

## **Jack Russell Standards**

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### Jack Russell Standards

THE KENNEL Club Standard for the Jack Russell Terrier is to be published in due course and it will be interesting to see what the sub-committee has come up with.

Currently there exist several Standards for the breed and I've found three, that from Australia which is considered the 'country of development' by the Fédération Cynologique Internationale, another from the Jack Russell Terrier Club of GB which appears to use one compiled by its American equivalent, and finally that from the American Kennel Club for the 'Russell Terrier'.

The FCI version emphasises that two varieties, the Parson and the Jack, evolved from the Rev John Russell's strain, basically similar but differing in height and proportions.

General appearance of the JRT is a 'strong, active, lithe working terrier of great character with flexible body of medium length. His smart movement matches his keen expression.' It lists the three coat types: smooth, rough or broken, and the proportions are rectangular.

The AKC clause is much the same, with some added details about colour.

The club's Standard is prefaced by a paragraph which is mainly concerned with the breed's character and 'fearless, happy disposition', emphasising that the breed is a working terrier and should retain these instincts. 'Nervousness, cowardice or over-aggressiveness should be discouraged and it should always appear confident.'

General appearance in the breed club version includes the words 'sturdy', 'tough' and 'very much on its toes', and adds the size limits.

Body length must be in proportion to the height, which could mean anything I'd have thought! It does also use the word 'compact', so this might suggest a dog of more Parson proportions than the 'rectangular' look of the AKC and FCI Jacks.

FCI and AKC have temperament clauses both saying much the same thing. I like the AKC sentence: "Their intensity of life is one of their endearing traits". It also says that sparring is not acceptable, something any other country would take for granted.

The heads in all three Standards are basically much the same though AKC and FCI allow button as well as drop ears but the club mentions only drop ears.

Regarding the body, the AKC says that the 'small oval shaped compressible chest' is the hallmark of the breed. All the Standards say it should be spannable by an average size man's hands. Toplines are level; AKC and the club want a slight arch to the loin.

All want straight forelegs – not an attribute one often sees in the pet Jacks one sees up and down the country!

AKC has much more detail on movement than the other two, FCI is content with just 'true, free and springy'. I guess none of them countenance the 'hop' one so often sees in pet Jacks and which one hopes serious breeders have done their best to eliminate.

The three coat types are mentioned in each case, and as for colour, white must predominate, with black, tan or (in the club version) brown markings. For the AKC, less than 51 per cent white is a disqualification, as are brindle markings which are 'unacceptable' in the club Standard.

Basically, then, it's just details which seem to separate the three Standards until you get to the rather vexed question of size. The FCI gives the ideal height at withers as 25 to 30cm which is roughly equivalent to just under ten to just under 12 inches. Weight is in the proportion of about one kilogram per five centimetres. AKC is ten to 12 inches, anything outside this in either direction being a disqualification.

The JRT Club, however, covers ten to 15 inches, and therefore also covers what we know as the Parson (ideal height 14 inches dogs and 13 bitches in both KC and AKC Standards). Presumably, then, the idea of two separate breeds is anathema to the JRT Club of GB, and perhaps this is why the Standard it uses is so vague on the subject of proportions.

And now I've found a fourth Standard, for the British JRT Club. This is similar to the JRTCGB with the ten to 15 inch range and vagueness over proportions, but it does admit that for showing purposes the breed is divided into ten to 12 and over 12 up to 15 inch groups.