

## Judging the Chinook

### **What to expect: Temperament in the ring**

You should find an enthusiastic, friendly Chinook in your ring though some Chinooks, in particular young or inexperienced Chinooks may be reserved which is acceptable. Approaching with confidence will help put a reserved Chinook at ease. Expect to find dancing feet and licking tongues as the Chinook is known for giving out kisses and a more boisterous Chinook may forget himself and attempt to jump up in friendly greeting. Aggression toward people is not to be expected in any Chinook. Any Chinook showing aggression must be excused from the ring as this is aberrant behavior.

### **What to expect: Your examination**

Chinooks tend to be a natural at free-stacking and many handlers prefer to let their dogs set themselves up. A Chinook will gladly allow your help to correctly position the front and rear legs for your examination if needed. You will undoubtedly see some toeing out of the front feet though not in every exhibit. Slight toeing out is not of itself a fault and hand stacking should be able to set the front legs with toes pointing forward. Expect to find any type of ear carriage including mis-matched, all acceptable, but matching and down ears are preferred. Pulling both ears to the inside corner of the eye will not only show the length of ear but will also help to define the broad, slightly arched topskull, esp. in an up-eared dog.

Look for a body slightly longer than tall, not square and not too long as measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks, with shoulder and upper arm being equal in length. The back must be straight and strong with no sign of weakness. Look for a slight arch over the loins, and a broad croup that is only slightly sloping, with the tail set moderately just below the topline. Moderation is a key component in the Standard. There is a natural range in size of the breed and size should not take precedence over quality. Tails can be very expressive and you may find variations of tail carriages even in the same dog: a tucked tail during your examination, a slight curve toward the tip when relaxed, and a sickle curve when alert and moving. The Chinook has an easy care coat which should be brushed out for the ring with particular attention to the longer fur on the ruff, breeches, and tail. Scissoring of the coat is to be severely penalized.

### **What to expect: Gaiting**

The Chinook's gait is smooth, easy and tireless, covering ground with minimal effort. Chinooks will make good use of a large ring, moving out on a loose lead at a moderately fast trot shows off their fluid, balanced side movement, their good reach and drive, and level, strong backline. When gaiting the head lowers, the front toes reach out to meet the line of the nose, the rear legs drive forward with the rear pads exposed. When speed increases, Chinooks will single-track and the tendency for the front and rear legs to converge toward the center can be seen as the dog goes away and comes back to you if moved at a fast enough speed. There should be no contact of front and rear feet, ideally no over-reach, and you should never see toeing out in the front or rear while gaiting.

### **Common judging mistakes**

The Chinook exemplifies a sound athlete whose original purpose was both drafting and sled dog racing. Any Chinook put up because he or she looks able to pull a sled all day long must be sound and in excellent physical condition: he or she should be well muscled but not fat as an overweight Chinook will tire quickly and can not perform the job the breed was bred to do.

In making your selections, type and movement are equally important. Size should never take preference over quality.

All things being equal in your selections, please give due consideration to the sound dog who has both the physical and mental ability to perform the job to which it was bred: that of an all purpose sled dog bred for both drafting and racing.