hard, and weather resistant, and cover the entire dog, including the belly and underside of the thighs.

ROUGH: A double coat consisting of a short, dense undercoat, and very dense, wiry outer coat. Hair over the eyes and on the muzzle will form eyebrows and a beard. The outer coat should not be so long as to obscure the outline of the dog.

BROKEN: Any intermediate coat between a rough and smooth coat. The broken coat lies closer to the body than a rough coat and has longer guard hairs than a smooth coat. A broken-coated dog may or may not have face furnishings.

SMOOTH: A short, flat coat.

Rough- and broken-coated dogs may be stripped to preserve the quality of the coat, but the artfulness of the trimming is not a factor to consider in judging this breed.

Serious Faults: Silky or woolly coat.

COLOR
Solid white or predominantly white with any combination of black, tan, or brown markings are preferred, but an otherwise good specimen of the breed must not be penalized for heavy body color. Legs,
chest and belly must be white. The back and sides of a
dog with heavy body coloring must have a minimal
amount of white. Any white area may be ticked
providing that white predominates.
Disqualifications: Any color, pattern, or markings other
than listed above; albinism.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT
The Jack Russell Terrier is of a size to go to ground.
Mature Jack Russell Terriers range in height from 10 to
12 inches, and from about 11 to 13 pounds in weight.
Jack Russell Terriers should always be presented in
hard, working condition. Dogs outside the approved
range of height shall be penalized only to the degree
that their size affects their ability to work.
Serious Fault: Dogs over 12 inches in height.

GAIT
The Jack Russell Terrier moves with a jaunty, confident
attitude, conveying the character of the breed. When
trotting, the gait is effortless, smooth, powerful, and
well coordinated, showing good, but not exaggerated,
reach in front and drive behind. 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. Poor movement should be penalized to the
degree to which it reduces the Jack Russell Terrier’s
ability to perform the variety of tasks it was bred to do.

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.
Undershot or overshot bite.
Blue eye.
Brown or liver nose.
Absence of pigment in nose.
Permanently erect ear. This disqualification shall not
apply when the erect ear is the result of accident or
injury.
Any color, pattern, or markings other than listed.
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 feels that no dog
in any UKC event, including conformation, shall be
penalized for a full tail or natural ears.