



## MICHIGAN CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER CLUB

August 20, 2014

To: Licensed and Provisional Chesapeake Bay Retriever Judges

Re: American Chesapeake Club Illustrated Guide, and Supplemental Articles

The American Chesapeake Club (ACC) has established an Illustrated Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Retriever. Most of you may have already received a copy of the ACC Illustrated Guide. If you haven't, it may be downloaded at this web address:

<http://amchessieclub.org/illustrated%20guide/illustratedguide.htm>

The Michigan Chesapeake Bay Retriever Club (MCBRC) is comprised of long time breeders with 40+ years of experience, exhibitors, sportsmen and Chesapeake enthusiasts.

It is the opinion of the MCBRC Membership that the Official Breed Standard is sound and true and that it must take precedence over all other available documents. In our review of this Illustrated Guide and supplemental material, we have found **numerous contradictions** when comparing it to the Official AKC Breed Standard for the Chesapeake Bay Retriever; you will find the information in the following pages.

We appreciate you taking the time to review this information. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at [cbrc@micbrc.org](mailto:cbrc@micbrc.org).

Sincerely,  
Michigan Chesapeake Bay Retriever Club

enc. 5 pages

## **Information Concerning the American Chesapeake Club (ACC) Illustrated Guide (IG)**

As you are reviewing the pages of specific concerns; there are several areas of the IG that are repetitively contradictory to the Official Breed Standard (OBS). To save time we will mention these areas here, and ignore them in the individual page reviews.

- When addressing the tuck-up in the flank that is described in the OBS, the IG uses the incorrect term of 'loin'. The OBS describes the tuck-up to be in the flank: "*Body is of medium length, neither cobby nor roached, but rather approaching hollowness from underneath as the flanks should be well tucked up.*" The term 'loin' is only used one time in the OBS and that is when describing the coat.
- The IG on several pages indicates that the chest should reach at least to the elbow, **if not below**. The OBS says as to depth of body and chest: "*Depth of body should extend at least to the elbow.*" "*Chest should be strong, deep and wide. Rib cage barrel round and deep.*" The OBS only requires for the depth of body to reach at least the elbow. Although depth of body sometimes does/can extend below the elbow, the OBS does not give any indication that it is something to be looked for when evaluating the Chesapeake.
- Skirting is also mentioned on more than one occasion in the IG. Skirting is not mentioned in the OBS. It is opinion on how it should be judged. If a dog has so much skirting that a judge must feel for the tuck up, the dog does not have the distinctive breed outline as mentioned on pages 27 & 28 of the IG.

The formatting of the following section is a list by page, followed by wording found in the IG which is then compared to the OBS. A commentary on the comparison follows immediately. Please note that the IG pages themselves are not numbered, but numbers may show depending on the program you use to view the IG.

### **Page 13**

**IG** - The ears are triangularly shaped, small, and are set high on above the eye level on a skull which rounds from ear to ear.

**OBS** - Ears are to be small, set well up on the head, hanging loosely, and of medium leather. Skull is broad and round with a medium stop.

**Comment:** OBS does not address shape of ear or the position relative to the eye. Although triangular is the most often seen shape, some dogs have a much more rounded ear-tip. The OBS does not indicate that the roundness of the skull is from ear to ear.

### **Page 18**

**IG** - All heads are males-a small amt. of lip on a male (as in A & C) is acceptable.

**OBS** - Lips are thin, not pendulous.

**Comment:** The acceptance of "a small amt. of lip" is strictly opinion. The OBS makes no distinction between male and female, nor does it address what amount of lip would be acceptable.

### **Page 25**

**IG** - There should be some forechest for ice breaking ability but it should not be overly prominent.

**OBS** - No mention of forechest.

**Comment:** The OBS only talks about chest: "*Chest should be strong, deep and wide.*" It does not mention forechest.

### **Page 36**

**IG** - Since the rear pastern/hock length is to be medium, correct stifle angulation is achieved when the length from the stifle to the top of hock joint is approximately equal to the length from the top of the hock to the ground.

**OBS** - Stifles should be well angulated. The distance from hock to ground should be of medium length.

**Comment:** The OBS lists no measurements. It is strictly opinion as to which of the dogs represented in photos have the preferable angulation. It is misleading to indicate that only the two measurements mentioned determine the angle of the stifle.

### **Page 53**

**IG** - Historically and today, breeders have been working toward a solid colored (no white) dog....

**OBS** - One color is not to be preferred over another. A white spot on the breast, belly, toes or back of feet (immediately above the large pad) is permissible, but the smaller the spot the better, solid colored preferred.

**Comment:** It is opinion that historically breeders are working toward a solid colored dog. The ACC has not done any type of poll with breeders to support the claim that breeders today are working toward a solid colored dog. On a historical note, OBS's from 1889, 1918, and 1923 all allow for white and do not state a preference for a solid colored dog. It wasn't until the standard revision of 1933 that, "solid colored preferred" was introduced.

### **Page 55**

**IG** - Going away, the hocks should move in straight parallel lines

**OBS** - When the Chesapeake is moving away from you, there should be no sign of cowhockness from the rear. As speed increases, the feet tend to converge toward a center line of gravity.

**Comment:** It is unclear here if the IG is talking about the actual hock joint, or the rear pasterns, frequently incorrectly referred to as the hocks. Since it uses the phrase "straight parallel lines", one would think it is addressing the rear pasterns. The OBS does not call for parallel rear pasterns when moving. Moving in parallel lines would also contradict the photo used to show correct rear movement.

## Page 71

**IG** - (BASED ON ANNE ROGERS CLARK'S "JUDGING THE ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL")  
Does the dog have one of the two acceptable top-lines? (Rear high as shoulder or a TRIFLE higher)

**OBS** - Topline should show the hindquarters to be as high as or a trifle higher than the shoulders.

**Comment:** These are Chesapeakes, not English Cockers. As to the reference to topline, the dog pictured second from the left appears to have a sloping top line; not what is called for in the OBS.

## Page 73

**IG** - Now down and back-remembering that retrievers are wider in build. They move wider coming toward you and their rears should drive. "Movement is evaluated 60% on side gait and 40% on the down/back. And now-does it move from the side ? After all, this is the true test of the sum total of his parts. If you have done all of this, you have made your first selections on type and rewarded functional soundness of movement from your typical specimens."  
A.R. Clark

**OBS** - The gait should be smooth, free and effortless, giving the impression of great power and strength. When viewed from the side, there should be good reach with no restrictions of movement in front and plenty of drive in the rear, with flexion of stifle and hock joints. Coming at you, there should be no signs of elbows being out. When the Chesapeake is moving away from you, there should be no sign of cowhockness from the rear. As speed increases, the feet tend to converge toward a center line of gravity.

**Comment:** The quotes attributed to A.R Clark are her own opinions and written about English Cockers, not Chesapeakes. The statement of retrievers moving wider; wider than what? A Chesapeake with a wide chest that moves correctly is still capable of converging toward a center line as the OBS describes movement. The opinion that movement is judged 60% on side gate and 40% on down/back is not stated or indicated in the OBS and contradicts another part of the IG that states on page 56: "*Movement should be evaluated by giving every consideration to the entire view of side gait and down and back*".

## Page 74

**Comment:** There are areas of the drawing that are mis-labeled. The flank is identified as the loin. The rear pastern is labeled as the hock. Due to the angle of the drawing, the point of the shoulder is shown more as the forechest. What should be identified as the backline is labeled as the topline. It might be better if the second thigh point isn't sitting right on top of the knee/stifle joint.

## Page 75

**IG** - Although these other colors and patterns are not disqualifications, it will be up to you as the judge to decide how you wish to handle them in the ring.....The dog on the right is the tan color described in the standard. It should never be penalized, excused or DQ for its color. The dog on the left is not tan and its color is not described in the standard. It is your decision how to handle judging the dog on the left.

**OBS** - Any color of brown, sedge, or deadgrass is acceptable, selfcolored Chesapeakes being preferred. One color is not to be preferred over another.

**Comment:** Tan is not "described in the standard" anymore than the "dog on the left" (which is commonly referred to as ash), as neither color is **described** in the OBS. The ash, and the patterned dogs are acceptable per the OBS because they fall into the range of any color of brown, deadgrass or sedge. As far as the patterned dogs go, the

OBS states that selfcolored is preferred. Therefore the OBS is recognizing that there are dogs that are not selfcolored, which would automatically encompass the patterns seen in the breed.

Judges should not be told to handle the patterned and ash dogs however they want. The OBS clearly states that one color is not preferred over another and selfcolor is preferred. Color only carries a value of four of 100 on the positive Scale of Points. The OBS also states in its final paragraph, "*The question of coat and general type of balance takes precedence over any scoring table which could be drawn up. The Chesapeake should be well proportioned, an animal with a good coat and well balanced in other points being preferable to one excelling in some but weak in others.*" Color is not mentioned in this final summary of the OBS.

### **Comments On Other Supplemental Information**

The ACC also provides other supplemental material on the club website and articles provided at seminars. This other information sometimes expresses personal opinions that are not supported by the OBS. Please, all we ask is that you view such information against the backdrop of the OBS.

The ACC is in the process of changing long standing informational articles on their website to now support the opinions presented in the IG. These changes were done without membership input.

#### Some of the opinions you may encounter:

- Height of tail carriage to which the OBS is silent other than "*should not curl over the back or side kink*".
- You may read that there are not two sets or kind of hairs that make up the Chesapeake coat. The OBS clearly states "*The double coat consists of a short, harsh, wavy outer coat and a dense, fine, wooly undercoat containing an abundance of natural oil and is ideally suited for the icy rugged conditions of weather the Chesapeake often works in.*"
- Other information as to eye shape or eye color matching the coat may be expressed. The OBS makes no comment to either of these areas, only stating "*Eyes are to be medium large, very clear, of yellowish or amber color and wide apart.*"
- You may hear that the breed has a bit of an arch in the loin area as it proceeds into the croup. Some dogs do, some dogs don't. The OBS makes no mention of an arch in the loin area.
- Lastly, there has been an ongoing controversy within the Breed for about the past 8 years that we feel must be addressed. The controversy concerns the color shade commonly referred to as ash. Such controversy started when, a few dogs of this shade appeared in the show ring about the same time, and in the same area of the country. Many breeders had never seen or heard of the ash shade and made their objections well known. Some judges were excusing Champions of this ash shade from their rings using the reasoning that the OBS didn't address the shade. Some people including breeders and ACC mentors mistakenly believe the shade is gray. Some breeders say they don't have proper coat texture; that dogs of the ash shade should not be bred. Or, they worry that blue eyes may gain a foothold in the breed. Do some ash dogs have improper coat texture? Sure, but improper coat texture can be found in ALL colors of Chesaapeakes. As to the worry about eye color, the OBS processes that, the same as any other characteristic that is contrary to what is listed there.

The ash shade is a dilute brown, similar to what is seen in the Weimaraner and is documented in the breed at least as far back as 1862. In Chesapeake these dogs generally 'brown up' as they mature. There are two dilution genes carried by Chesapeake, one producing ash, the other deadgrass. Both of these dilution genes can cause a paling of eye color. However, it is only the ash shade that is now, in the 21st century being discriminated against.

Wording in the article 'Color in the Chesapeake Bay Retriever', written in 1993 by the ACC Standard Committee, originally stated the following which was presented as the definitive word by the ACC:

*"Historic records show that some of the deadgrass shades can be very light, almost white in appearance, while darker deadgrass colors can include diluted shades of brown called ash, that appear as either gray or taupe. **The almost white and ash/taupe/gray shades are not commonly seen, but are acceptable.** Eye color for these diluted shades, as with all coat colors, must be of yellowish or amber color."* (bolding added for emphasis)

As referred to earlier in this information, the ACC has approved the following change to the previously mentioned article, without member input, wording has been changed to read as follows:

*"Historic records show that some of the deadgrass shades can be very light, almost white in appearance, while darker deadgrass colors can include shades of brown called ash, that appear as either gray or taupe. **These ash/taupe/gray shades are not commonly seen and are not preferred.** As with all coat colors, the eyes must be of yellowish or amber color."* (bolding added for emphasis)

After all of this, please remember that according to the OBS, color is worth only 4 points on the positive scale of points. The OBS says only this about color (not including the reference to white): *"The color of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever must be nearly that of its working surroundings as possible. **Any color of brown, sedge, or deadgrass is acceptable, selfcolored Chesapeakes being preferred.** One color is not to be preferred over another."* (bolding added for emphasis) It is unfortunate that the ash shade has become such an issue considering a Chesapeake's color is relatively unimportant compared to the areas of the OBS that address functionality of the Breed toward its intended purpose.

In closing we would like to thank you for taking the time to review this information. It is the objective of the MCBRC to try and provide accurate information that supports and is supported by the OBS. The MCBRC supports the Official Breed Standard as the only document by which the Chesapeake Bay Retriever should be judged and thus it must/should take precedence over all other information. We are strongly obligated to advocate for this American Breed, so its uniqueness is neither lost nor destroyed.

Respectfully,  
Michigan Chesapeake Bay Retriever Club

References:

*Color in the Chesapeake Bay Retriever*  
<http://amchessieclub.org/standard/discussion.html>

*ACC Illustrated Guide*  
<http://amchessieclub.org/illustrated%20guide/illustratedguide.htm>

*Chesapeake Bay Retriever - AKC Official Breed Standard*  
<http://amchessieclub.org/standard/standard.html>

Historic color reference to ash, dilution genes in Chesapeakes, and definitive word by ACC -  
*Another Shade of Brown - The Ash Color Explained*  
<http://amchessieclub.org/standard/AnotherShadeofBrownAshColorExplained.pdf>