

The Pomeranian Club of NSW

*The only Breed Club in Australia recognized by
Dogs Australia (Australian National Kennel Council)*

Pomeranian Breed Lecture

27th July 2026





Pomeranian Breed Lecture

- Notes prepared to assist in education of Trainee Judges to develop a greater understanding of the Pomeranian.
- These notes are based upon the ANKC Breed Standard for the Pomeranian which is 'The Kennel Club England Standard', adopted by the ANKC. Key points in the Standard highlighted in red.
- The KC Standard is also adopted as the Breed Standard for Pomeranians in New Zealand, South Africa, Japan.
- Other worldwide Breed Standards include:
 - FCI-Standard N° 97 (German Spitz)
 - American Pomeranian Club
 - Pomeranian Club of Canada



Lecture presented by Club President Rhiannon Walsh of Pomquest Pomeranians.



Early History and Development

- The Pomeranian can be traced back many centuries where they have been known as Wolf dogs, Volpinos and Spitz. Many historians believe that the Pomeranian was developed from a Spitz type of dog similar to those still seen in Iceland and Lapland hauling sleds over the snow. The Pom, despite its diminutive size, retains the hardy disposition and thick coat typical of dogs in those cold climates.
- Wurttemberg, the heartland of German dog development is recognised as the area where the Spitz was transformed into the Pomeranian in the mid 19th Century though is also believed that the Pomeranian was first developed in the Province of Pomerania (hence the name Pomeranian).
- The early Pomeranians were much larger than today's specimens and were used for drawing sleds, as shepherd dogs herding sheep and reindeer, and for guarding property.

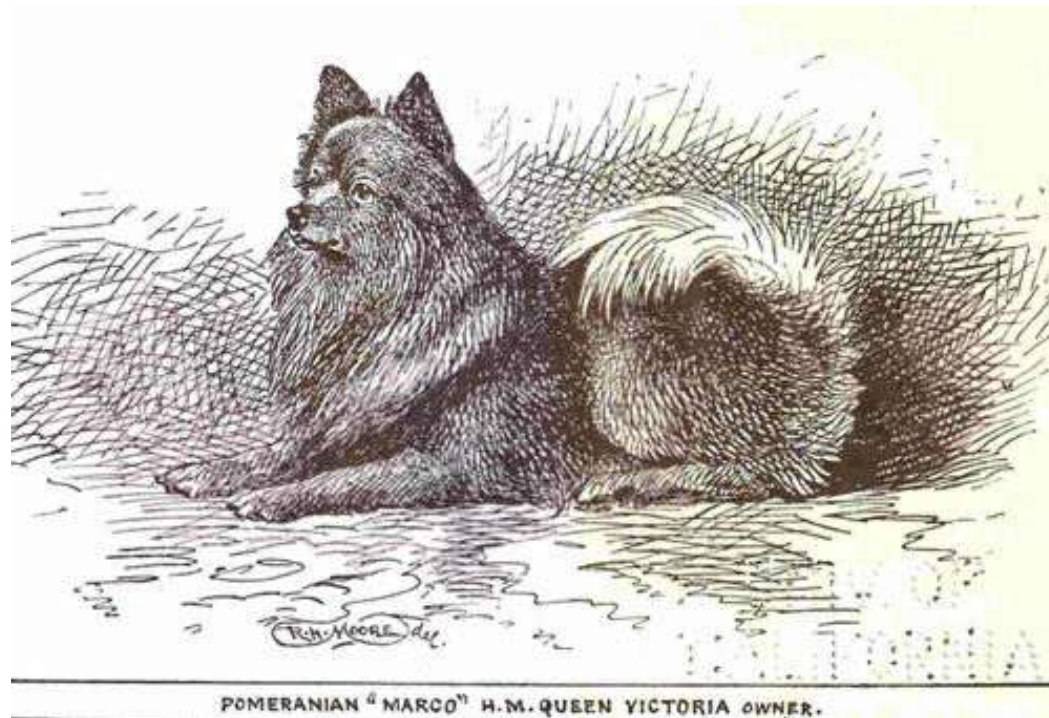


Early History and Development

- Although Pomeranians were in England early in the 19th Century, the Pomeranian was not recognised by the English Kennel Club until its registration in 1870.
- Many of the early Pomeranians exhibited in England weighed around 12kg and measured up to 50cm tall. By inbreeding and selection, the size has been reduced dramatically to the present day.
- Queen Victoria became interested in Pomeranians whilst visiting Florence, Italy in 1888. She was so impressed with those she saw, that the Pomeranian soon became a favourite royal breed, and the Queen later kept a kennel of them, with a Pomeranian keeping a bedside vigil as she lay dying.
- It was through this royal patronage that the Pomeranian became the most popular toy dog of that era until it was displaced by the ever popular Pekingese.



Early History and Development





Today's Pomeranian

- The Pomeranian in its glorious coat is a picture of beauty, stylishness, grace and elegance, emanating gaiety, buoyancy and loveliness in all its being.
- The modern Pom is not bred for any specific use. It is beautiful and a triumph of the breeder's art, and their main vocation in life is as a companion and to please their owners.
- A Pom should enter the show ring as though "they own it", proud, vivacious, almost arrogant!

"These enchanting, tiny balls of fluff, float around the ring, their dainty, delicate little feet, skimming the ground in their joyous action, and knowing, with complete confidence, that they alone, can claim to be the most beautiful dog in the world"

Quote from Hilary Harmer, Aztec Toy Dogs UK, author of "The Pomeranian"



Upon First Glance

- Very beautiful breed of dog - pleasing to the eye
- Balanced - circular in shape
- Compact and short backed
- Dainty and fine boned
- Brisk and buoyant in movement
- Vivacious temperament - cocky and confident
- Well coated - profuse double coat
- High set tail fanned over back





ANKC Breed Standard

- **General Appearance:**

- Compact, short coupled dog, well knit in frame. Exhibiting great intelligence in expression; activity and buoyancy in deportment.

- **Characteristics:**

- Sound, vivacious and dainty.

- **Temperament:**

- Extrovert, lively and intelligent.





Sound, Vivacious, Dainty

- 'Sound, Vivacious, Dainty' - these are three of the most important words in the standard. As you assess each Pom ask yourself - is this Pom sound ? is this Pom vivacious ? - is this Pom dainty ?
- The Pom must be sound, both in mind and structure.
'A sound dog possesses all his proper physical parts in place and functioning as nature intended. He moves properly and vigorously, he can see, hear and scent, is able to breed, and has a disposition that is alert, poised and cooperative'.
- The Pom is outgoing and full of bounce and spirit. They should never be shy, timid, slow or sluggish. He bounces like a ball at the slightest sound and appears as if he is on springs. He can keep pace with breeds much larger in size.
- The Pom should be dainty, light on its feet, almost dancing. On no account should the Pomeranian show tendency towards coarseness or cloddiness.



ANKC Breed Standard

- **Head and Skull:**

- Head and nose foxy in outline, skull slightly flat, large in proportion to muzzle which finishes finely and free from lippiness. Nose black in white, orange and shaded sable dogs; brown in chocolate tipped sable dogs, but in others colours may be 'self-coloured', never parti-coloured or flesh.

- **Eyes:**

- Medium size, slightly oval, not full, or set too wide apart; bright, dark and showing great intelligence. In white, orange, shaded sable and cream dogs, rims black.

- **Ears:**

- Relatively small, not set too wide apart, not too low down, but carried perfectly erect.

- **Mouth:**

- Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.



Head

- The head is one of the most distinctive features of the Pomeranian, and like most breeds contributes significantly towards correctness of breed type. To be outstanding, a Pom must excel in head and expression, the head must be pleasing to the eye and be full of quality.
- The skull should be slightly flat and as it is well covered with hair it will give a slightly rounded appearance, however a round, apple skull is incorrect.
- There must be a definite stop though this shouldn't be too pronounced at this can also give an apple headed appearance.
- In a correct head, there should be a nice fill under the eyes, wide at the back of the jaw, tapering gradually to a refined muzzle in a medium, short jaw that finishes finely.
- The lips should finish nicely, and the Pom shouldn't have overhung, pendulous lips.



Head

- The eyes should be dark, lustrous, liquid and expressive. They should not bulge and are never full or prominent. They are rather oblique and should not be set too far apart, or too close together. They should be clear, expressive, and clean. Not dirty or weeping.
- They should express happiness, alertness and intelligence.
- Correctly set eyes give the Pom expression and charm.
- The ears must be as small as possible, rather narrow, and are set fairly close together. They must be carried high on the head and are absolutely erect. The ears should be covered with short, soft hair, which is trimmed for neatness and appearance.
- Correctly set ears impart the intelligent and alert expression so greatly prized in the breed.



Head





ANKC Breed Standard

- **Neck:**

- Rather short and well set into shoulders.

- **Forequarters:**

- Shoulders clean and well laid back. Fine boned legs, perfectly straight, of medium length in due proportion to size of dog.

- **Body:**

- Back short, body compact, well ribbed up, barrel well rounded. Chest fairly deep, not too wide but in proportion to size of dog.

- **Hindquarters:**

- Fine boned, legs neither cow-hocked nor wide behind; medium angulation.

- **Feet:**

- Small, compact and cat-like.



Body

- The front legs should be dead straight when viewed from the front. From the side there will be a very slight angle from the pastern to ground. The pasterns should be strong.
- The legs are of medium length not such as would be termed 'leggy', nor 'low on leg', but in length and strength in due proportion to a well balanced frame.
- The back must be short and the ribs well sprung, the barrel well rounded giving plenty of room for the heart and lungs. The Pom is very short coupled and the body should be well ribbed up to a short, strong loin.
- The Pom is quite deep in brisket, the chest well developed, the prosternum well defined and the body having plenty of substance. The chest shouldn't be too wide.

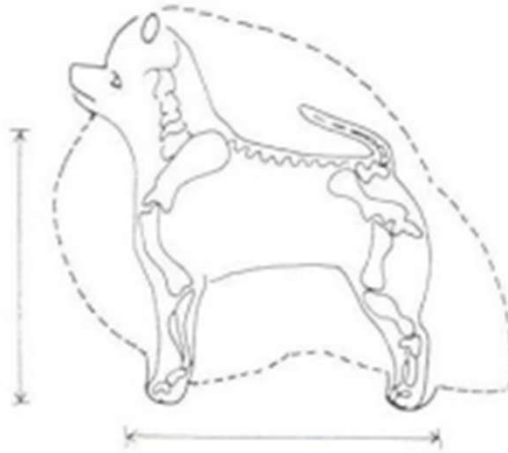


Body

- The Pom should be quite short in hock. The legs from the hock down should appear straight and parallel to each other when viewed from behind. They shouldn't be too close, too wide, cow-hocked nor bow legged.
- The length of legs should be in proportion to the size of the dog, ensuring a balanced appearance. If the legs are too short the dog loses elegance, style and action and becomes long, heavy looking and unbalanced.
- The bone should be fine - but not weedy. We don't want a spindly appearance. Also don't want a heavy coarse look like the Chow Chow.
- Also be aware that some dogs have heavy leg fur which can give a heavier boned appearance, so it's important to feel the bones, not just look at them. While the Pom should be dainty, weediness and delicacy are not correct and should be discouraged by judges and breeders alike.
- The feet are very small, catlike and compact. The toes are short, well cushioned and rounded.
- When standing and moving the Pom must be well up on his toes at all times.



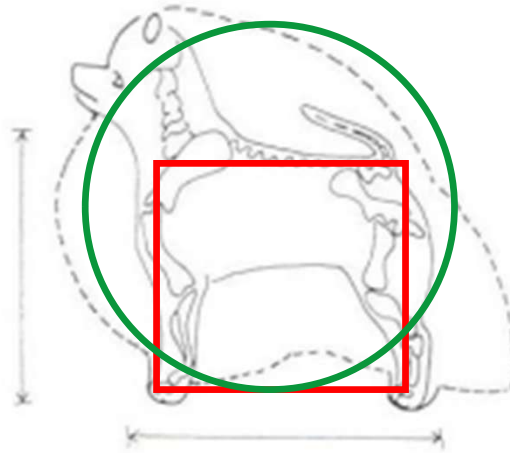
Body



*Above diagrams from 'The New Pomeranian' by Sari Brester Tietjen
(drawn by Christine Heartz)*



Body



A 'circle' on top of a 'square'



Body

- The short neck, on a well laid back should enables the head to be carried high and proud, enhancing the round, circular appearance sought after.
- Long, swan-like necks are incorrect. Often you will find that a dog with a long neck will also have long legs, a long body and long snikey muzzle. While the long neck and legs may give a pleasing, flashy appearance when the dog is moving, it is incorrect and totally contradictory to the compact shape required by the standard.
- A correct neck set is very important to the overall shape of the Pom, both standing and moving. Moving with the head down and forward spoils the whole balance and outline of the dog and makes it appear elongated.
- The shoulders should be well laid back, sloping back so that the withers are slightly higher than the line of the back. The shoulder blade and upper arm should be approximately equal in length.
- The elbows are rather low, and set well into the sides.



Body





ANKC Breed Standard

- **Tail:**

- Characteristic of breed, high set, turned over back and carried flat and straight, profusely covered with long, harsh, spreading hair.





Tail

- The tail is a DISTINCT characteristic of the breed.
- In the Pomeranian it is the "icing on the cake", "the cherry on top".
- It must be set high on the end of the back bone and lie flat and straight along the back from root to tip. It is profusely covered with long thick, harsh hair, reaching to the ears and spreading over the back like a beautiful fan.
- When set correctly the tail will have no feeling of boniness at all when the palm of the hand is placed flat against the tail root.
- With a low set tail the root will protrude outward and upward and you can feel the bone with the palm of your hand. A low set tail will spoil the correct round appearance of the Pom.
- The tail should not flap to one side nor be arched over the back, there must be no curl on the tip and no twist from root to tip.
- Even when the tail is set correctly, if the tail root has a twist to it, it will fall to the side and not lay flat, and most of the plume will fall to one side.



ANKC Breed Standard

- **Gait/Movement:**

- Free moving, brisk and buoyant.





Gait/Movement

- Correct movement is the test of correct conformation.
- The Pom must be sound – soundness is listed as a breed characteristic.
- The Pom should move 'effortlessly', with purpose and be sound in action with 'free moving' gait.
- A slight convergence in front when moving is acceptable. There should be no paddling or weaving.
- The movement is free, light, rather brisk, buoyant and not restrictive in any way.
- Correct buoyancy is achieved from an elastic spring through back and rear.
- The Pom should 'float around the ring' carrying themselves proudly and soundly.



ANKC Breed Standard

- **Coat:**

- Two coats, an under coat and an outer coat. Former soft, fluffy, the latter long, perfectly straight, **harsh in texture** and covering whole of body; very abundant round neck and fore part of shoulders and chest; forming frill, extending over shoulders. **Forequarters well feathered, thighs and hindlegs well feathered to hocks.**





Coat

- The coat of the Pomeranian is one of its most outstanding features.
- In early breed standards where a point system was used the 'coat' was considered of such importance that it was allocated 25 points (out of a total 100 points)
- Although quantity of coat is so necessary, it is just as important that the texture is correct. Always feel for coat texture - the biggest coat isn't necessarily the best coat - the texture must be correct.
- A poor coated specimen should never be considered a good Pomeranian.
- The Pom must have a luxuriant double coat. A thick, spongy, soft, woolly undercoat, and a harsh, standoff, long straight outer coat.
- The outer coat should glisten, sparkle and shine with life and vitality. Do not confuse a dry coat with a harshness.
- A correct coat - both quantity and quality are essential to the general appearance. A Pom without a coat and incapable of growing a coat is not worth a second glance.



Trimming

- In earlier days, only the feet, ears and tail/vent areas were customarily trimmed for neatness, however body coat was left natural or only lightly trimmed. These days body coat is also trimmed for neatness and enhanced appearance.
- A cleverly trimmed coat can very much improve appearance of the Pom and 'mask' faults - shorten a longer body, make a larger dog look smaller, improve a tail set, give a dog more leg etc.
- When done well, trimming looks lovely on a Pom and gives a beautiful finish. Poms shouldn't be overtrimmed to the extent that the harsh outer coat is cut off with only the undercoat remaining. Neither should the Pom look like a clipped Bichon.
- A well trimmed dog doesn't look 'artificial', but neat, well groomed and professionally presented. Trimming should be 'subtle' and enhance shape without being sculptured...



Shaped not sculptured



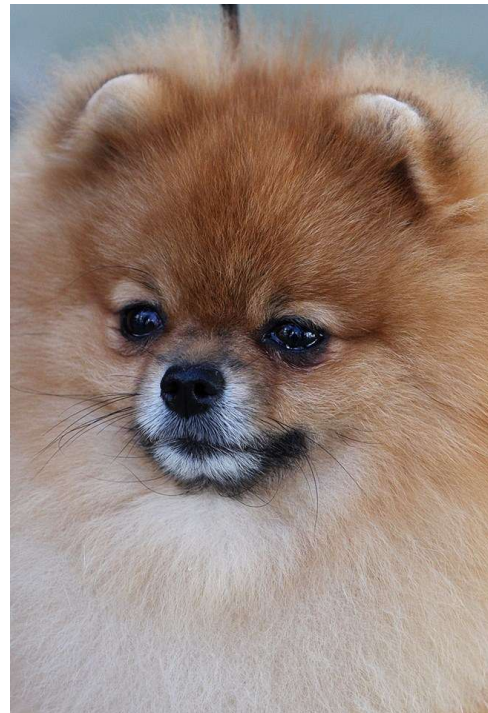
ANKC Breed Standard

- **Colour:**

- All whole colours permissible, but free from black or white shadings.
- Whole colours are: white, black, brown, light or dark, blue as pale as possible. Orange which should be self-coloured and bright as possible. Beaver. Cream dogs have black noses and black eye rims. Whites must be quite free from lemon or any other colour.
- A few white hairs in any of the self-coloured dogs permissible but undesirable. Dogs (other than white) with white or tan markings highly undesirable and not considered whole coloured specimens.
- In parti-coloured dogs, colours evenly distributed on body in patches; a dog with white or tan feet or chest not a parti-coloured dog.
- Shaded sables should be shaded throughout with three or more colours, the hair to be as uniformly shaded as possible, and with no patches of self-colour.
- In mixed classes, where whole coloured and parti-coloured Pomeranians compete together, the preference should, if in all other points they are equal, be given to the whole coloured specimens.



Orange & Orange Sable





Red & Red Sable



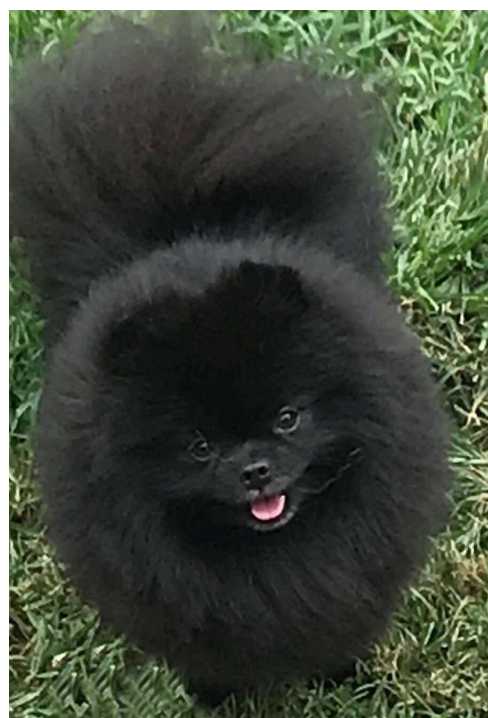
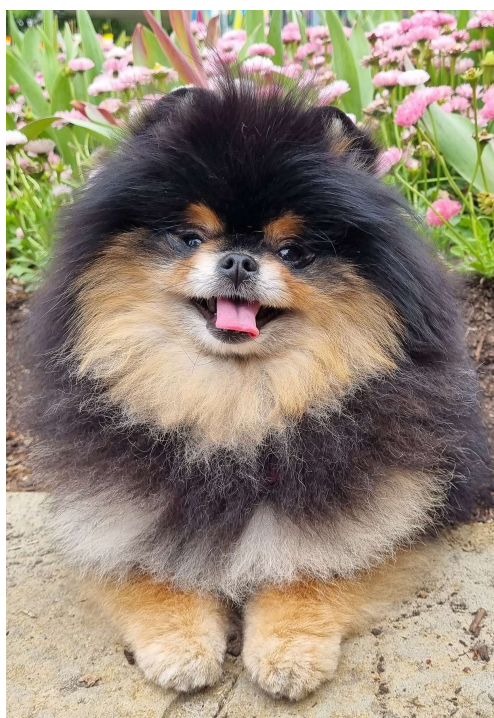


Cream & Cream Sable





Black, Black & Tan



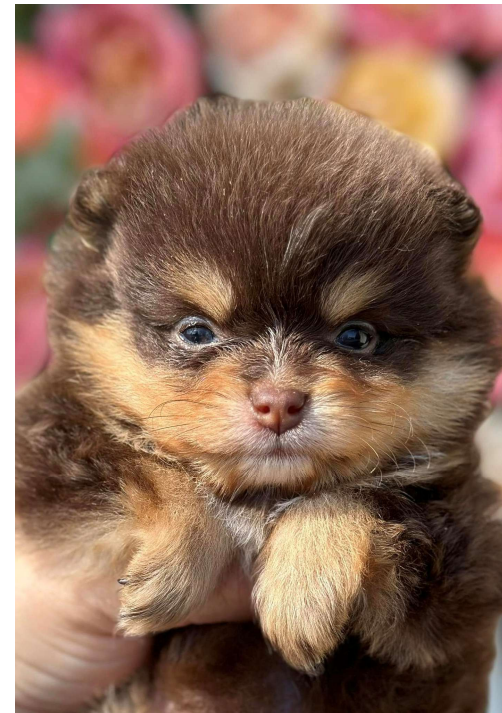
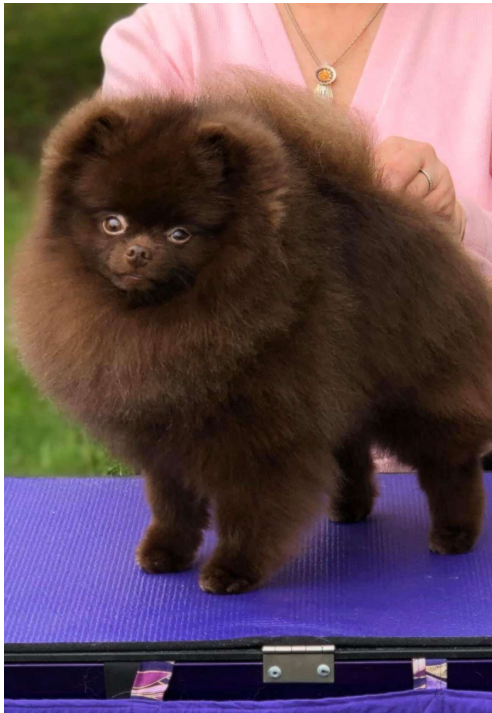


Blue, Blue & Tan





Chocolate, Chocolate & Tan





White





Wolf Sable





Particolour





ANKC Breed Standard

- **Sizes:**

- Ideal weight:
 - Dogs 1.8-2 kg (4-4.5 lbs)
 - Bitches 2-2.5 kg (4.5-5.5 lbs)



Size

- The Pom is an excellent size for a toy breed. Both undersize and oversize are undesirable.
- Undersize: Dogs start to lose body, coat and quite often soundness. The dogs appear weak, weedy and without substance.
- Oversize: Dogs tend more towards coarseness and lose the daintiness and type of the breed.
- Breeder judges will be more forgiving to a smaller male or a larger female as can still be suitable within a breeding program, however a large male or small female are not.
- Although it is a weight standard, large dogs shouldn't be thin and small dogs shouldn't be heavy to make correct weight.
- Bitches play a vital role in the future of the breed - they should have substance, and should be sound - they should be able to breed on.
- There is no height listed in the standard, but look for balance. A well balanced, dainty but sturdy toy dog is required, within the correct weight limits.



Development

- Pomeranians are generally a slow maturing breed going through a transition period known as 'the uglies' from about 4 months to 8 months old.
- During this stage they slowly lose their baby coat, and transition to adult coat and have a 'monkey face' look due to the new/old coat. They will also have a distinct line of new coat along the centre of back.
- By 12 months a Pomeranian is near full adult height.
- Later they will go through a 'junior drop' where the undercoat is shed out leaving the outer coat to lie flatter than normal.
- From 2 years a Pomeranian will then have a 6 month cycle of dropping undercoat.
- Incorrect puppy coat transition or coat cycles can be indication of problematic coat issues in the breed.





Breed Related Coat Issues

- Pomeranians can be affected by various health issues (usually inherited) that cause mild to severe coat loss, eg Alopecia X (also regularly referred to as Black Skin Disease), Hypothyroidism, Cushings Disease, fungal infections, allergies etc.
- Prior to coat loss occurring the tail hair generally thins out and the body coat tends to lack colour, become dull, dry, lifeless and can clump together.
- Alopecia X can be early onset with puppies who have large volumes of cottonish looking coats, quite often greyish colour (except head and legs), which do not cycle the puppy coat through 4-8 months and they become affected with severe coat loss instead of growing new adult coat.
- Late onset coat loss Pomeranians have an apparent correct double coat until 2-4 years old and then suffer from coat cycle arrest and the coat loss when it occurs tends to be more gradual.





Common Faults

"Even truly supreme dogs can have a plainly obvious fault and truly mediocre dogs can be credited with next to no obvious faults. But the difference in potential breed progress is profound between the two dogs."

From 'Virtue Judging vs Fault Judging' by Jonathon Kimes

The perfect dog has not been born! It's much better to award an outstanding dog with some faults than an average dog with no faults. An outstanding dog with great breed type has significantly more to offer the breed than an average dog.

- Unsoundness in hindquarters
- Out at elbows and/or wide front
- Insufficient lay in shoulder
- Down on pasterns
- Long bodies
- Low tailset
- Curled tails
- Tail carried to side
- Incorrect coat texture (woolly coat or dry/lifeless)
- Undershot, overshot, wry mouths
- Lacking pigment (including a 'winter' nose)
- Protruding eyes
- Large ears
- Low set ears
- Open fontanel
- Over size /under size



Dog Sports

Aside from their great appeal in the show ring, Pomeranians also excel in performance sports due to their temperament and intelligence. Poms have titled in Obedience, Rally, Tricks, Agility, Jumping, Dances with Dogs, Scent Work, Tracking.





Summary

- The Pomeranian should be judged as a whole, not in parts.
- A good Pomeranian should possess:
 - Correct breed type:
 - Compact, dainty, vivacious
 - Extrovert, lively and intelligent
 - Head foxy in outline, medium oval eyes, small highset ears, scissor bite
 - Short backed, well ribbed, well laid shoulders
 - Abundant double coat, harsh in texture
 - Highset tail carried straight with long spreading hair
 - Brisk free moving gait
 - Soundness (both mentally and physically)
 - Balance (nothing to extreme)



Breed Club record holder for BISS wins



Summary

"These enchanting, tiny balls of fluff, float around the ring, their dainty, delicate little feet, skimming the ground in their joyous action, and knowing, with complete confidence, that they alone, can claim to be the most beautiful dog in the world"



Thank you

Brett Abraham

