

# Old English Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.



JUDGES EDUCATION  
BREED STUDY GUIDE

## PREFACE

This information has been prepared by the Old English Sheepdog Club of America, Inc. Judge's Education Committee. We have attempted to promote a better understanding of our breed through written words, illustrations, and photographs.

The boxes at the beginning of each section are the direct quotes from the Official Breed Standard.

Special thanks to Dennis Maier [ddmaier@gmail.com](mailto:ddmaier@gmail.com) for his technical expertise and support of this project.

Learning about our breed is a continuing educational experience. Our materials are a work in progress, and will be updated annually.

Should you have questions or would like further information please contact:

Mary Anne Brocius  
Judges Education Chair  
The Old English Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.  
[gubicoes@comcast.net](mailto:gubicoes@comcast.net)

December - 2014

**“The Breed Standard is the Blueprint.  
The Breeder is the Builder.  
And the Judge is the Building Inspector.”**

- Percy Roberts

• Reprinted with permission from Dirty Beards Magazine, and Susan Vroom.



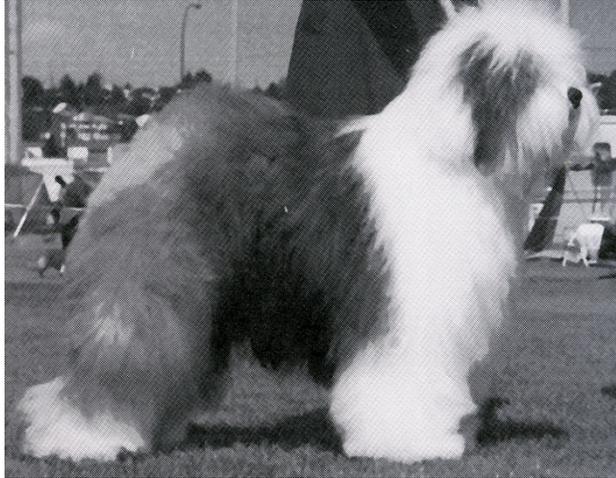
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## HISTORY



Dog literature started defining breeds with OES characteristics in the late 1600's. With references in books and periodicals about "big and blocky, with massive bone, and full coarse hair with white and merle markings, strong, active good natured, with general conduct staid and dignified". That was a description of what was called the Russian Terrier, a breed forbearer. In 1771 Gainsborough painted a recognizable OES and in 1835 Sidney Cooper crafted the first painting to represent, without a doubt, a purebred OES of the sort we would recognize today. The official beginning was in England in 1861 where they lumped all of the Shepherd's Dogs together at the local dog shows. In 1873 in Birmingham, England 3 exhibitors showed their dogs under judge M.B. Wynn, where he withheld first prize for lack of merit. The breed held on and improved and in 1888 the OES Club of England was formed. In 1903 and 1904 Mr. Henry A. Tilley made trips to the US to exhibit and he was instrumental in assisting with the founding of the OESCA in 1905. Old English Sheepdogs were recorded in the US in 1844 and the first official record with the AKC was a litter in 1898. As you can see from this brief overview it is not an old or ancient breed.



## GENERAL APPEARANCE

“A strong, compact, square, balanced dog. Taking him all around he is profuse, but not excessively coated, thickset, muscular and able-bodied. These qualities combined with his agility, fit him for the demanding tasks required of a shepherd’s or drover’s dog. Therefore, soundness is of the greatest importance. His bark is loud with a distinctive “pot casse” ring in it.”

It is the sum of the characteristics which give the Old English Sheepdog the look that is distinct and like no other breed. He is built for power and endurance. His ability for an instant takeoff, speedy gallop, quick turns, twists, and reverses enables him to do the job he was bred for. He is a Herding dog.

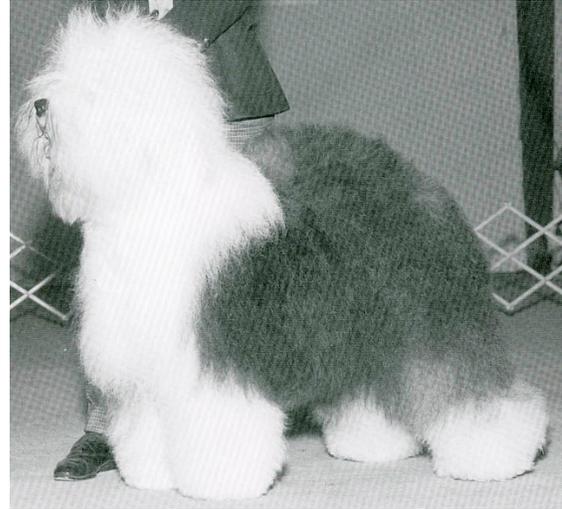
To live up to his potential, the OES must be **sound** and **well balanced**. The uniqueness of the breed comes in several important areas. He is short backed and very compact, yet he moves out with strong, powerful reach and drive. If viewed from above, one would notice he is pear shaped, narrower in the front with a broad rear. The very stout, gently arched loin, and round muscular hindquarters, with well let down hocks, enable him to move tirelessly in any gait. He stands higher at the loin (not the hip) than at the withers. Hidden under the long shaggy coat is a **sound, well balanced**, energetic, athletic and sweet tempered herding dog.

His loud “pot casse” bark enables him to be easily located out in the field. It also aids in controlling and guarding his flock and raising an alarm if needed.

## JUDGING APPEARANCE

The OES is often the most daunting for an aspiring judge to tackle. As one of the more heavily coated breeds, this is definitely a “hands-on” breed as both good and bad qualities may be hidden in the coat. Everything is simplified when you get past the coat.

The old adage, “Looks Can Be Deceiving”, can, at times, fit the perfectly groomed OES to a “T”. It is of utmost importance for judges to feel for the distinct characteristics that define this breed. The mental pictures obtained from the hands on examination, combined with the overall visual appearance, should simplify the choice. Grooming can hide a multitude of faults, so it is imperative that judges look past the grooming and feel for correct structure.



## **TYPE**

“Type, character and balance are of great importance and are on no account to be sacrificed to size alone.”

The OES type, in a visual sense is clearly the sum of his anatomical parts working in harmony. The type picture remains unchanged regardless of size. The OES is balanced regardless of height, color or markings. He is compact and square with substantial bone. Type is everything that makes the Old English Sheepdog what he is. It should never be sacrificed.

## **JUDGING TYPE**

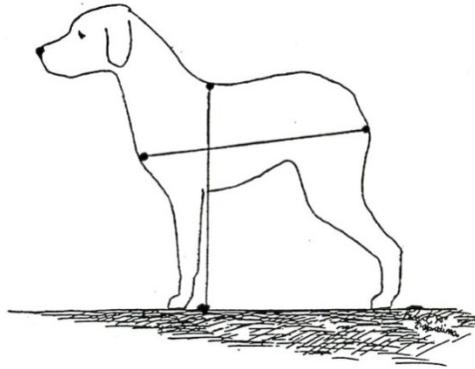
How close does the exhibit come to the standard? Is the dog the sum of his parts? Looks can be deceiving. Feel for squareness, balance and topline. Get under the hair.

## **SIZE – PROPORTION – SUBSTANCE**

### **SIZE**

Size - Height is measured from top of the withers to the ground.  
Dogs - 22 inches (55.9 cm) and upward  
Bitches - 21 inches (53.3 cm) and upward

The vertical measurement from the top of the withers to the ground and the horizontal measurement from the point of the shoulder to the ischium should be equal. Dogs are not necessarily larger than bitches. The dog should be masculine, while balanced and a bitch should be feminine and balanced.



## PROPORTION

“Length, measured from point of shoulder to point of ischium (tuberosity), practically the same as the height. Absolutely free from legginess or weaseliness.”

The overall picture of the OES should be one to suggest squareness. The balanced dog does not have one outstanding feature or any glaring faults. He is neither long and low, nor tall and short backed. He is well balanced and is eye pleasing by his nicely proportioned features that are in correct relation to one another. The Height of an OES is nearly 50% from the top of the withers to the elbow, and nearly 50% from the elbow to the ground.

## JUDGING SIZE AND PROPORTION

Size and proportion are absolutely independent of one another. Squareness, balance and correct proportions are just as necessary in a 21” bitch as they are in a 28” dog. Regardless of height, the dog must be square. Proper balance and dimension, are two important pieces in the overall correctness of the dog.

## SUBSTANCE

“Well muscled with plenty of bone.”

The bone of any given dog must be in proportion to his size and substance. The OES should be sturdy and rugged having substantial bone to enable him to perform his herding tasks.

## JUDGING SUBSTANCE

An OES should feel sturdy. His loin should be muscular and broad. The amount of substance should be in proportion to the size of the animal.





## HEAD

“A most intelligent expression”



## EYES

“Brown, blue or one of each. If brown, very dark is preferred. If blue, a pearl, china or wall-eye is considered typical. An amber or yellow eye is most objectionable.”

The eyes should be large, bright and set wide apart having an intelligent expression. The well arched bones over the eyes are divided by a clearly defined stop. If you have an exhibit with a “split eye” in which the brown eye has some blue in it or a blue eye that has some brown in it, this is acceptable.

### JUDGING EYES

It should be noted that the use of walleye in the standard is a synonym for China and Pearl. The brown eye must be dark and any shade of blue is acceptable. An amber (light brown) or yellow eye is objectionable. Pigmentation around the eye rims or lack of pigmentation should not be considered.

## EARS

“Medium sized and carried flat to the side of the head.”



## SKULL

“Capacious and rather squarely formed given plenty of room for brain power. The parts over the eyes (supra-orbital ridges) are well arched. The whole well covered with hair.”



## STOP

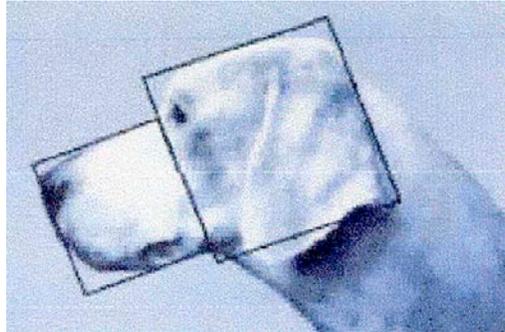
“Well defined.”

The large squarely formed skull is well covered with shaggy hair. The width of the skull is approximately equal to the length of the skull from the stop to the occiput. To be squarely formed the width of the skull will approximate the length from the stop to the occiput. The capacious skull is neither too flat or too dome shaped. The head and muzzle as a whole are squarely formed not just the top. They both should exhibit good depth.

The square head with the well defined stop is distinctly characteristic of the breed. A narrow, smoothly tapered head with little or no stop is considered a deformity. It does not allow room for the brain power a herding dog must possess.

## JUDGING SKULL AND STOP

To assess the skull and stop start by placing the heel of your hand on the muzzle between the nose and stop and moving forward feel for the degree of stop. Continue by using your thumb and fingers as you go up over the eyes, checking for the well arched supra-orbital ridges and a square, capacious skull. Large and square is an important combination for the skull to be correct. One or the other of these characteristics is not sufficient.



## JAW

“Fairly long, strong, square and truncated. Attention is particularly called to the above properties as a long, narrow head or snipy muzzle is a deformity.”

### JUDGING JAW

Webster defines “truncated” as having the end square, cut short and curtailed. While the jaw should be fairly long, a judge should pay particular attention to a long narrow, tapering muzzle as this is considered a fault.

## NOSE

“ALWAYS black, large and capacious.”

A Dudley Nose, one flesh-colored or spotted is not acceptable. The Standard states “ALWAYS BLACK”, and there should be no excuses made for a dog that is old enough to be entered in a point show to have a pink nose.

Pigmentation is hereditary and lack of it, as shown by a pink or speckled nose, should be discouraged. This is one area where the Standard is quite concise and positive. The nose is to be black, with no exceptions.

## TEETH

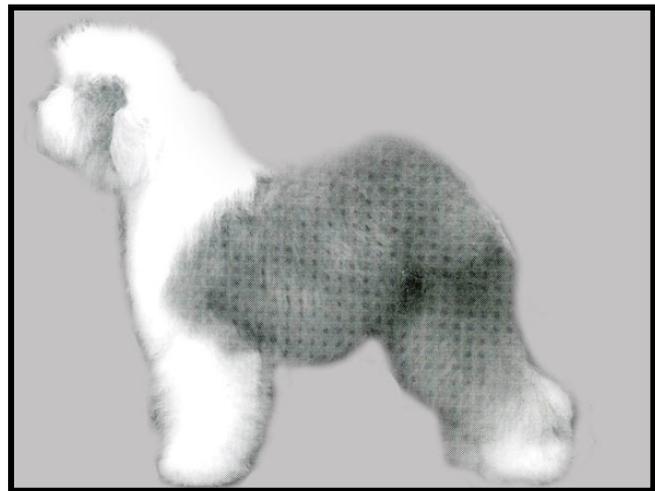
“Strong, large and evenly placed. The bite is level or tight scissors.”

A gentle mouth with a set of large white, evenly placed teeth is correct for the job he is expected to do. The bite can be level or tight scissors with incisors of the lower jaw fitting tightly behind those of the upper jaw. The OES’s strong truncated jaw lends itself well to this type of mouth and bite. The incisors should be straight across and not in a rounded configuration.

Again the Standard is positive in its statement. Because the OES must occasionally use the teeth in his work, an undershot, or overshot jaw would hamper or make impossible the performance of the dog’s necessary duty. The effectiveness of the working dog would be minimized.



### NECK – TOPLINE – BODY



### NECK

“Fairly long and arched gracefully.”

The neck should be fairly long, arched gracefully, well coated with hair and blend smoothly into the shoulders. A well arched neck is a sign of strength and power. When the OES is working in a grassy field and is “down”, the well arched neck is essential so that he can better observe his flock.

### JUDGING NECK

It is easy for a judge to be misled in the area of “fairly long gracefully arched” neck at first glance. A good handler can make a great deal of difference in the way a dog is presented, as can a good hairdresser with a stripping knife give an illusion of an arched neck and the position of the withers being correctly located when the neck is not arched and the withers not properly set. A well informed judge, after individual examination of each dog, knows which dog has the arched neck and which doesn't. As the hand is moved down the neck, an arch can be felt in the upper portion below the skull.



## TOPLINE

“Stands lower at the withers than at the loin with no indication of softness or weakness. Attention is particularly called to this topline as it is a distinguishing characteristic of the breed.”

The OES topline is a unique characteristic. It is gently arched over a very broad and stout loin. The topline is not to be mistaken for a roached back nor is it a swayback with the highest point at the hip bones. The correct topline has a gentle rise with the highest point over the loin.

## JUDGING TOPLINE

While judging topline, proper use of your hands is again of utmost importance. This technique should give you the answer: Start by checking that the dog is stacked properly as this will affect the topline. Then with your hand placed at the withers, run it along the topline. You should feel a gentle rise as your hand moves toward the loin of the dog. The ribs should extend well back and the loin should be short and gently arched. The greater height at the loin than at the withers need not be extreme and should not be achieved by a sway back, by very straight stifles, or by unusually short front legs.

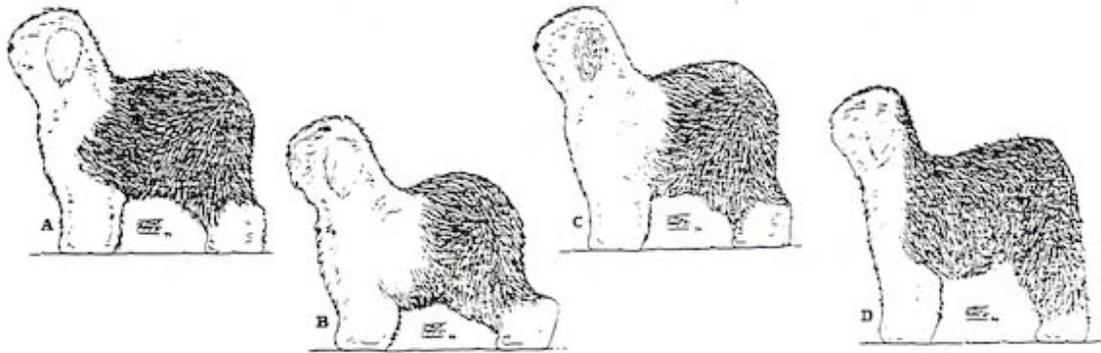
Remember, this is a characteristic that is unique to the OES. Without it you do not have a correct Old English Sheepdog.



## OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG

(Based on the AKC 1990 Revised Standard)

By Robert Cole



Robert Cole's drawings depict four OES to choose from when standing. Please select the one most pleasing to your eye.

Let's look at these examples for topline and the appearance of topline - 2 entirely different things.

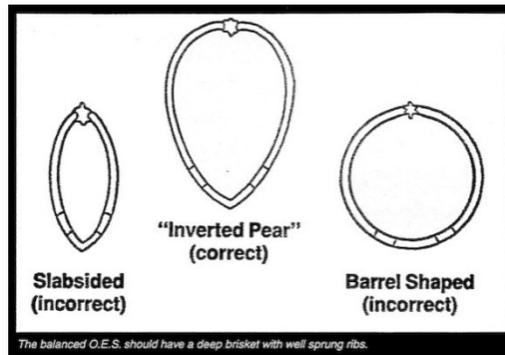
Dog A - This dog has a lot going for him, but the characteristic topline is not there. Level back.

Dog B - The topline is correct (legs too short - forelegs half the distance to the withers).

Dog C - Topline is correct

Dog D - No topline. Several areas of poor assembly. Poor front and rear assemblies.

## BODY



"Rather short and very compact, broader at the rump than at the shoulders, ribs well sprung and brisket deep and capacious. Neither slab-sided nor barrel-chested. The loin is very stout and gently arched."

A deep brisket, capable of housing strong lungs is required if the OES is to maintain the stamina needed for a day's work. The ribs should be well sprung, but not to the point of creating a barrel-like appearance.

## JUDGING BODY

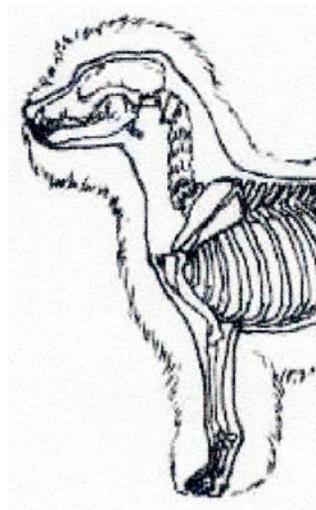
Hands must be placed behind the elbows and brought along the contour of the dog's body. As the hands move over the ribs, a well-muscled animal should be felt.

## TAIL

"Tail is docked close to the body, when not naturally bobtailed."

The Old English Sheepdog Club of America, Inc. has not prepared a position statement on un-docked OES. With the trends throughout the world with OES and other docked breeds, you may see one with a tail in your ring. According to the American Kennel Club, if the standard does not call for the disqualification of a dog that has a tail that is not docked, you must fault the deviation to the extent of the breed standard. The tail is docked.

## FOREQUARTERS



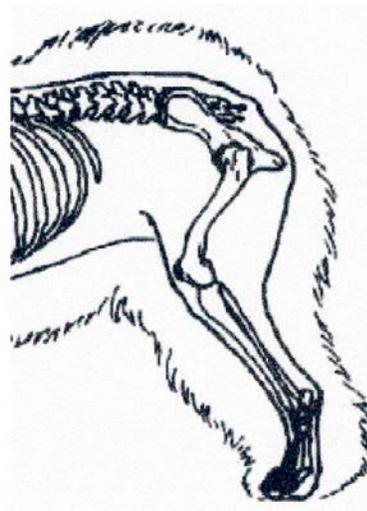
“Shoulders well laid back and narrow at the points. The forelegs dead straight with plenty of bone. The measurements from the withers to the elbow and from the elbow to the ground are practically the same.”

Neck and shoulders are the door way to the rest of the OES. A clean, arched neck, with plenty of length, well placed on a pair of shoulders, nicely sloped and inclining to narrowness at the points, are critical components which contribute to the proper balance of the dog.

The ideal OES should have a 90 degree angle in the shoulders. The shoulder blade and upper arm must have sufficient length and, in addition, be equal to each other in length. This will allow for the extension required for a ground covering and tireless gait

The forelegs are straight and strong with plenty of bone. They are well coated all around with shaggy hair. There should never be a sign of weakness at the pastern joint and the dog should be well up on his toes.

## HINDQUARTERS



“Round and muscular with well let down hocks. When standing, the metatarsus are perpendicular to the ground when viewed from any angle.”



The hindquarters are muscular with balance in length of bone between the femur and the lower thigh. Well angled stifles and well let down hocks complete the picture.

The hams are densely coated with a thick, long jacket in excess of any other part. Hindquarters that have been clipped and scissored excessively will not have coat in excess of any other part. Compactness is a considerable factor in the OES and grooming can make a dog appear to be what he is not. The illusion of compactness is not true compactness.

The hocks are to be well let down. High hocks or cow hocked usually hinders the dog from producing drive. The movement produced is unstable and a strong indicator of lack of endurance.

#### JUDGING HINDQUARATERS

You want a well-muscled rear with good breadth. It should be nicely rounded and angulated to match the well-laid back shoulders. The croup should be sloping, not high and flat. The hocks are well let down and make sure that you feel all the way down. Some dogs that are heavily coated may appear close behind or cow-hocked when in fact they are not. Less than ideal rears can be somewhat improved by skillful trimming. Without proper angles in the rear assembly, the OES will not have the proper drive and power needed for herding.

#### FEET



“Small and round, toes well arched, pads thick and hard, feet pointing straight ahead.”

#### JUDGING FEET

Judges should check the feet of the dogs. The OES stands on thick, hard pads and, for all his weight and strength, moves about as lightly as a cat. The feet are much smaller in appearance than the size of the dog. The toes are well arched and the feet small and round. Grooming may hide the lack of these qualities - feet, toes and pads should be examined.

## COAT



“Profuse, but not so excessive as to give the impression of the dog being overly fat, and of a good hard texture; not straight, but shaggy and free from curl. Quality and texture of coat to be considered above mere profuseness. Softness or flatness of coat to be considered a fault. The undercoat is a waterproof pile when not removed by grooming or season. Ears coated moderately. The whole skull well covered with hair. The neck well coated with hair. The forelegs well coated all around. The hams densely coated with a thick, long jacket in excess of any other part. Neither the natural outline nor the natural texture of the coat may be changed by any artificial means except that the feet and rear may be trimmed for cleanliness.”

The OES has two distinct coats. A thick soft undercoat next to his body and a crisp, harsh, shaggy one outside.

The outer layer is long and harsh. It is not in the least curly, neither is it, to any degree, straight. It is rough surfaced and wiry. Above all, the OES coat should look shaggy and convey an impression of growing profusely in all directions.

Underneath the outer coat is a dense thick coat of a waterproof “pile”. Both coats may be considerably modified by grooming.

## JUDGING COAT

The presence of foreign substance is cause for dismissal from the ring. Teased heads, bodies and legs followed by a can of spray do not allow coat texture to be judged. You should not see a dog go around the ring with the legs moving, but not the hair! Some dogs are over groomed today and the standard clearly states that this is incorrect. A poor specimen should not be rewarded over a superior one simply on the basis of grooming. An OES should be clean, brushed out and free of mats.

## COLOR

“Any shade of gray, grizzle, blue or blue merle with or without white markings or in reverse. Any shade of brown or fawn to be considered distinctly objectionable and not to be encouraged.”

The correct color of the OES coat may vary in shades of blue, grey, grizzle or blue merle. Any shade of fawn or brown is objectionable and should be treated as such. There is positively no desired shade of color or markings.

Splashes or flashes of white in the solid body markings have always been considered typical and should never be subject to penalty. A good dog is a good dog, regardless of markings.

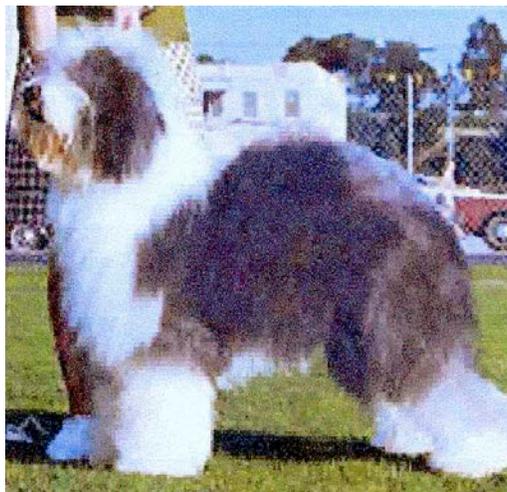
**COLOR – Continued.**



**6 months**



**15 months**



**Adult**

## JUDGING COLOR

No dog can be fairly dubbed too light or too dark in color if his coat does not contain shades of brown or fawn. Any shade of gray, grizzle, or blue merle is correct as long as no shades of brown or fawn are present.

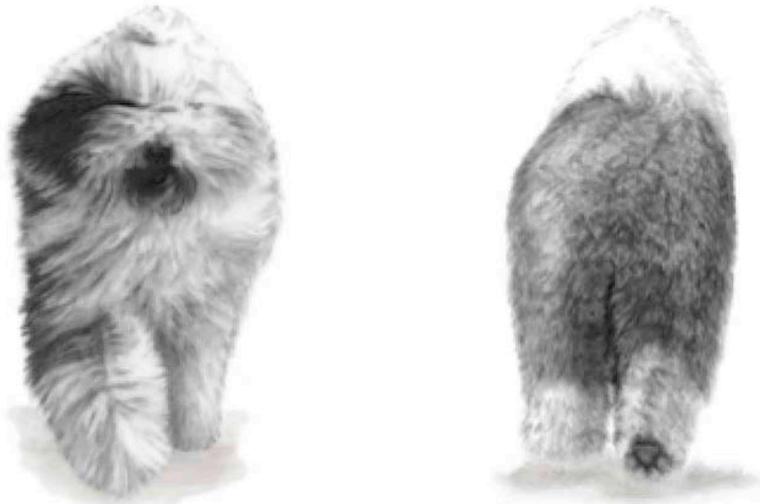
The depth of gray color is also a function of age. The very light, silvery gray of adolescence very frequently darkens with maturity. The difference in the shade of gray, be it light or dark is not to be penalized.

A footnote to coat color is to identify sun bleaching and/or changing puppy coats. Sun bleached coats have temporary red or brown tinges to the ends. When dogs have a brown or fawn look to the coat, spread the hair apart to see the inner hair color. Check the puppy coat for the new guard hairs (texture) and more mature hair coming in. Young dogs may have coats that transition from soft black hair that may be somewhat brown. The transition coat can be light grey with brown dead puppy hair. Look through the hair for incoming undercoat and coarse outer hair.

## GAIT

“When trotting, movement is free and powerful, seemingly effortless, with good reach and drive, and covering maximum ground with minimum steps. Very elastic at a gallop. May amble or pace at slower speeds.”





*Be aware that the coat can distort your impression of the movement. Watch the pads going away.*

An Old English Sheepdog's effectiveness as a herding dog can be evaluated quickly and relatively accurately by watching how he moves at a trot.

Looking at the OES, and the way he is built, one would not expect him to gallop well. Free to move with speed, he is an active, tireless galloper, covering ground quickly with apparently little effort. Unfortunately, you will not see the elastic gallop in the show ring.

The OES must maintain balance, proportion, type and topline while in motion. The dog should project the same balance, proportion, type and topline in motion as when it stands.

The profile outline that is seen when a dog is in motion is very important when evaluating type as well as movement. It is the dog's balance, starting with the correct head carriage and continuing along the proper topline and croup - creating a harmonious whole. This should all work together with the breed-specific stride - in this case - trotting, ambling or pacing.

The OES must have sufficient neck to carry its head. However, in the OES and many herding breeds the head is not always carried up. Remember, what the OES is watching is closer to the ground, so the head will often plane a bit lower. Carrying the head up is flashy in the show ring, but is not always correct for a Herding dog.

## JUDGING GAIT

Equal emphasis should be placed on the three angles from which the judge views the dog's movement. Length of stride is determined by correct shoulder layback, length of upper arm and the rear angulation the dog possesses.

According to the standard an OES may amble or pace at a slower speed.

Ambling is a "four beat pace" which may sound like a contradiction, but is an accurate explanation. In ambling, the front and rear on each side descend together, but striking the ground is a bit out of synch so that it may look like pacing, but is really a four beat gait.

Pacing is a "two beat gait". The front and rear feet, on the same side, strike the ground simultaneously in pacing. The left side hits, then the right side hits.

Gait and movement are separate. Movement is the way a particular gait is executed. In the trot, for example, the movement should have good extension in the front and good drive in the rear. A dog with balanced angulation will have equal extension in the front and rear. The end result is a properly executed gait.

Coat may influence your perception of the way an OES is moving and you must learn to see through the coat in action. A lot of coat on the front may make a dog look out at the elbows or even a little sloppy. Likewise, don't be fooled by all the hair on an overly wide front that does not converge. An untrimmed hindquarter can look close and markings on the legs may give a false impression of movement. Watch the pads going away.

A Herding dog should move as though it could cover ground at a steady gait for long periods of time and never miss a beat or break down. He should be well-balanced and athletic with good reach and drive.

The front should reach easily and smoothly without hitching, rolling, waddling or hackney movement. The rear drives straight back without any wasted motion (kicking up). A Herding dog will drop his head and carry it forward as his speed increases; proper assessment of OES movement requires that the dog be shown on a loose lead, not "strung up" and at a moderate speed.



## TEMPERAMENT



"An adaptable, intelligent dog of even disposition, with no sign of aggression, shyness or nervousness."



## JUDGING TEMPERAMENT

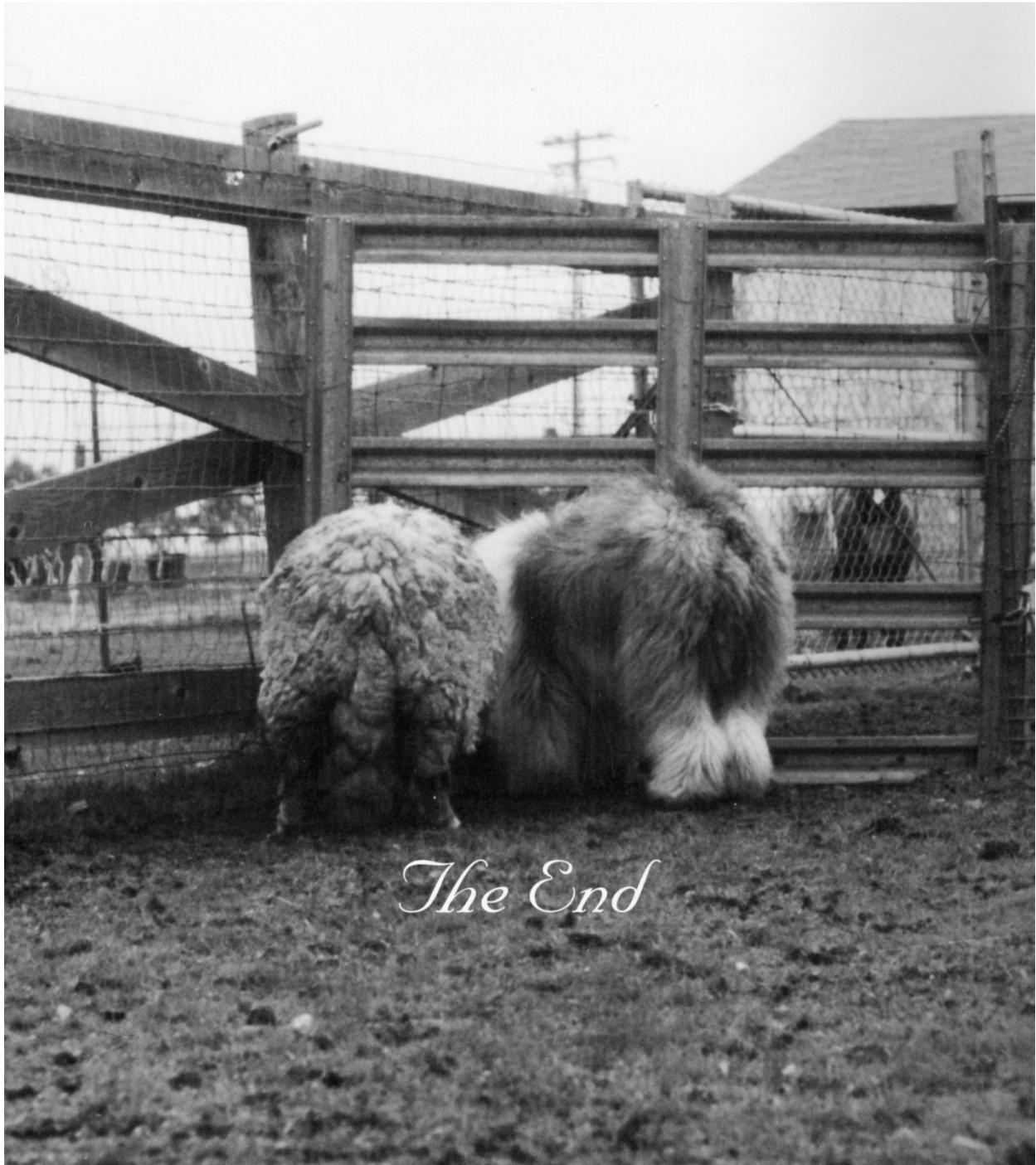
Do not reward an exhibit that demonstrates aggression, shyness or nervousness.

## OES IN PERFORMANCE EVENTS

This versatile, agile Herding Dog has become a standout in the Performance Events. Obedience, Rally, Agility, and Herding feature OES as able, willing workers. For more information visit [www.PerformanceOES.com](http://www.PerformanceOES.com).



THE END



## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1-- Official Breed Standard of the American Kennel Club & the OESCA

Attachment 2-- Glossary of Terms Found In The OES Standard

Attachment 3-- Points of the Dog Diagram

Attachment 4-- YOU BE THE JUDGE, Robert Cole, DOG NEWS, 2003

Attachment 5-- THE JUDGE'S EYE, Dorothy McDonald, AKC GAZETTE, Vol. 120, No. 1, January 2003.

Attachment 6-- JUDGING THE OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG, Elizabeth Muthard, AKC Advanced Herding Institute, 2003.

Attachment 7-- IT'S GOOD TO BE SQUARE - Col. Wm. Garvey, Breed Columnist Ed Johanson, AKC Gazette, Date Unknown.

Attachment 8-- OESCA JE Handout

Attachment 9-- OESCA Mentor Contact List

## Official Standard for the Old English Sheepdog

**GENERAL APPEARANCE** A strong, compact, square, balanced dog. Taking him all around, he is profusely, but *not excessively coated*, thickset, muscular and able-bodied. These qualities, combined with his agility, fit him for the demanding tasks required of a shepherd's or drover's dog. Therefore, *soundness is of the greatest importance*. His bark is loud with a distinctive "pot-casse" ring to it.

### SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

Type, character and balance are of greater importance and are on no account to be sacrificed to size alone.

**SIZE** Height (measured from top of withers to the ground). Dogs: 22 inches (55.8 cm) and upward. Bitches: 21 inches (53.3 cm) and upward.

**Proportion** Length (measured from point of shoulder to point of ischium [tuberosity]) practically the same as the height. Absolutely free from legginess or weaseliness.

**SUBSTANCE** Well muscled with plenty of bone.

**HEAD** A most intelligent expression.

**EYES** Brown, blue or one of each. If brown, very dark is preferred. If blue, a pearl, china or wall-eye is considered typical. An amber or yellow eye is most objectionable.

**EARS** Medium sized and carried flat to the side of the head.

**SKULL** Capacious and rather squarely formed giving plenty of room for brain power. The parts over the eyes (supra-orbital ridges) are well arched. The whole well covered with hair.

**STOP** Well defined.

**JAW** Fairly long, strong, square and truncated. *Attention is particularly called to the above properties as a long, narrow head or snipy muzzle is a deformity.*

**NOSE** Always black, large and capacious.

**TEETH** Strong, large and evenly placed. The bite is level or tight scissors.

**NECK, TOPLINE, BODY -- NECK** Fairly long and arched gracefully.

**TOPLINE** Stands lower at the withers than at the loin with no indication of softness or weakness. *Attention is particularly called to this topline as it is a distinguishing characteristic of the breed.*

**BODY** Rather short and very compact, broader at the rump than at the shoulders, ribs well sprung and brisket deep and capacious. Neither slab-sided nor

barrel-chested. The loin is very stout and gently arched.

**TAIL** Docked close to the body, when not naturally bob tailed.

**FOREQUARTERS** Shoulders well laid back and narrow at the points. The forelegs dead straight with plenty of bone. The measurements from the withers

to the elbow and from the elbow to the ground are practically the same.

**HINDQUARTERS** Round and muscular with well let down hocks. When standing, the metatarses are perpendicular to the ground when viewed from any angle.

**FEET** Small and round, toes well arched, pads thick and hard, feet pointing straight ahead.

**COAT** Profuse, but not so excessive as to give the impression of the dog being overly fat, and of a good hard texture: not straight, but shaggy and free from curl. *Quality and texture of coat to be considered above mere profuseness.* Softness or flatness of coat to be considered a fault. The undercoat is a waterproof pile when not removed by grooming or season. Ears coated moderately. The whole skull well covered with hair. The neck well coated with hair. The forelegs well coated all around. The hams densely coated with a thick, long jacket in excess of any other part. Neither the natural outline nor the natural texture of the coat may be changed by any artificial means except that the feet and rear may be trimmed for cleanliness.

**COLOR** Any shade of gray, grizzle, blue or blue merle with or without white markings or in reverse. *Any shade of brown or fawn to be considered distinctly objectionable and not to be encouraged.*

**GAIT** When trotting, movement is free and powerful, seemingly effortless, with good reach and drive, and covering maximum ground with minimum steps. Very elastic at a gallop. May amble or pace at slower speeds.

**TEMPERAMENT** An adaptable, intelligent dog of even disposition, with no sign of aggression, shyness or nervousness.

*APPROVED FEBRUARY 10, 1990  
EFFECTIVE MARCH 28, 1990*

## ATTACHMENT 2 – Glossary of Terms

### Glossary of Terms

**Amble** - A relaxed, easy gait in which the legs on either side move almost, but not quite, as a pair. Often seen as the transition movement between the walk and the faster gaits.

**Arched** - Both toes and neck are described as "arched," but the word has, obviously, quite different meanings in the two instances. An "arched" neck refers to the manner of carrying the head when standing still. The neck will describe a graceful curve forward and then upward from its base, supporting the head in a position well above and slightly forward of the chest

In the "arched" -toes foot, the dog stands well "up on the pads of its feet" and there will be a generous distance up between the pads to the top of the "arch," which will stand well above the ground.

**Blue – merled** (coat color) - Blue and gray mixed with black. Marbled.

**Brisket** - The forepart of the body below the chest, between the forelegs, closest to the ribs.

**Capacious** - Able to contain much; large; roomy, spacious.

**Character** - Expression, individuality, and general appearance and deportment as considered typical of a breed.

**Croup** - The back part of the back, above the hind legs.

**Docked** - The tail shortened (or eliminated) by surgical removal, a procedure ordinarily accomplished within a few days after birth in those breeds where the Standard requires such alteration.

**Eyes** - (Colors)

- **China** - An opaque blue characteristic of certain china.
- **Light** - Any light shade of the specified dark (brown) eye color; a hazel, yellow,

or amber eye. Not a term referring to any shade of blue.

- **Pearl** - Nearly the color of mother of pearl. A nearly neutral gray with slight bluish cast
- **Walleye** - A light gray or whitish blue iris. Also, in our breed, used to refer to the dog which has one dark brown eye and one blue eye.

**Grizzle** (coat color) - Bluish gray, sprinkled or streaked with gray.

**Hams** - Muscular development of the hind leg just above the stifle (the dog's knee); the more heavily muscled part of the upper thigh that leads to and becomes part of the buttocks.

**Height** - Vertical measurement from the top of the withers to the ground; referred to usually as shoulder height or height at the shoulder. The withers is the highest point of the scapula or shoulder blade at the base of the neck.

**Hocks** - The tarsus or collection of bones of the hind leg forming the joint between the second thigh and the metatarsus. The hock corresponds to the heel in man. The dog stands and walks on its toes, its heel (hock) standing up from the ground. **Well let down hocks** - hocks close to the ground.

**Ischium** - (tuber) Rear point of the pelvic bone.

**Level bite** - When the front teeth (incisors) of the upper and lower jaws meet exactly edge to edge. Pincer bite.

**Loin** - Region of the body on either side of the vertebral column between the last ribs and the hindquarters.

**Metatarsus** - That portion of the foot between the ankle (hock) and the digits (toes).

**Occiput** - Highest point at the back of the skull, above where the neck joins the head; in many breeds it forms a crest and is quite prominent.

**Pacing** - A gait which tends to promote a rolling motion of the body, The left foreleg and left hind leg advance in unison, then the right foreleg and right hind leg. Differentiated from the amble principally by the fact that the speed is greater in the pace.

**Pads** - Tough, shock-absorbing projections on the underside of the feet The soles,

**Points** (Point of Shoulder) - The lower or front end of the scapula (shoulder blade) in the region of the chest.

**Pot-Casse** - Broken pot (from French, casser - to break); sound of a pot when it breaks upon being dropped or falling.

**Ribs** -

- Slabsidedness - Having flat sides, the result of an inadequate outward curve of the rib structure.
- Well sprung- Having more arch to the ribs allowing endurance of the lungs and heart

**Skull** - The skeleton of the head; the bony framework which protects the brain and chief sense organs and supports the jaws. The skull does not include the muzzle, forehead, or jaws.

**Sloping** (Shoulders) - The shoulder blade set obliquely or "laid back."

**Snipy** - (Muzzle) Weak or pointed forehead.

**Soundness** - The state of mental and physical health in which all organs and faculties are complete and functioning normally, each in its rightful relation to the other.

**Stifle** - The joint of the hind leg between the thigh and the second thigh.

**Stop** - The step up from muzzle to skull; indentation between the eyes where nasal bone and skull meet.

**Supraorbital Ridge** - Brow area over the eyes.

**Symmetry** - Correctness or balance of proportions; beauty of form arising from a harmony of proportion among component parts.

**Truncated** - Having the end square or even, giving the appearance of having been cut off or lopped shorter.

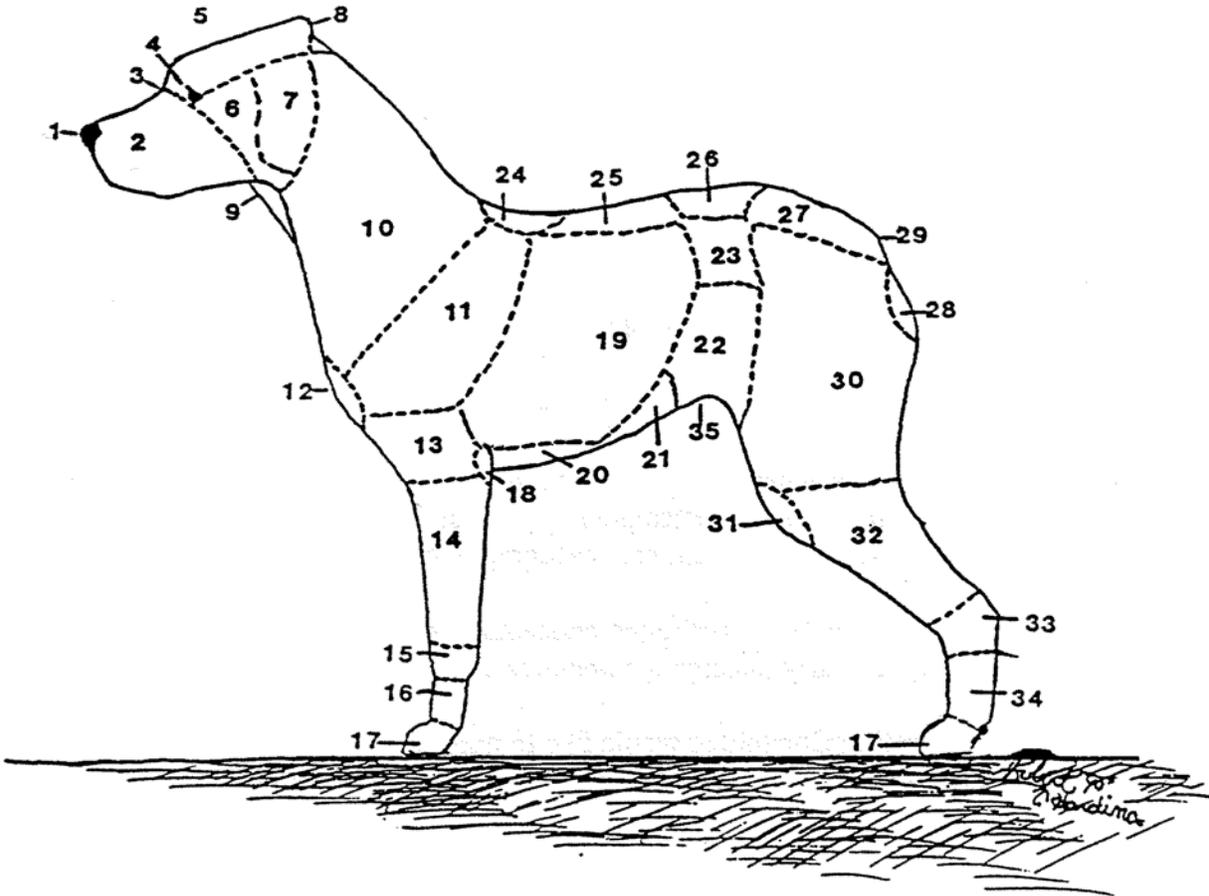
**Type** - The characteristic qualities distinguishing a breed; the embodiment of a Standard's essentials.

**Undercoat** (Double Coat) - A separate and shorter (thus "under") coat of softer hair providing warmth and waterproofing. The outer coat, which is longer and coarser and is sometimes referred to as the "guard" coat, is resistant to weather and protective against brush and brambles.

**Weaselness** - Lean, long body with short legs. Opposite of legginess.

**Withers** - Highest point of body immediately behind neck, this is the top of the shoulder blades, the point from which height is measured.

ATTACHMENT 3 – Points of the dog diagram



POINTS OF THE DOG

1	Nose	13	Upper arm; arm	25	Back
2	Muzzle; foreface	14	Forearm	26	Loin
3	Stop	15	Knee	27	Croup; rump
4	Eye	16	Front pastern	28	Ischium tuberosity
5	Skull; forehead	17	Foot; paw	29	Tail; stern
6	Cheek	18	Elbow	30	Thigh
7	Ear	19	Ribs	31	Stifle
8	Occiput	20	Brisket	32	Second thigh
9	Throat	21	Abdomen; belly	33	Hock
10	Neck	22	Flank	34	Rear pastern — Metatarsus
11	Shoulder	23	Coupling	35	Tuck up
12	Point of Shoulder	24	Withers		

Length is measured from point of shoulder to ischium (12 to 28).

Height is measured from withers (24) to ground.

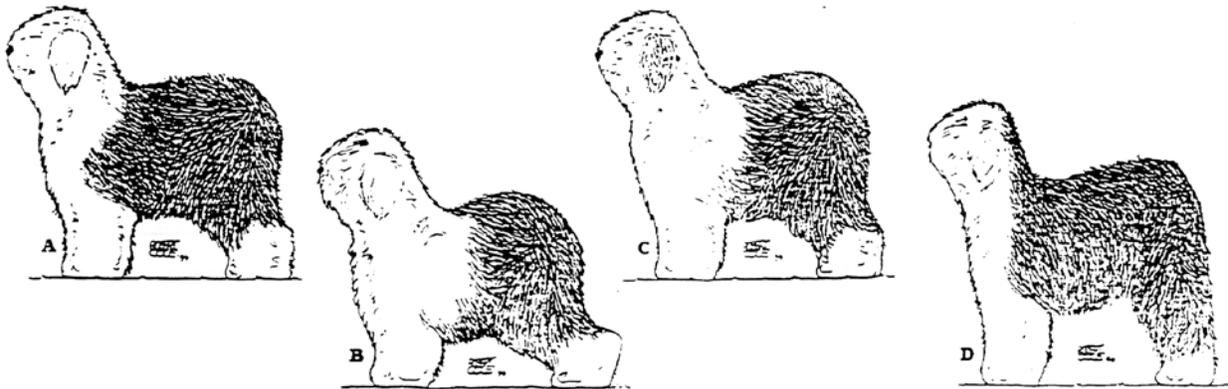
Length is the same as the height.

# YOU BE THE JUDGE

## OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG

*(Based on the AKC 1990 Revised Standard)*

By Robert Cole



## OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG

*(Based on the AKC 1990 Revised Standard)*

By Robert Cole

Regardless of profuse coat, you have probably made a preliminary assessment of this class of four Old English Sheepdogs stacked in profile. You have no doubt found that even without a hands-on examination two examples are seen to look very much alike, a third to have too much angulation, and a fourth to be steep in front and steep in rear. Make a preliminary selection of first, second, third and fourth place. But be prepared to change them around after a hands-on examination.

Because of profuse coat, the OES requires a close, hands-on examination. My detailed description of each example will serve as a substitute for your hands. In describing typical I shall follow the hands-on procedure that I use, elaborating on what I believe to be required type and structure for this shepherd or drover's dog. Then I shall describe each of the dogs individually and you can confirm or rearrange your placements, agreeing or disagreeing with my placements.

## You Be the Judge - Continued

### TYPICAL

Viewed in profile the typical OES should appear practically square, having the same length of body as height. Viewed head-on his forelegs are straight and his feet point straight forward. On examination of the head you should see a large, black nose with wide nostrils and feel a broad solid cutoff muzzle. The skull should feel capacious and rather square. A long, narrow head or snipy muzzle is a deformity - I cannot put it stronger than that.

Use your thumb to feel for a well defined stop and pronounced ridge over the eyes. This particular typical example has one brown and one blue eye (both could be brown, blue, pearl, china or walleye). An amber or yellow eye is most objectionable. Pigmentation around the eyes is preferred even if not always (AKC Standard) stated. Check the ears, they should be small, flat and carried to the side of the head.

You should be able to feel a degree of forechest in front of the point of shoulder and put a hand's breadth between the forelegs, the brisket level with elbows. Feel the arch of the fairly long neck and ensure that the shoulders are well laid back and narrow at the points. Place your hand at the withers and move it firmly along the backbone towards the croup. You should be able to feel a definite rise over the loin. This rise causes the OES to stand lower at the shoulder than at the loin. The rise may be slight, perhaps an inch or less, but it should always be perceptible (see outline sans coat). This is one aspect of breed type that separates the OES from other breeds.

Another aspect of OES breed type you must feel for is a rump broader than the shoulders. Also feel for ribs well sprung, neither slab-sided nor barrel- chested. The tail is customarily docked close to body when not naturally bob tailed. The measurement from withers to elbow and from the elbow to ground (the elbow level with brisket) are practically the same. The feet are small and round, the toes well arched, the pads thick and hard.

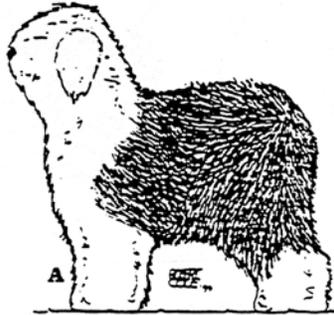
The typical coat is profuse, but not so excessive as to give the impression of the dog being overly fat, and must be of good hard texture, not straight, but shaggy and free from curl. Quality and texture of coat should be considered above profuseness, and profusion to be considered above mere length. The undercoat is a waterproof pile when not removed by grooming or season. The head is well covered with hair, ears moderately coated, neck well coated, forelegs well coated all round, hindquarters more heavily coated than the rest of the body. Neither the natural outline nor the natural texture of the coat may be changed by any artificial means except that the feet and rear may be trimmed for cleanliness.

Color may be any shade of gray, grizzle, blue or blue merle with or with-out white markings or in reverse. Any shade of brown or fawn is undesirable.

Size is 22 inches and upward for dogs, 21 inches and upward for bitches in Canada and United States; in Britain and elsewhere height is 24 inches and upward for dogs, 22 inches and upward for bitches. Height is not mentioned in any Standard but varies with the size of the OES from about fifty-five pounds for a small bitch to one hundred and twenty pounds and over for a very large dog.

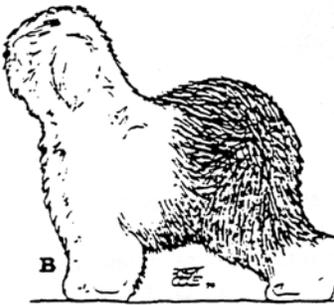
## You Be the Judge - Continued

### DOG A



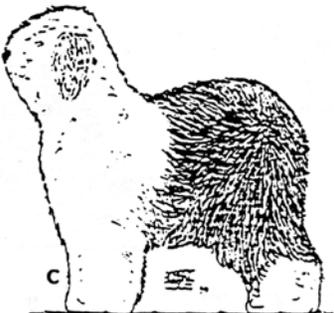
This square, sound example possesses most of the OES characteristics described as typical. In addition his straight forelegs have sufficient bone and the front pasterns slope slightly. In the rear his hindquarters are round, muscular, angulated at stifle and hock, and his hocks are well let down. On the debit side his topline is level - there is not the required rise over loin.

### DOG B



He is not as tall as the other three dogs but he is within the limit. He is not as tall because his legs are too short; the forelegs should be half the distance to withers, the body deep, and the elbow level with brisket.

### DOG C

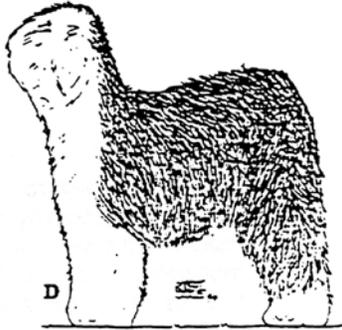


His topline correctly rises over his loin, his rump is wider than his shoulders, but his second thigh is overly long setting his rear pasterns too far rearward of a line dropped down from the buttocks. To compensate, the rear pastern sickles.

## You Be the Judge - Continued

His strong muzzle correctly measures approximately half the total length of head and his eyes are set well apart. He illustrates my description of typical except for some sun bleaching of his hair, which should not be confused with objectionable brown or fawn. This is a good time to mention that some slow shedding puppy coats have a temporary red-brown tinge to the ends, a frustration to the owner.

### DOG D



The small size and shape of this OES's nose is a good indication of what you can expect to find under the hair on his narrow muzzle. The nose should be large, black and prune-like. This example's small round nose goes with a narrow head, snipy muzzle, lack of underjaw, and 'spoon shaped' placement of the incisors. A long, narrow head or snipy muzzle is a deformity in this breed.

Flick back the hair from the eyes and check eye color. Eyes can be brown, blue or one of each, very dark being preferred. If blue, a pearl, china or walleye is considered typical. This dog has one amber eye and one yellow eye - both objectionable.

His body is longer than the other three examples. He still appears squarish because he is leggy, a departure warned of in the Standard.

His shoulders and upper arms are steep. His withers are correctly lower than the loin but the dip behind the withers is soft. The loin is longer than desirable and not correctly broad. The pelvis is steep and this has steepened the hindleg thus reducing angulation at stifle and hock and raising the hindquarters. Both ends are equally inferior.

### PLACEMENTS

First Place is between Dog A and Dog C. The only important difference between the two is topline. A strong topline, lower at the withers than at the loins, is a distinguishing characteristic of the breed. Dog A has a level topline, a departure. Dog C's correct topline is lower at the withers than the loin. I gave Dog C First Place. I gave Dog A Second Place over short-legged, over angulated in rear Dog B. Fourth Place went to Dog D.

### *Dog News*

## THE JUDGE’S EYE

### Balance is one of the key aspects of breed type. By Dorothy Macdonald

**W**hen we evaluate dogs, what do we mean by balance? How important is it? How does a judge recognize it?

Balance can be defined as *the inter-relationship of the parts to one another*. It is a crucial dimension in understanding any breed and in judging every dog. Almost every standard mentions balance at least once.

The importance of balance is stated in the Golden Retriever standard: “Overall appearance, balance, gait and purpose to be given more emphasis than any of his component parts.” The English Setter standard contains an almost identical sentence. The Fox Terrier standard calls balance “the keystone of the Terrier’s anatomy.”

Type, soundness, and balance create a triangle of qualities that cannot be separated when you evaluate a dog. “Balance, soundness and type are of greater importance than size”: So speaks the Otterhound standard.

Balance is essential in both the Pekingese and the German Shepherd Dog. The Pekingese standard reads, “a well-balanced compact dog with heavy front and lighter hindquarters,” while the German Shepherd standard reads, “It is well-balanced with harmonious development of the forequarter and hindquarter.” Clearly, since there is considerable difference between these breeds, each must be balanced in its own particular way, as described in detail in its standard. There is no such thing as generic balance.

In some cases, balance is square. The Norwegian Elkhound standard describes the breed as “square in profile, closecoupled and balanced in proportions.” In other cases, balance is off-square. For example, the Löwchen standard states, “The body is just off-square when properly balanced.”

As you study more breeds and standards, it becomes obvious that correct balance exists only within the framework of each individual standard. Remember that balance is only desirable if it is a balance created from quality parts. A balance of mediocre parts creates mediocrity.

#### AN OUTSTANDING HEAD

An outstanding head is the result of correct balance and proportion among its component parts. Correct structure varies from breed to breed, as outlined in the respective standards.

For example, the Fox Terrier standard states, “In a well balanced head there should be little apparent difference in length between skull and foreface.” On the other hand, in the Bichon Frise standard we find, “A properly balanced head is three parts muzzle to five parts skull.”

Ears or eyes that do not fit the head—because they are the wrong shape or badly placed—are distortions of the standard and create an imbalance.

#### MOVEMENT

In any breed, a beautiful mover is the result of correct, matching ends that are connected by a body of breed-specific dimensions, proportions, and shape.

On movement, the Great Dane standard states that “the powerful rear drive should be balanced to the reach.” The American Water Spaniel is constructed very differently from the Dane, yet the standard similarly states that the AWS “moves with well-balanced reach and drive.”

The profile outline seen when a dog is in motion is of supreme importance in evaluating type. It is the dog’s balance, starting with the correct head carriage for the breed and continuing along the proper topline all the way to the tail, that helps create a harmonious whole. All this works in conjunction with the breed-specific stride, whether it be for a Chow Chow or a Poodle.

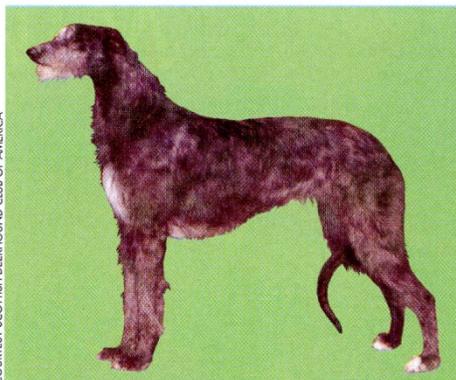
Exhibitors spend a great deal of time trying to display the outstanding features of their dogs, but a judge has to look beyond handling in order to evaluate balance. This is particularly true when seeing a dog in motion, as most exhibitors move their dogs too

fast. A Miniature Pinscher who is moved too fast can lose the hackney-like gait that the standard calls for, just as a Scottish Deerhound can lose his lift. It is equally true that a too-slow gait makes it hard to see the requisite reach and drive. It is rare, though, that an exhibitor moves a dog too slowly.

#### CREATING A GREAT DOG

It is a pleasure to see a great head and to watch a fluid mover. These are major elements in a judge’s evaluation. Still, neither by itself can create a great dog. For a dog to be a classic example of his breed, every part must be of high quality and unified in balance with every other part. As the Irish Setter standard says, “The correct specimen always exhibits balance, whether standing or in motion.”

A judge must study the standard of



*For a dog to be a classic example of its breed, every part must be of high quality and unified in balance with every other part.*

each breed he adjudicates so as to know its required shape and make. Every deviation from the standard destroys some element of balance. But a judge must then go a step beyond and thoroughly understand the essence and function of the breed in order to be able to fully evaluate a dog as a unified whole.

All of this is perhaps best summed up in the Irish Terrier standard: “In conformation he must be more than a sum of his parts.” What a perfect definition of a great dog in any breed! ♦

*Dorothy Macdonald is past president of the Dog Judges Association of America.*

## **ATTACHMENT 6 – Judging The Old English Sheepdog**

### **JUDGING THE OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG**

There is no way to fully assess the Old English Sheepdog without a thorough, careful and correct examination of the dog before you. A profusely coated Old English Sheepdog can be more deceiving to the eye than any other breed; it can be groomed to hide faults, or it can cover up a really good dog. You **MUST** get your hands under the coat to feel the structure.

You should find a square, strong, very compact, thick-set, deep, muscular, agile, and able bodied dog.

Of particular importance are the areas of the standard defining the features that set the Old English Sheepdog apart from other breeds.

The skull is large, squarely formed, the parts over the eyes developed to form the well-defined stop. The top and sides of the skull should feel flat. The muzzle should have good width with a strong underline, square jaw, and should appear strong and rather square in profile (truncated) or from the front.

The unique "pear shaped" body of the Old English Sheepdog is higher at the loin than the withers; broader at the rump than the shoulders, compact, and deep with well-sprung ribs. Be certain to check from the withers back, running a hand along the spine to feel the strong back, the gentle rise at the loin, the wide rounded rump. This body shape is one of the most distinguishing features of our breed.

Another is the wonderful, profuse coat. Remember, the standard states quality and texture more important than mere profuseness. The correct Old English Sheepdog coat has a nice harsh texture, a crispness that can be "heard" when you run a few strands between your fingers. This is a double-coated breed, and the correctly textured outer coat will stand up a bit to protect the undercoat, not lie flat. A correctly coated Old English Sheepdog does not require constant teasing, fluffing, and fussing to retain its shape in the ring. Also important to remember is that we do have puppy coats. The puppy coat can change quickly to proper adult coat, or the transition can take months, during which time the puppy coat can take on a brownish or reddish cast until it drops out to be fully replaced by adult coat. If you encounter this coat in a puppy or adolescent, simply separate the hair down to the skin, and you should see the correct adult coat coming in at the base.

Our standard very aptly describes the movement required by the Old English Sheepdog. Do not fault an Old English Sheepdog for pacing in your ring. If you wish to see him trot, simply ask that he be moved a bit faster. Keep in mind that no matter what the gait, the Old English Sheepdog must be free, powerful, and effortless on the move, exhibiting good ground covering reach and drive.

The Old English Sheepdog was developed for a specific purpose, with proper head, body and topline, coat, and movement necessary to perform as a herding dog. We ask that you keep these breed specific characteristics in mind when evaluating the Old English Sheepdog.

***Elizabeth Muthard***

## **ATTACHMENT 7 – It's Good To Be Square**

### **Old English Sheepdogs**

We always welcome input from OESCA members and other informed individuals. This month's guest columnist is Bill Garvey, an OES breeder and group judge.

#### **IT'S GOOD TO BE SQUARE**

One of the most troubling aspects of dog breeding is lazy breeding, which is brought about by those wanting to shortcut breeding for correct type. In the case of OES, our primary problem is lack of leg. We are finding more and more of less and less leg. Eventually, we began to take this proportion to be correct breed type and establish it as normal. The specious argument in justifying a shorter leg is that it improves movement, which is a weak argument at best.

OES history is replete with descriptive phrases of proper OES proportion; square-up, compact, cobby, four-square are but a few of the terms used to insulate our thinking about correct OES proportion. Obviously, this history was based on the utility of this desired form as it relates to the employment of the OES in stock management.

In using OES for moving and holding sheep and cattle, an agile and nimble dog that was equally at home on rough or hilly terrain was desired. Further, this dog should have a thick-set, muscular body to cope with the rigors of his work. It was and is, as our standard states, an able-bodied dog. Our standard goes on to say, "A strong, compact dog of great symmetry, practically the same in measurement from shoulder to stern as in height."

This square form we desire is not confined to OES alone. We find it in Bouviers, the Belgian breeds, Boxers, Dobermans, Schnauzers and many other breeds. Squareness is an efficient form because it allows a balanced quickness of foot so necessary to the mission required of the OES.

The history of the horse shows a parallel to that of the dog. Horse breeders' quest for the square animal began with the Arabian. It was described by the Egyptians as a square animal, light of foot and agile so as to handle desert terrain. Further, it should have a deep and compact body to face the rigors of desert warfare. Our American Quarter Horse, a refined extension of the American cowboy's roping and cutting horse, is, by definition, a square horse of great agility and speed, to control cattle herds or for cutting singles from the herd.

Type, it can be argued, is present in the dog best suited to perform the tasks at hand. In the final analysis, in judging OES, one must avoid those with overemphasized traits, specifically a short-legged or long-backed OES, piled high with hair. Usually, the dog that appears functional with the proper parts is the ideal specimen to work with.

—B. G.

*My thanks to Mr. Garvey — Ed Johansen, P.O. Box 49, Washington, CT 06794*

## **The Five Hallmarks of the Old English Sheepdog**

### **Balance & Proportion**

Type in an OES comes from his proportions. The picture remains unchanged regardless of the size. The OES is balanced regardless of height, color or markings. He is compact and square with substantial bone. An OES is not low and long bodied or tall and short bodied. Square proportions measured from the withers to the ground, point of shoulder to the ischium. Neck is fairly long and gracefully arched. Shoulders well laid back and narrow at the points. Forelegs dead straight with plenty of bone. Hocks well let down, metatarsus are perpendicular to the ground from any angle. Broader at the rump than at the shoulder. The body is thickset, muscular, able-bodied.

### **Head**

Strong, square truncated muzzle. The nose is always black and large. Definitive stop, well arched over eyes. Large squarely formed skull. Dark brown eyes, one or two blue, pearl, china or walleye is typical. Scissors or level bite. A long narrow head or snippy muzzle is a fault.

### **Topline**

The OES topline is a unique characteristic. It is gently arched over a very broad, stout loin. The topline is not to be mistaken for a roach back nor is it a sway back. The correct topline has a gentle rise with the highest point over the loin.

### **Coat**

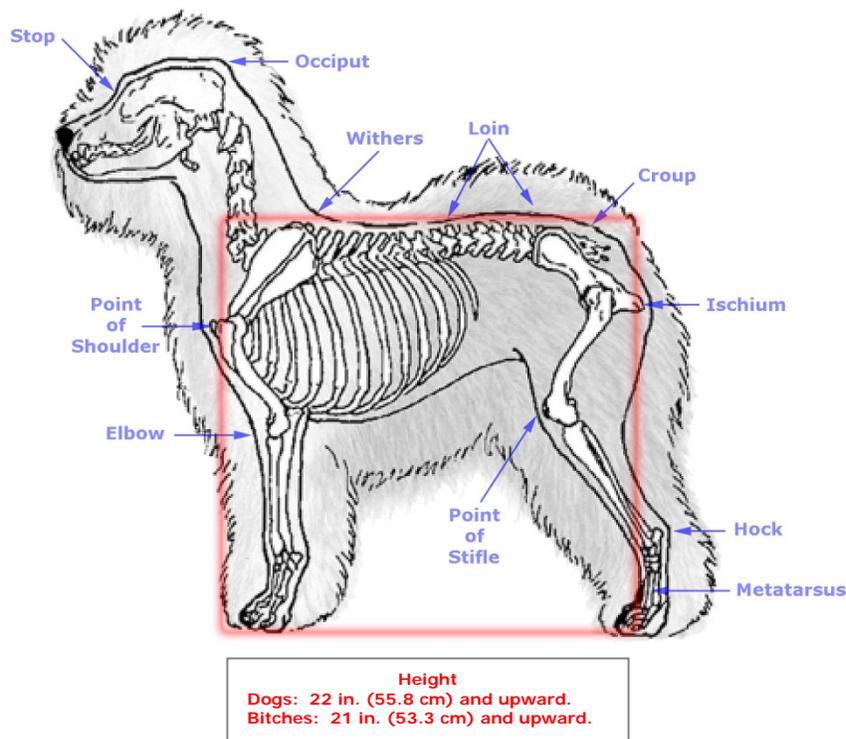
The OES has a thick soft undercoat next to his body and a crisp harsh shaggy coat on the outside. Quality of coat is more important than mere profuseness. Color is any shade of gray, grizzle, blue or blue merle with or without white markings or in reverse.

### **Movement**

When trotting the movement is free and powerful seeming effortless, with good reach and drive and covers maximum ground with minimum steps. The OES must maintain balance, proportion and topline in motion as when it stands. An OES is to be judged at a trot. May pace or amble at slower speeds.

## Examining the Old English Sheepdog

It is of utmost importance for judges to feel for the distinct characteristics that define the breed. The mental picture obtained from your hands, combined with the overall visual appearance should simplify the choice. Grooming can hide faults. It is imperative that judges look past the grooming and feel carefully for correct structure.



**“The Breed Standard is the Blueprint.  
The Breeder is the Builder.  
And the Judge is the Building Inspector.”**

- Percy Roberts

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## **ATTACHMENT 9 – OESCA Mentor Contact List**

### **OESCA approved U.S. Judge Mentor Listing**

For a list of breed mentors near you, please go to our web page for an up-to-date listing: <https://oldenglishsheepdogclubofamerica.org/history/judges-education/>

\* AKC Judge. \*\* CKC Judge

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