

AKC Judges BREED STUDY

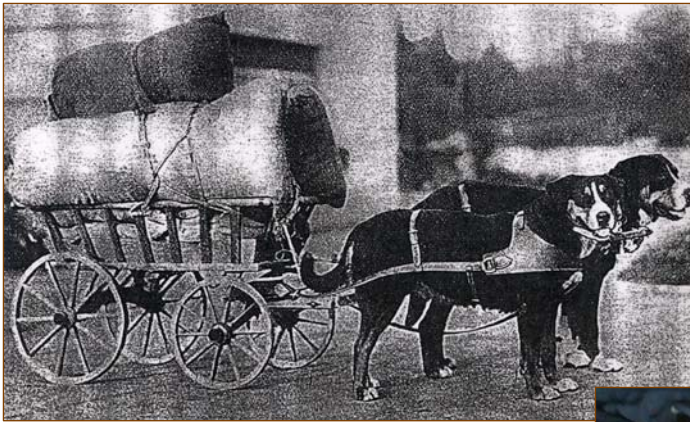
The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog



Presented by
The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America
Judges Education Committee

HISTORY: FORM & FUNCTION

Of the four Sennenhund breeds developed in Switzerland, the *GREATER SWISS* is both the *LARGEST and the OLDEST*. Developed in the remote and isolated areas of Switzerland, the GSMD was adapted to general farm use as a *LIVESTOCK DROVER*, *GUARD DOG*, and *UTILITARIAN DRAFT DOG*. Thus, when judging the GSMD, keep in mind, first and foremost that the dog should have the *SUBSTANCE, STRUCTURE and TEMPERAMENT* suited to the many duties for which it was bred.



Clockwise from upper left:

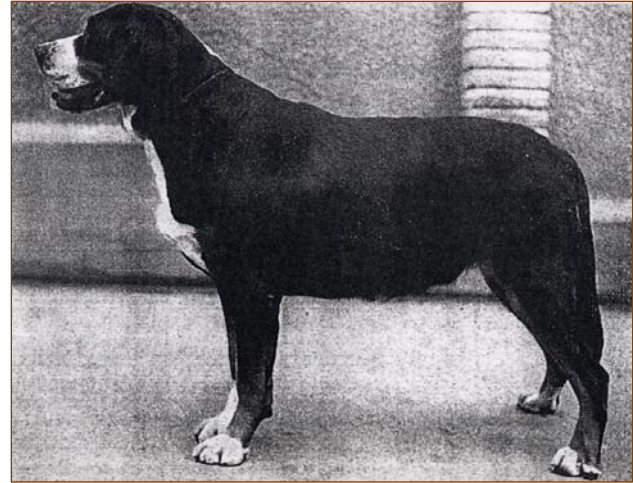
- Historical pair of GSMD with wagon
- Bitch droving sheep
- Working Weight Pull dog
- Working Pack Dog (bitch)

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The GSMD is a striking, tri-colored, large, powerful, confident dog of sturdy appearance. It is a heavy boned and well muscled dog....



Historical Photos



TYPICAL BITCH



Current Photos



...which, in spite of its size and weight, is agile enough to perform the all-purpose farm duties of the mountainous regions of its origin.



SIZE, PROPORTION and SUBSTANCE



Height at the highest point of the shoulder is ideally:

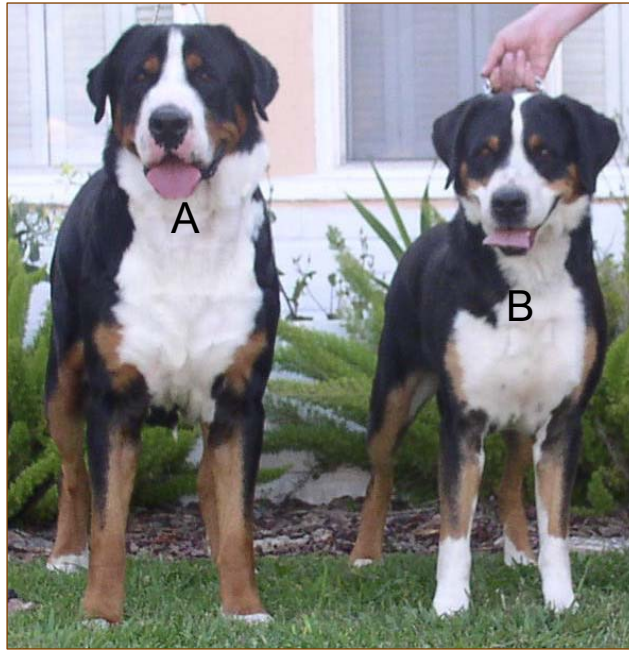
- DOGS: 25.5 to 28.5 inches

“Body *LENGTH to HEIGHT* is approximately a 10 to 9 *PROPORTION*, thus appearing slightly longer than tall”.

It is a *HEAVY BONED* and *WELL MUSCLED* dog of *STURDY* appearance.

- BITCHES: 23.5 to 27 inches





As implied by its name, the GREATER Swiss Mountain Dog should be a
LARGE, powerful dog.

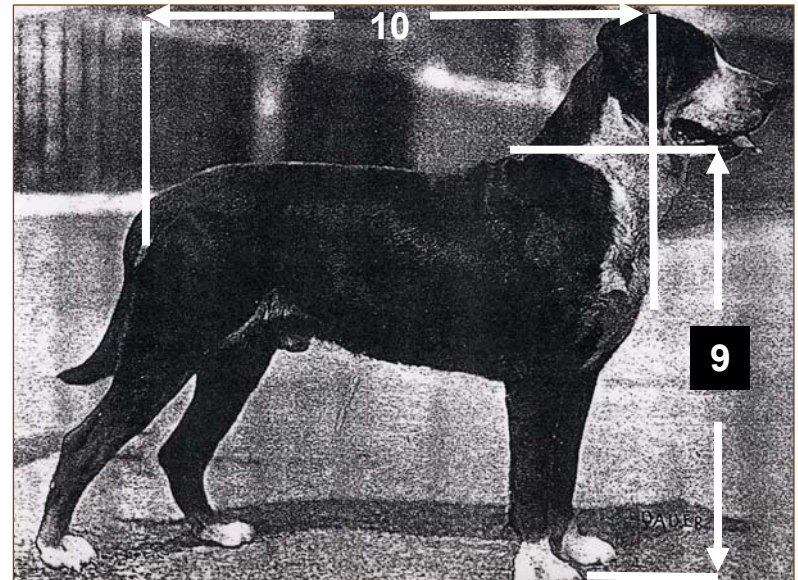
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should be a LARGE, powerful dog.

The adult GSMD males pictured above meet the breed Standard for height.

*However, Dog A is more typical of desirable size and substance,
whereas Dog B lacks desirable substance and bone.*

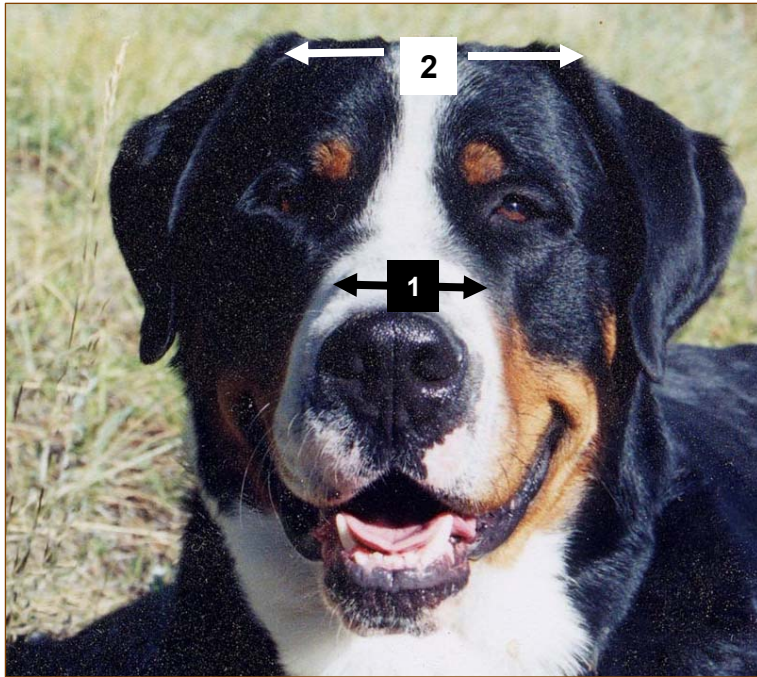
Important PROPORTIONS

Body LENGTH TO HEIGHT is approximately a 10 : 9 proportion.



Depth of chest is approximately one half the total height of the dog at the withers.

Important Proportions of the HEAD



The *BACKSKULL* is approximately *TWICE* the *WIDTH* of the MUZZLE.



The *BACKSKULL* and *MUZZLE* are of approximately *EQUAL* length.

Head and Expression



DOG



BITCH

- Expression is *ANIMATED and GENTLE*
- Eyes are *almond shaped* and brown, *dark brown preferred*, medium sized, neither deep set nor protruding
- Eyelids are closefitting and eye rims are black
- The top of the ear is level with the top of the skull
- The skull is flat and broad with a slight stop
- In ADULT dogs, the nose leather is always black



HEAD

- Muzzle is LARGE, BLUNT and STRAIGHT, not POINTED and most often with a slight rise before the end
- The lips are clean and as a dry mouthed breed, flews are only slightly developed



Both of these dogs have nice head type. However, *DARKER* eye color would be *preferable* to their *light* eyes.

Light eyes, while not specifically listed as a fault, tend to *detract* from correct expression.

Judges should expect to see a range of brown eye colors.

BLUE eye color is a DISQUALIFICATION

Teeth and Bite



The teeth meet in a scissors bite.

Missing teeth is not considered a fault.

What to look for in a SWISSY HEAD



DOG



BITCH

This dog and bitch have nice head type, proportions, color and lovely expression.

Faults seen in GSMD Heads

The head of a GSMD should *not resemble* that of a Collie, Rottweiler, Hound or St. Bernard.



Snipey head w/narrow muzzle and backskull .



Rotty-like head. Earset too high. Muzzle too short.

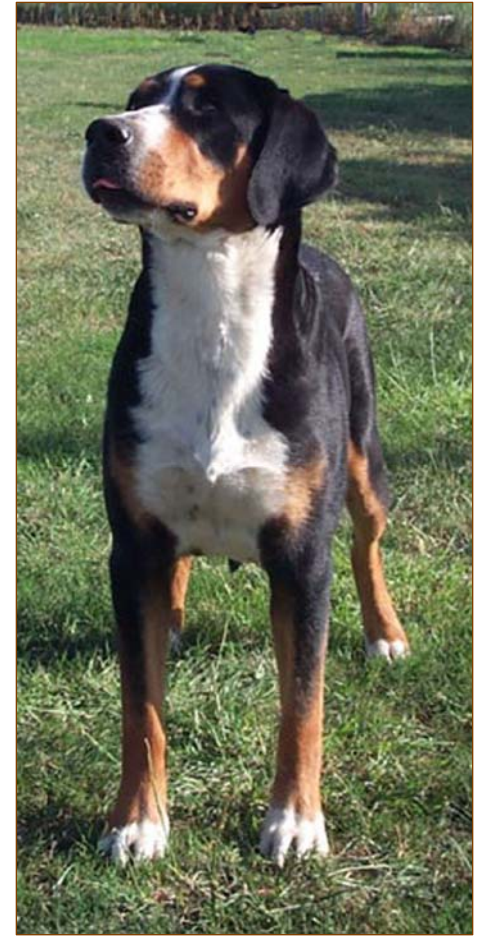


Houndy head w/pendulous lips & low earset.



Fleshy face and neck. Too much dewlap.

FOREQUARTERS



- Chest is *DEEP* and *BROAD* with a *slightly protruding breastbone*.
- Shoulders are long, sloping and *moderately laid back*. They are flat and well muscled.
- Forelegs are straight and strong.
- Pasterns slope slightly but are *NOT WEAK*.

Neck, Topline and Body



DOG



BITCH

- The neck is of moderate length, strong , muscular and clean.
- The topline is level from the withers to the croup.
- Body is FULL with a slight tuck up.
- Ribs are well sprung.
- The deepest point of the chest should lie between the elbows , not above them.
- The loins are broad and strong.
- The croup is long and broad and smoothly rounded to the tail insertion.

HINDQUARTERS



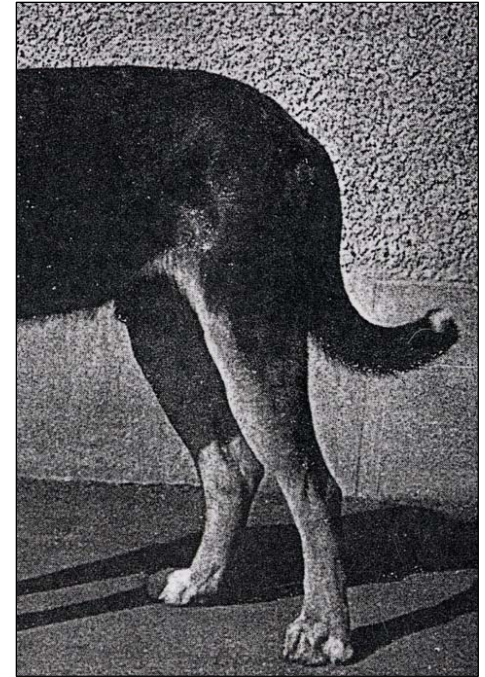
“Hocks are well let down
& straight when viewed
from the rear”



“Stifles are moderately
bent & taper smoothly
to the hocks”



Overangulated
Cow-hocked

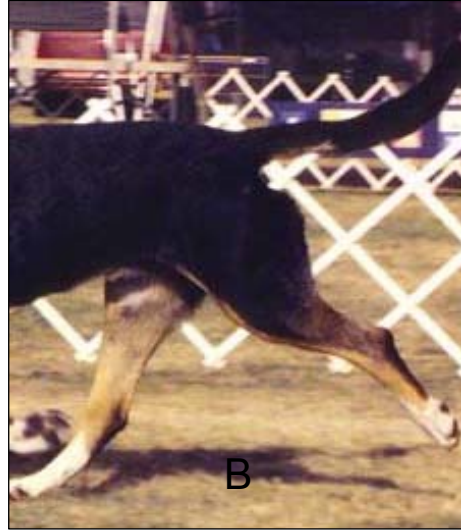


Straight in stifle
Cow-hocked

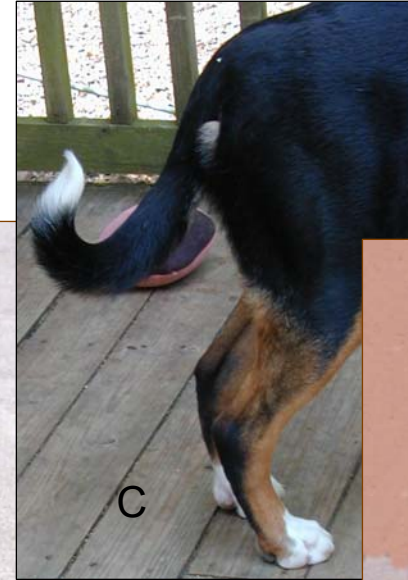
Broad, strong, muscular hindquarters and proper rear angulation are essential for a draft dog to provide powerful rear drive during movement as called for in the standard.

Poor musculature, straight or overangled stifles, and hockiness result in a *sloppy*, inefficient gait.

TAILSET and CARRIAGE



YES



NO

- The tail is thick from root to tip, tapering slightly at the tip (A) reaching to the hocks and carried down in repose.
- When alert and in movement the tail may be carried higher and slightly curved upwards (B) but should NOT CURL (C) , or TILT over the back (D and E).
- The bones of the tail should FEEL straight as KINKS are a concern.



FEET

-YES -



FRONT

REAR



- NO -



FEET are *round* and *compact* with *well arched toes* and turn neither in nor out.
Feet should not be FLAT or SPLAYED.

Front Dewclaws may or may not be present.

Rear Dewclaws should be removed.

COAT



Straight, Smooth coat



Undercoat



Wavier, Coarser coat

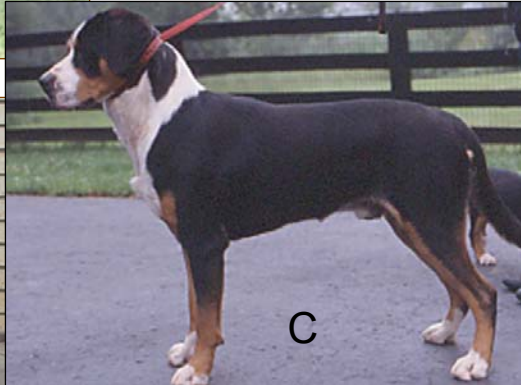
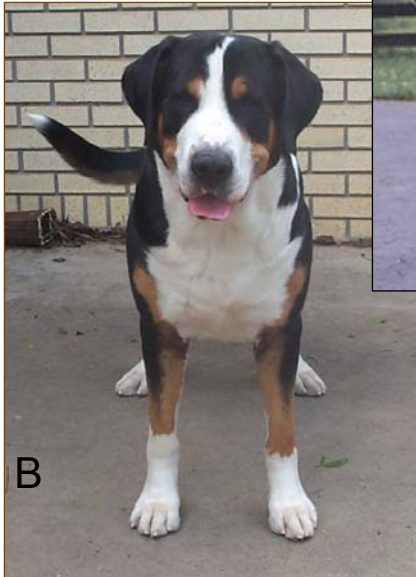
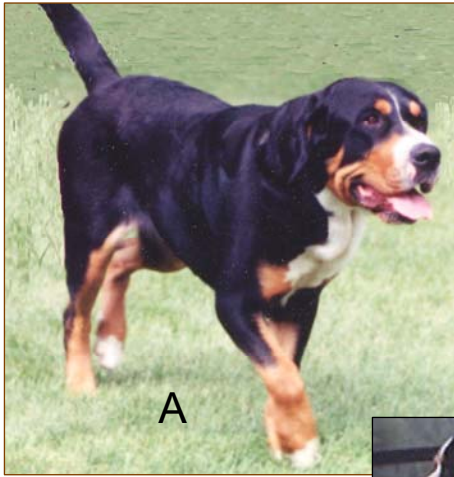
TOPCOAT is dense, approximately 1-1/4 to 2 inches in length.

Acceptable lengths and textures of GSMD topcoat range from short, straight & fine to slightly longer, wavier & coarser.

Undercoat must be present and may be thick and sometimes showing.
Undercoat color ranges from the preferred dark grey, to light grey to tawny.

TOTAL LACK OF UNDERCOAT IS UNDESIRABLE AND SHOULD BE PENALIZED.

COLOR and MARKINGS



- Topcoat is Black
- Presence of agouti hairs is not considered a fault in the Standard. However, an abundance of it causes a “muddy “ look which contributes to lack of elegance.
- Markings are rich Rust & White.
- Rust appears on the cheeks, under the tail , on both sides of the fore chest and on all four legs.
- Blaze may vary in length and width and may run over the top of the skull and meet with white patch or collar on neck.
- White markings may be more conservative as seen in (A) or brighter as seen in (B). Both are acceptable. Symmetry of markings is desired.
- A white collar or patch on the neck is acceptable (C).

Markings and other cosmetic factors should be considered of lesser importance than other aspects of type which directly affect working ability.

Comparison: Correct vs. Incorrect

CORRECT



DOG

DOG (L) and BITCH (R) with
DESIREABLE BREED TRAITS
of
Correct size, substance
and proportions



BITCH

INCORRECT



DOG (L) and BITCH (R) with
MAJOR STRUCTURAL
FAULTS

Dog: - *lacks body depth*
- *frame is too light*
- *high in the rear*
- *sway backed*

Bitch: - *lacks size & substance*
- *snipey head*
- *curled tail*



JUDGES: If you see GSMDs with severe faults like the above examples, PLEASE WITHHOLD RIBBONS !!



SUBSTANCE *and* SIZE



Both dogs and bitches are expected to fulfill the requirements of having a *large and powerful* structure.

Proper evaluation of the GSMD will put great emphasis on the well-conditioned and athletic animal and will *denigrate* the overweight and out-of-shape dog.

You will often be asked to pass judgment on a massive dog that is no more than a fat and lazy “couch potato” that could never perform its historic task as an all purpose farm dog - such a dog is not a good specimen of the breed. Nor is mere height a virtue when it fails to be accompanied by the athletic balance and substance so crucial in defining the correct Swissy.

We ask judges to always keep in mind that bigger is not necessarily better; the more correct dog is always better.



“DOGGY” Bitch



2 yr. old typical dog (L) next to 4 yr old “bitchy” dog (R)

Judges are reminded that GSMDs should carry the characteristics of their sex.

However, the fancy has a **great** deal of tolerance for *doggy bitches*.

This tolerance does not extend to males who fail to be adequately masculine.

MOVEMENT



INEFFICIENT MOVEMENT
HACKNIED GAIT RESTRICTS REACH

GOOD REACH IN
FRONT
POWERFUL DRIVE IN
REAR
MOVEMENT WITH A
LEVEL BACK



SHOWS BEAUTIFUL LEVEL TOPLINE
WHILE MOVING BUT DOG MOVING TOO
FAST - OVERREACHING



SOUND , PURPOSEFUL GAIT WITH LEVEL BACK

Soundness, balance and efficiency that accompany *correct structure* and *good condition* are the crucial factors in Swissy movement, *not speed*.

These dogs were bred to work all day on a farm, not to race once or twice around a show ring!

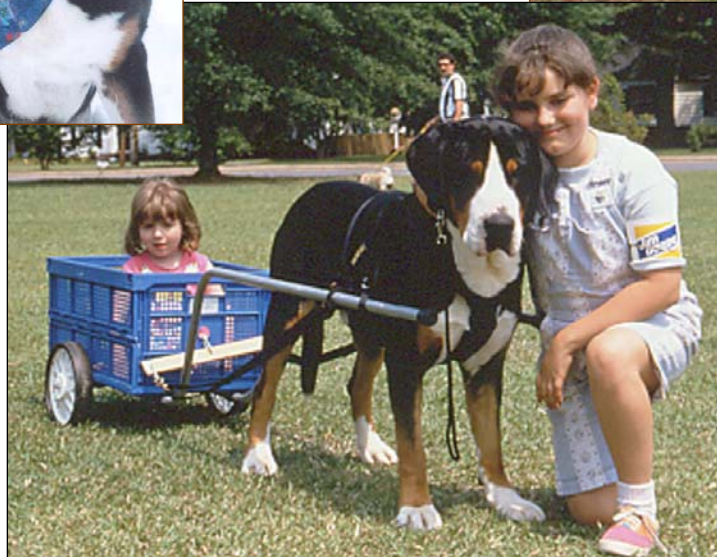
TEMPERAMENT



LOYAL FAMILY
COMPANION



ALERT &
VIGILANT



BOLD, FAITHFUL, WILLING WORKER

**“The strongest penalty shall be reserved for
SHY or AGGRESSIVE Temperament”.**

It is these THREE conditions ONLY that warrant Disqualification in the GSMD Standard

BLUE COAT



BLUE EYE(S)



RED COAT



When judging the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog, defects of structure and temperament are to be judged more severely than mere lack of elegance because they reduce the animal's capacity to work. Any fault that detracts from the description in the breed standard should be penalized to the extent of deviation.

*THANK YOU for participating in this seminar
and for your continued interest in our breed!!*



For information on upcoming Specialties, accompanying Breed Studies
and ringside mentoring opportunities, please contact
The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America.

www.gsmdca.org

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