

subject, but happily they are also asking all the right questions. Some breeders have difficulty with this as well. At a show a while ago, when Glen exhibitors were analyzing a judge's comments after he had passed on a large entry—in which he had praised one of his winners for being the "better-balanced" Glen—a breeder of some experience offered, "Balance is something judges bring up when they don't know what else to say." The remark is baseless but revealing. In this case, and on this point, the judge had a better understanding of the breed than the breeder did.

Balance is defined as "a condition wherein all proportions of a dog are in static and dynamic harmony." So to understand balance in a breed, one has a triple challenge: to appreciate balance specific to this breed, and to be able to assess it in freeze-frame as well as on the move. The latter seems especially elusive for some. An often-heard comment made by some enthusiasts is "a Glen should possess strong drive." This is a half-truth; the balanced Glen possesses good *reach* and drive. Considering the learning curve once again, I

would wager that most students of a breed recognize good drive before they can identify strong reach. Perhaps this explains why one of the more common movement faults seen in Glens is strong drive, even too much drive, without the appropriate degree of reach. These Glens will invariably be seen crabbing and/or paddling. The cause of this unbalanced movement is quite commonly a too-short humerus in the fore-quarters.

Now, can somebody explain to me how to program my DVR?

—Bruce Sussman, New York, N.Y.;  
Bluekafka@aol.com ♦



Irish Terriers

### The Headpiece

Nothing in the appearance of the Irish Terrier defines its essence more than the headpiece. Under the old Thorndike point system, the head accounted for a full 20 percent of the total. While this system is no longer in use, it does show the importance given the headpiece relative to the rest of the dog in the 1920s and '30s.

Jack Thorndike was a noted Irish Terrier man of this period. His interpretation of the breed standard, *The Irish Terrier Standard Simplified*, provides extremely helpful guidance to all enthusiasts. In addition to reliance on Thorndike for this analysis, we rely on Dr. E.S. Montgomery, another notable breed expert. We would be remiss to not acknowledge the contributions of these men to the breed and to this column!

A key element in our standard is *balance*. This and future columns will consider the balance between head and body, and balance among all

the aspects of the head to one another.

Thorndike writes: "The length of the head in a mature, well developed, and well balanced Irish Terrier male of correct size, measured with calipers from the back of the occipital bone to the end of the nostrils, should average eight inches in length. The female slightly less. The foreface should be about half an inch *shorter* than the skull" (emphasis added).

This explanation addresses the call in our standard for a long head, because he observed that people were ignoring the rest of the sentence: "... *but in nice proportion to the rest of the body.*" It seems that judges were comparing heads, looking for the longest and rewarding that feature without regard to overall balance.

Montgomery warned judges against the practice of seeking the longest head in the ring when he wrote: "The practice of many judges to compare head lengths is unfair to the individual specimens and detrimental to the breed as a whole, since by picking the longest heads it necessarily follows that the specimen chosen has the longest back and is also the leggiest. Actually, the specimens with the shortest heads may have the longest head length when head to body ratio is considered."

In addition to length, the *shape* of the head was carefully considered by the old masters. Montgomery explains that the shape of the head when viewed from above should be "slightly wedge shaped, with no appearance of falling away forward of the eye. In other words, the side of the head and foreface should present an unbroken line from the base of the ear to the side of the nostrils, being just slightly less narrow at the nostrils than at the base of the ears."

He goes on to criticize harshly the very slim head, or "needle head," and warns that this can develop into the "Taneous" head that has an "evil association with very high legs, slab sides, overlong bodies, and even more important, a lack of intelligence." He clearly felt quite strongly about this!

We'll continue with this important discussion next time.

—Robert Clyde and Marianne Kehoe,  
Plainfield, N.J.; m\_dkehoe@  
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