

American Kennel Club Official Standard for the **FINNISH SPITZ**

General Appearance

The Finnish Spitz presents a fox-like picture. The breed has long been used to hunt small game and birds. The pointed muzzle, erect ears, dense coat and curled tail denote its northern heritage. The Finnish Spitz' whole being shows liveliness, which is especially evident in the eyes, ears and tail. Males are decidedly masculine without coarseness. Bitches are decidedly feminine without over-refinement.

The Finnish Spitz' most important characteristics are its square, well-balanced body that is symmetrical with no exaggerated features, a glorious red-gold coat and his bold carriage and brisk movement. Any deviation from the ideal described in the standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation. Structural faults common to all breeds are as undesirable in the Finnish Spitz as in any other breed, even though such faults may not be specifically mentioned in the standard.

Size, Proportion, Substance

Size - Height at the withers in dogs: 17 1/2 to 20 inches; in bitches: 15 1/2 to 18 inches.

Proportion - Square, length from forechest to buttocks equal to height from withers to ground. The coat may distort the square appearance.

Substance - Substance and bone in proportion to overall dog.

Head - Clean cut and fox-like. Longer from occiput to tip of nose than broad at widest part of skull in a ratio of 7:4. More refined with less coat or ruff in females than in males, but still in the same ratio.

A muscular or coarse head, or a long or narrow head with snipy muzzle, is to be penalized.

Expression - Fox-like and lively.

Eyes - Almond-shaped with black rims. Obliquely set with moderate spacing between, neither too far apart nor too close. Outer corners tilted upward. Dark in color with a keen and alert expression. Any deviation, runny, weepy, round or light eyes should be faulted.

Ears - Set on high. When alert, upward standing, open to the front with tips directly above the outer corner of the eyes. Small, erect, sharply pointed and very mobile. Ears set too high or low or too close together, long or excessive hair inside the ears are faults.

Skull - Flat between ears with some minimal rounding ahead of earset. Forehead a little arched. Skull to muzzle ratio is 4:3.

Stop - Pronounced.

Muzzle - Narrow as seen from the front, above and from the side; of equal width and depth where it insets to the skull, tapering somewhat, equally from all angles.

Nose - Black. Any deviation is to be penalized. Circumference of the nose to be 80% of the circumference of the muzzle at its origin.

Lips - Black; thin and tight.

Bite - Scissors bite. Wry mouth is to be severely faulted.

Neck, Topline, Body

Neck - Well set; muscular. Clean with no excess skin below muzzle. Appearing shorter in males due to their heavier ruff.

Topline - Level and strong from withers to croup.

Body - Muscular, square.

Chest - Deep, brisket reaches to the elbow. Ratio of chest depth to distance from withers to ground is 4:9.

Ribs - Well sprung.

Tuck-up - Slightly drawn up.

Loin - Short.

Tail - Set on just below level of topline, forming a single curl falling over the loin with the tip pointing toward the thigh. Plumed, curving vigorously from its base in an arch forward, downward, and backward, pressing flat against either thigh with tip extending to middle part of thigh. When straightened the tip of the tail bone reaches the hock joint. Low or high tailset, too curly a tail, or too short tail is to be faulted.

Forequarters

Shoulders - The layback is thirty degrees to the vertical.

Legs - Viewed from the front, moderately spaced, parallel and straight with elbows close to the body and turned neither out nor in. Bone strong without being heavy, always in proportion to the dog. Fine bone, which limits endurance, or heavy bone, which makes working movement cumbersome, is to be faulted.

Pasterns - Viewed from the side, slope slightly. Weak pasterns are to be penalized.

Dewclaws - May be removed.

Feet - Rounded, compact foot with well-arched toes, tightly bunched or close-cupped, the two center toes being only slightly longer than those on the outside. The toe pads should be deeply cushioned and covered with thick skin. The impression left by such a foot is rounded in contrast to oval.

Hindquarters

Angulation in balance with the forequarters.

Thighs - Muscular.

Hocks - Moderately let down. Straight and parallel.

Dewclaws - Removed.

Feet - As in front.

Coat

The coat is double with a short, soft, dense undercoat and long, harsh, straight guard hairs measuring approximately one to two inches on the body. Hair on the head and legs is short and close; it is longer and most dense on plume of tail and back of thighs. The outer coat is stiffer and longer on the neck and back, and in males, considerably more profuse at the shoulder, giving them a more ruffed appearance. Males carry more coat than females. No trimming of the coat except for feet is allowed. Whiskers shall not be trimmed. Any trimming of the coat shall be severely faulted. Silky, wavy, curly, long or short coat is to be faulted.

Color

Varying shades of golden-red ranging from pale honey to deep auburn are allowed, with no preference given to shades at either extreme so long as the color is bright and clear. As the undercoat is a paler color, the effect of this shading is a coat which appears to glow. White markings on the tips of the toes and a quarter-sized spot or narrow white strip, ideally no wider than 1/2 inch, on the forechest are permitted. Black hairs along lipline and sparse, separate black hairs on tail and back permitted. Puppies may have a good many black hairs which decrease with age, black on tail persisting longer. Muddy or unclear color, any white on the body except as specified, is to be penalized.

Gait

The Finnish Spitz is quick and light on his feet, steps out briskly, trots with lively grace, and tends to single-track as the speed increases. When hunting he moves at a gallop. The angulation called for permits him to break into a working gait quickly. Sound movement is essential for stamina and agility.

Temperament

Active and friendly, lively and eager, faithful, brave but cautious. Shyness, any tendency toward unprovoked aggression is to be penalized.

Note: Finnish Spitz are to be examined on the ground.

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