

THE IRISH RED SETTER BREED STANDARD

Adopted by the National Red Setter Field Trial Club 2005

1. As Irish red setters were originally bred as partridge and grouse dogs, their style of hunting these birds may be taken as the norm. Primary focus of the breed standard shall be upon the performance of the animal while hunting wild or native game birds.
2. Irish red setters are, first and foremost, bird dogs. In their quest there must be an intensity that gives purpose to the hunt for game. The concentration on the job at hand should be evident in every stride and movement, and they shall exhibit the style and class as befits a quality American bird dog. The cooperation with the handler is part of that concentration and should not interfere with the quest for game, but rather should exhibit a behavior that is best described as a team effort between canine and human. They shall have a keen and intelligent mind, and be especially adept at handling wild birds intelligently under native conditions.
3. Irish red setters are fast and wide ranging; they use the ground with intelligence and precision in pursuit of game, searching the wind for the faintest scent. Should it be not detected, they continue their cast with urgency, without wasteful application or motion. The depths between casts are dictated by the conditions of the day and the terrain. Movement shall be free flowing and driving, with head held high and hindquarters driving smoothly with great power, as befits a racy, wide ranging bird dog. In the manner of stylish bird dogs, the tail shall demonstrate the dog's intensity of hunt. This "cracking" tail shall be an extension of the animal's intensity and animation in its quest for game.
4. The attitude of the Irish red setter in working game must be very intense and concentrated. The pointing stance is intense and rigid, full of energy and concentration. The body posture is staunch, with head, forequarters and hindquarters held well up, the eyes fierce, the tail rigid and bristling with the passion of the find.
5. The general appearance of the Irish red setter shall be racy, classy, and kindly in expression. The head shall be long and lean, and without coarseness. The skull shall be oval (from ear to ear), having plenty of brain room, and with well-defined occipital protuberance. The stop shall be well-

defined. The color of the nose shall be dark mahogany, dark walnut or black, the nostrils wide. The muzzle shall be moderately deep and fairly square at the end. From the stop to the point of the nose shall be long, and the flews not pendulous. The brows shall be raised. The jaws shall be nearly equal length with a scissors bite, and all expected canine teeth shall be present. The eyes shall be dark hazel or dark brown and not overly large, with no evidence of ectropic or entropic lids. Ears shall be of moderate size, fine in texture, set ranging from low to moderately high and well back, hanging in a neat fold close to the head. The body shall be proportionate to the size of the dog. The chest shall be as deep as possible, with ribs well sprung, leaving plenty of lung room. Feet shall be well proportioned to the body, very firm, toes strong, arched and close together. The loins shall be muscular and slightly arched. The hindquarters shall be wide and powerful. Male animals shall have two apparently normal testicles, fully descended into the scrotum. The tail shall be of moderate length, proportionate to the size of the body, strong at the root, tapering to a fine point, carried with a high carriage, ideally at a 12 o'clock position, but without excessive curvature or reflection over the back regardless. The coat shall be short and fine on the head, back, front of legs and tips of ears; on other parts of the body and legs of moderate length, flat, and free of curl and wave. The belly and chest shall have a good covering of hair to protect during hunting in heavy cover. Feathering may be present on the ears, back of legs, and tail. Feet are well feathered between toes. The coat color is a rich golden chestnut with no trace of black, but may vary from a dark mahogany to a red; white color may also be present, provided the chestnut color accounts for the majority of body color overall. The foregoing conformational traits of the breed are described only with the intent that such traits shall be supportive of performance as a bird dog.

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Typical Irish red setters showing traits suggested by the Irish red setter breed standard.

“Function Personifies Form.”