

THE SCHIPPERKE



**A Breed Study by the
Schipperke Club of America, Inc.**

Approved by the SCA Board on 8-9-2011



History of the Schipperke

- ❖ Alert and curious, the Schipperke has the heart of a terrier in the body of a spitz and may be related to neither.
- ❖ Schipperke means “Little Captain” in Flemish - or possibly the name comes from the Flemish word for shepherd. History is not clear as to the origin.
- ❖ In either case, the breed developed in Belgium in the 1600s as ratters and guards on canal barges. At times, they rode the backs or nipped at the heels of horses that pulled the barges along the canals. On land, the dog kept rats out of shops and warned of intruders.

History of the Schipperke

- ❖ Although the Schipperke's impudent character, foxy face, upright ears, and thick coat denote a spitz-type heritage, breed historians claim the dog descended from the Leuvenaar, a Belgian herding dog that also produced today's Belgian Sheepdog. The Belgian herding dog of those days weighed about 40 pounds, smaller than today's version, and could well have been the ancestor of both breeds.
- ❖ Whatever its origin, the Schipperke has an interesting history. Initially owned by shopkeepers and tradesmen, the little dog had its own specialty show in 1690. That show and subsequent competitions featured elaborate copper collars designed for the dogs. The breed didn't catch the attention of the upper classes until the mid-1800's when Queen Marie Henriette, wife of Leopold II of Belgium, saw a Schipperke at a Brussels show and bought the winner. For most of the rest of the century, the Schipperke was virtually the only house dog in Belgium.



History of the Schipperke

- ❖ The English discovered the Schipperke about the same time and imported many dogs from Belgium. The “Little Captain” came to the US by the end of the century. The breed was recognized by the AKC in 1904.

The Essence of the Schipperke

❖ General Appearance:

- The Schipperke is an agile, active watchdog and hunter of vermin.
- In appearance he is a small, thickset, cobby, black, tailless dog, with a fox-like face.



- ❖ *The dog should “feel heavy” and have plenty of body under the coat.*
 - Thickset and cobby refer to the body and overall appearance of the dog.
- ❖ *The Schipperke is often referred to as a “big” dog in a small package.*



General Appearance

- ❖ The dog is square in profile and possesses a distinctive coat, which includes a standout ruff, cape and culottes.
- ❖ All of these create a unique silhouette, appearing to slope from shoulders to croup.
- ❖ *The unique silhouette and coat pattern are what makes the Schipperke different from any other breed!*
- ❖ *If the Schipperke does not have the proper coat and silhouette, it is NOT an ideal Schipperke!*

General Appearance

- ❖ Males are decidedly masculine without coarseness.
- ❖ Bitches are decidedly feminine without over refinement.
- ❖ **The Schipperke should NEVER appear overdone or over refined!**



Correct Silhouettes - Male



Correct Silhouettes - Female



Schipperke Toplines

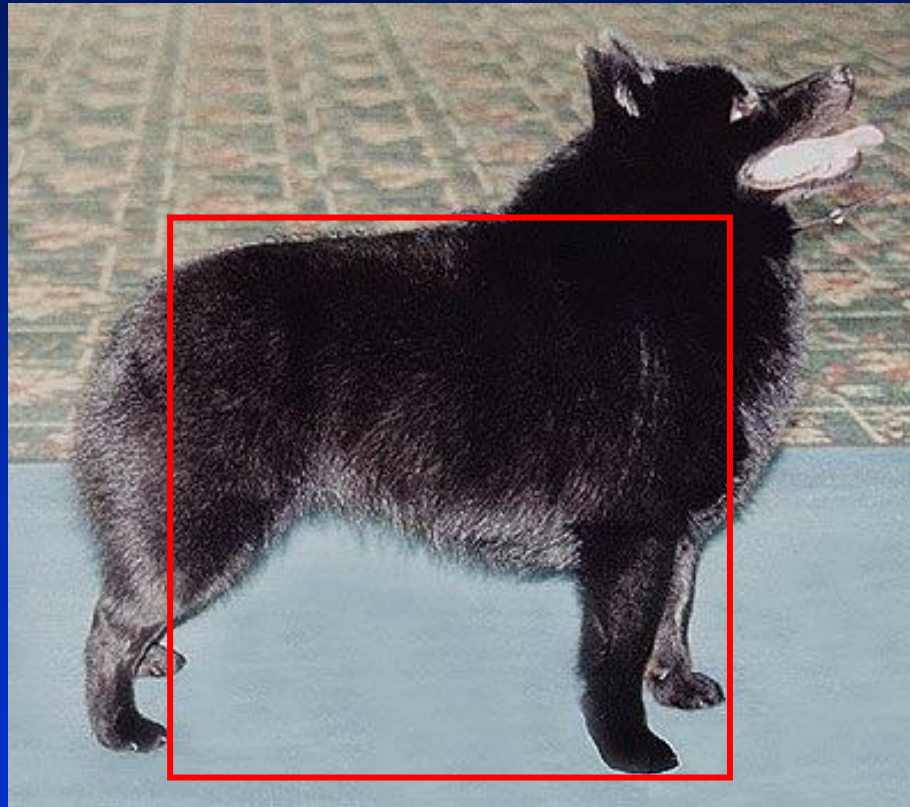
- ❖ The Schipperke may have a sloping or level topline.
- ❖ The Schipperke on the left has a level topline.



- ❖ The Schipperke on the right has a sloping topline. The stand-out ruff adds to the slope, making the dog seem slightly higher at the shoulders than at the rump .
- ❖ Both are equally correct.

The Square Dog

The Schipperke is square in profile.



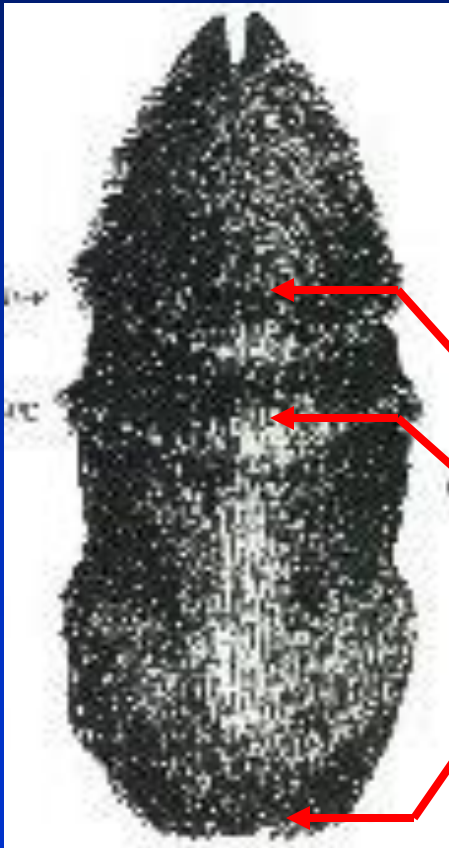
The Maturing Schipperke

- ❖ *Schipperkes are slow to mature...*
- ❖ *Notice that the “thickset” appearance becomes more obvious with age.*
- ❖ *These are pictures of the same dog, ages 2, 5 and 8 years.*



Coat Pattern

- ❖ The adult coat is highly characteristic and must include several distinct lengths growing naturally in a specific pattern.
- ❖ The coat is short on the face, ears, front of the forelegs and hocks.
- ❖ It is medium length on the body, and longer in the:
 - ♦ jabot,
 - ♦ ruff,
 - ♦ cape,
 - ♦ culottes.



drawing by Anita Fredricks

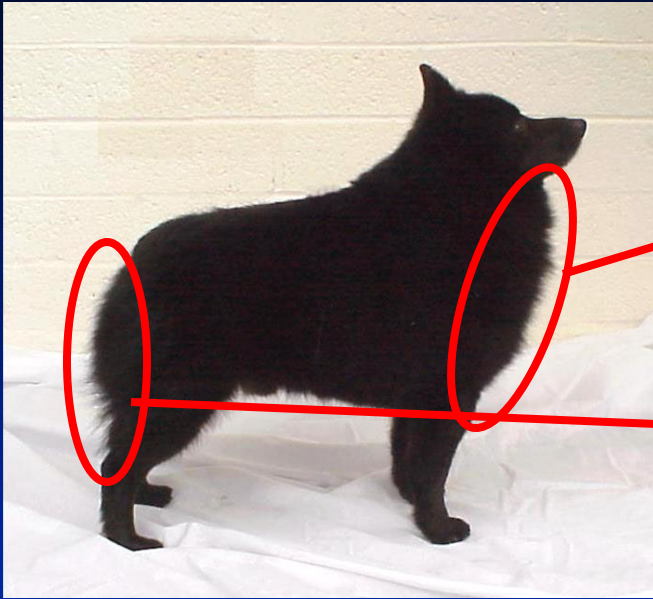
Coat Pattern



drawing by Anita Fredricks

- The ruff begins in back of the ears and extends completely around the neck
- The cape forms an additional distinct layer extending beyond the ruff
- The first distinct line you see is the ruff, the second line is the cape
- Body coat
- Culottes (Longer than body coat)

Coat Pattern



❖ The jabot extends across the chest and down between the front legs.

❖ The coat on the rear of the thighs forms culottes which should be as long as the ruff.



❖ The hair down the middle of the back, starting just behind the cape and continuing over the rump, lies flat.

◆ It is slightly shorter than the cape but longer than the hair on the sides of the body and legs.

Coat Pattern



Male



Female

Coat Pattern

- ❖ *Lack of differentiation in coat lengths should be heavily penalized, as it is an essential breed characteristic!*
- ❖ *Coat pattern is obvious in all Schipperkes, even those out of coat or young puppies.*
- ❖ *Undercoat is necessary in the Schipperke, as it is what makes the ruff stand out.*
- ❖ *The undercoat should be dense on the body, and very dense on the ruff.*



Coat Pattern

- ❖ While the overall dog must be black, the under-coat can be black, or an “off color,” usually grey or a slight reddish brown.
- ❖ Occasional stray white hairs are permissible.
- ❖ Graying, due to age in the Veteran dog (7 years) is permissible, but should be faulted in younger specimens.
- ❖ The coat should be abundant and straight.
- ❖ Coats may take on a reddish cast during shedding.

Coat Pattern

- ❖ The texture is slightly harsh to the touch.
- ❖ Silky coats, body coats over 3 inches or very short harsh coats are equally incorrect!
- ❖ Trimming of the coat is not allowed!



Incorrect Coat

There is a misunderstanding among some judges and those who are wanting to apply to judge Schips as to what a “fluff” is. Here is a head study and a profile shot of a fluff – the same dog.





Coat Pattern Summary

- ❖ **Correct pattern is obvious at any age!**
- ❖ **Pattern can still be seen even when the dog is out of coat.**
- ❖ **Correct pattern should be very distinct.**
- ❖ **Correct pattern is an essential breed characteristic!**



SCA Stand on Tails

While it is understood that you as a judge have a choice, the Schipperke Club of America prefers that you consider a Schipperke with a tail to be a serious deviation from the standard and prioritize and penalize it accordingly. The standard says:

The Schipperke is an agile, active watchdog and hunter of vermin. In appearance he is a small, thickset, cobby, black, tailless dog, with a fox-like face. The croup is broad and well-rounded with a tail that is docked. No tail is visually discernible. Any deviation from the ideal described in the standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

The docked tail is an essential breed characteristic.



SCA Stand on Trimming

The Board of Directors of the Schipperke Club of America is concerned by the current trend or "fashion" toward trimming and/or stripping being seen in the show ring.

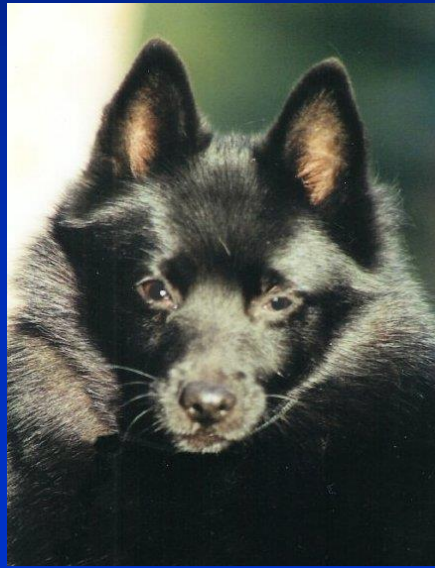
Our standard's section titled TRIMMING states: "As the Schipperke is a natural breed, only trimming of the whiskers and the hair between the pads of the feet is optional. ANY OTHER TRIMMING MUST NOT BE DONE."

The Schipperke coat pattern and texture are intrinsic characteristics of our breed. Trimming and/or stripping will alter both. A correct, quality coat should be bred, not "styled," in hopes of achieving the win.

It is essential that the breed standard, in its entirety, be adhered to when judging the Schipperke. We appreciate your time and your future thoughtful consideration of this when judging our breed.

Schipperke Heads - Expression

- ❖ The expression is questioning, mischievous, impudent and alert, but never mean or wild.
- ❖ The well proportioned head, accompanied by the correct eyes and ears will give the dog the proper Schipperke expression.



Schipperke Heads - Skull

- ❖ The skull is of medium width, narrowing toward the muzzle.
- ❖ Seen in profile with the ears laid back, the skull is slightly rounded.
- ❖ The upper jaw is moderately filled in under the eyes, so that, when viewed from above, the head forms a wedge, tapering smoothly from the back of the skull to the tip of the nose.



Schipperke Heads - Skull

- ❖ The stop is definite but not prominent.
- ❖ The length of the muzzle is slightly less than the length of the skull.
- ❖ The skull is slightly rounded when viewed from the side.



Length of Skull/Muzzle

- ❖ Stop is definite but not prominent.
- ❖ Length of muzzle is slightly less than the length of the skull.



Schipperke Head - Eyes

- ❖ The ideal eyes are small, oval rather than round, dark brown, and placed forward on the head.
- ❖ The eyes should never be prominent or bulging



Round Eyes When Excited

- ❖ The eyes will sometimes take on a more rounded appearance when the Schipperke is excited or nervous. If you find an exhibit you really like but its eyes look really round, have the handler put the bait away and see if they lose that look.



Schipperke Head - Ears

- ❖ The ears are small, triangular, placed high on the head, and, when at attention, very erect.



Less than ideal:

- ♦ The ear itself should not tip backwards or forward.
- ♦ The tips should not point inward or outward.
- ♦ Belled ears.
- ♦ Long and thin ears.



Schipperke Bites

- ❖ The bite must be scissors or level.
- ❖ Any deviation is to be severely penalized.
- ❖ Both the scissor or level bite are **EQUALLY acceptable!**

Fore and Aft



- ❖ Viewed from the front, the elbows remain close to the body. The legs form a straight line from the shoulders through the elbows to the toes, with the feet pointing straight ahead.



- ❖ From the rear, the legs form a straight line from the hip to the hocks to the pads, with the feet pointing straight ahead.

The Rest of the Dog

- ❖ The key to the rest of the dog and the **overall appearance** of the Schipperke is **balance**!



- ❖ The standard calls for the front to be placed well **underneath the dog**, the shoulders to be well laid back and a slight bend to the pasterns when viewed from the side.
- ❖ The rear should **APPEAR** slightly lighter than the front but is well muscled and in balance with the front. **Extreme rear angulation to be penalized.**



The Rest of the Dog

- ❖ The topline is level or slightly sloping.
- ❖ The bite is scissors or level. Any deviation is to be severely penalized.
- ❖ Suggested height is 11-13 inches for dogs and 10-12 inches for bitches.
- ❖ **QUALITY ALWAYS TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER SIZE!**
- ❖ The Schipperke is curious, interested in everything around him and is a faithful and excellent watchdog. He is reserved with strangers. He displays a confident and independent personality, reflecting the breed's original purpose as a watchdog and hunter of vermin.
- ❖ **Faults common to all breeds are just as undesirable in the Schipperke, even though they are not mentioned in the standard!**

The Balanced Schipperke



Schipperke Gait

- ❖ Proper Schipperke movement is a smooth, well coordinated and graceful trot (basically double tracking at a moderate speed), with a tendency to gradually converge toward the center of balance beneath the dog as speed increases.
- ❖ Front and rear must be in perfect balance with good reach in front and drive in rear.
- ❖ The topline remains level or slightly sloping downward from the shoulders to the rump.





Schipperke Gait

- ❖ The Schipperke should “hold the silhouette” while gaiting.
- ❖ When viewed from the side, the front and rear must be in perfect balance with good reach in front and drive in the rear.
- ❖ When judging the Schipperke, the down and back is just as important, if not more important than side gait since double tracking is such an important requirement in the breed standard.
- ❖ A good moving dog will have all three!
- ❖ Do not *necessarily* reward speed, a Schip with correct reach and drive has it at a nice, easy trot.
- ❖ Please allow the handler to move his dog at the speed that is best for that particular dog.

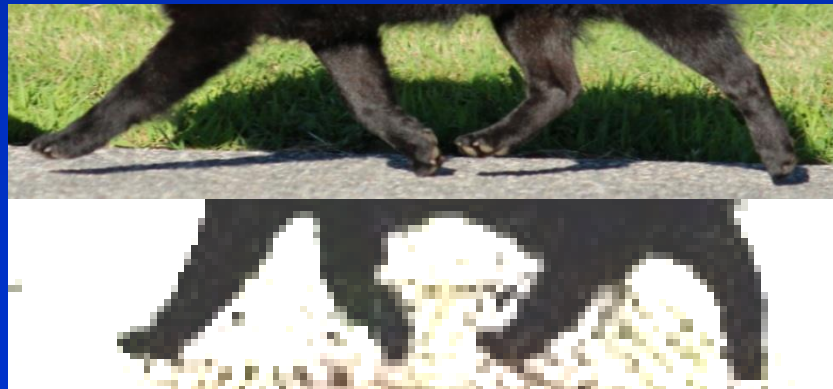
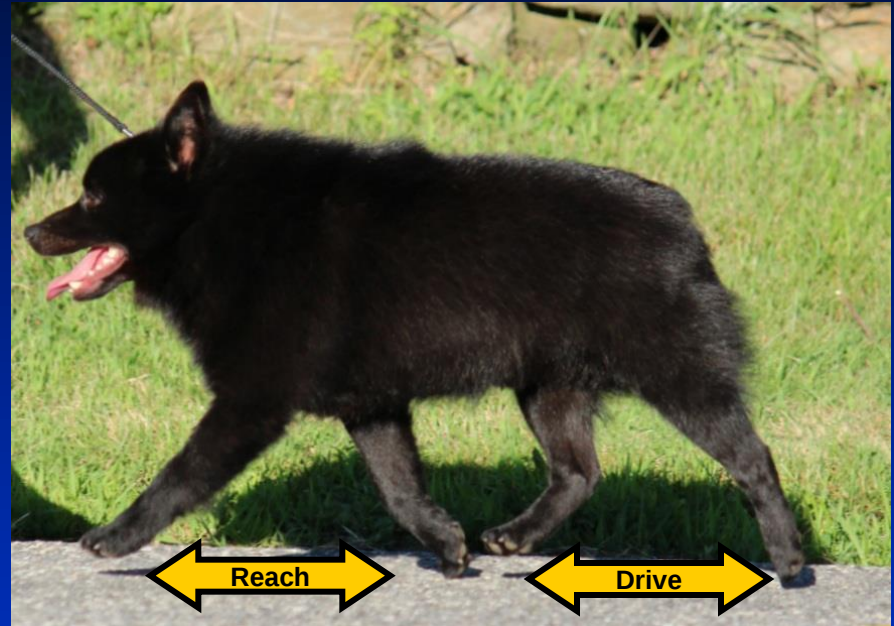
Side Gait – Reach and Drive

- ❖ With good reach in the front, the leg should extend to the front of the nose.
- ❖ When driving from the rear you should see the pad of the rear foot.



Gait: Reach and Drive Comparison

Notice the positioning of the feet



Gait: Double Tracking

Coming



Going



Notice that you see only one “set” of legs in either direction.

Gait: Gradual Convergence



Double Tracking with Slight Convergence

Summary

❖ Key Points:

- ♦ This is a silhouette breed
- ♦ Square and cobby
- ♦ Coat and Pattern are necessary for the proper silhouette
- ♦ The coat should be abundant, straight and slightly harsh to the touch
- ♦ Correct movement is double tracking, with gradual convergence as speed increases, and includes good reach and drive

❖ Disqualifications:

- ♦ *Drop ear or ears*
- ♦ *Any color other than black*

Schipperkes Are Versatile



Schipperkes love to work, whether it be obedience, agility, rally, tracking or search and rescue.

Schipperke Puppies





**The Schipperke Club of America wishes to
thank you for taking an interest in our breed.**

