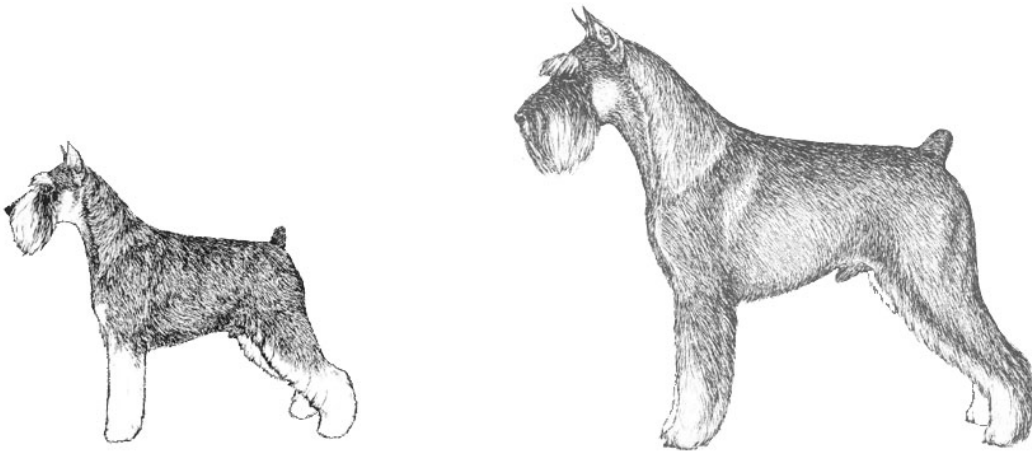


This article is meant to be only my opinion in judging the Miniature Schnauzer. Others might do this differently. Drawings are used with the permission of the American Miniature Schnauzer Club and the Standard Schnauzer Club of America, as well as artists Lori Bush and Gail Mackiernan. They are taken from the Illustrated Discussion of the respective breed. Items in italics are quoted from the AKC Standard for the Miniature Schnauzer. Comments of Beverly Pfaff and Penny Hirstein were submitted by them for use in this article.

Judging the Miniature Schnauzer

Marcia Feld 5891



“Resembling his larger cousin the Standard Schnauzer” - these are crucial words to remember when approaching the Miniature Schnauzer, for his origins are different from the other dogs in the terrier group. He is German in origin, bred down from the Standard Schnauzer by use of the Affenpinscher and perhaps the Poodle for use as a small farm dog and as a ratter. Only in the AKC is this breed classified as a terrier. His overall appearance is remarkably close to that of his larger cousin.

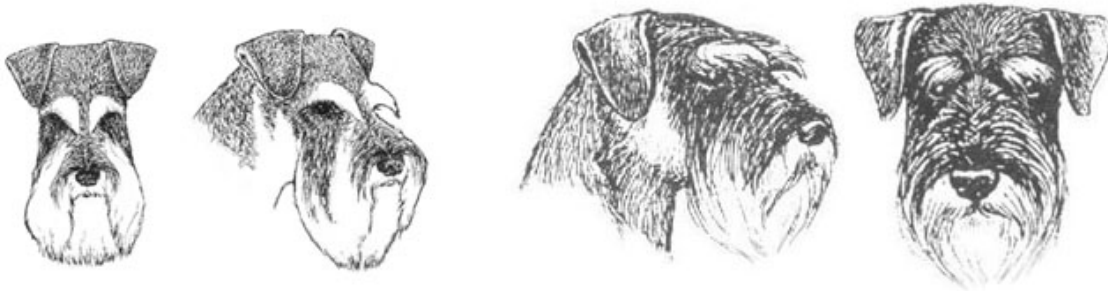
SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

“He is sturdily built, nearly square in proportion of body length to height with plenty of bone, and without any suggestion of toyishness”

Nearly square, and plenty of bone. Commonly referred to as one of the square breeds, note that the Standard calls for him to be slightly longer than tall. Shorter than square is not desirable. As you watch the dog go around the ring, or view him on the table, you should see a small version of the Schnauzer. He should be able to pull a cart (proportioned to his size), or act as a drover. His body should be robust and strong.

HEAD

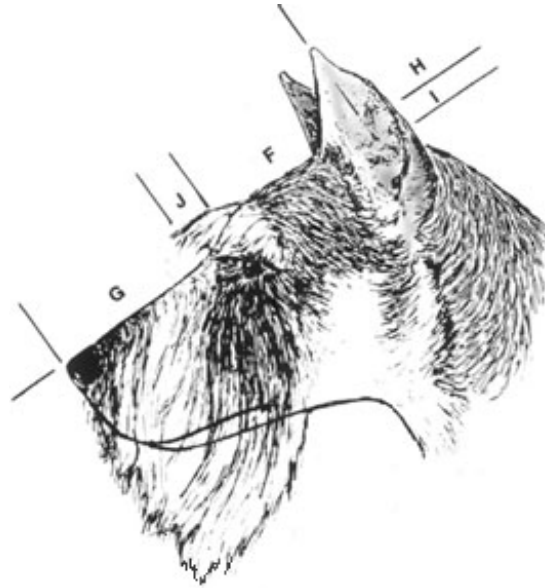
"Ears... When cropped, the ears are identical in shape and length, with pointed tips. They are set high in balance with the head and not exaggerated in length..... When uncropped, the ears are small and v-shaped, folding close to the skull"



The uncropped ear of the Mini is indeed set a tad higher, breaks a wee bit higher and is smaller than that of the Standard Schnauzer, but it is not to be confused with the ear of the Fox Terrier or the Kerry. The ear should fold just above the skull with the flaps pointing to the outside corner of the eye. Ears are very expressive and will vary with the dog's attitude and level of attention. To see the ears at best advantage, observe the alert dog from the front. While moving, the ears will most likely be carried higher, an unhappy dog will pull them back.

Important: The uncropped and the cropped ear are equally acceptable. Do NOT penalize a dog for natural ears. In your evaluation, please recognize the visual advantage of the cropped ear. From the side, the cropped ear visually extends the length of neck; from the front, the cropped expression appears much more alert, the head shape is enhanced.

"Head....Strong and rectangular, its width diminishing slightly from ears to eyes, and again to the tip of the nose.The top skull is flat and fairly long. The foreface is parallel to the top skull, with a slight stop, and it is at least as long as the top skull. The muzzle is strong in proportion to the skull; it ends in a moderately blunt manner....."



We are looking for a head that resembles a brick. Hopefully, a nice arch of neck has resulted in the head angled downward. Search for a large, blunt nose, as this is a good indication of muzzle strength. The dog was a ratter and must have the muzzle strength for this task. Parallel planes are vitally important and are becoming elusive. The Standard says muzzle "at least as long as"; it does NOT say "the longer the better". Unfortunately, today's exaggerated heads are frequently accompanied by several resultant problems; i.e. loss of parallel planes (downfaced) with weak muzzles, poor dentition, and in some cases, rounded top skulls. In your examination, grasp the muzzle in your hand and feel for substance, look for eyefill and please check the planes created by the top skull and muzzle. Many handlers are using beard well up between the eyes to cover the lack of stop and sloping muzzle. Be aware and do not be afraid to feel what lies beneath all that beard.

An over or undershot jaw is very offensive. Unlike the other terriers, a level bite is also a fault (as it is in the Standard Schnauzer).

BODY

"Short and deep, with the brisket extending at least to the elbows. Ribs are well-sprung and deep... ..short loin" ..no appearance of tuck-up; straight topline, slightly sloping from withers to tail

The well-arched neck should flow down to the body and blend smoothly with the shoulders. The neck is not a cylinder reaching for the sky as is the case with some of the terriers, but rather reaches forward. Use your hands to feel the flow of neck into chest and withers. Check for depth of chest; feel for ribsprung and a short loin. The depth of the body at the withers should be about equal to the length of leg from elbow to ground.

Forequarters and Hindquarters - very much like the working dog from which he comes. Reference the pictures at the beginning of this article. The Miniature Schnauzer does NOT have a shortened upper arm. The hindquarters should not be exaggerated, but rather have balanced extension necessary to provide for the solid movement of a working dog. There should be a nice shelf behind the tail. Pinched fronts are a common fault.

TAIL

"Set high and carried erect...docked only long enough to be clearly visible over the backline of the coat when the dog is in proper length of coat."

Why is the Miniature Schnauzer the only terrier with a tail docked so short? Once again, because he is a small SCHNAUZER. His tail should be set high and carried erect, but true to his heritage, it should not be "gay" or "squirrel". It should not point toward his head. Note that it says carried erect. When at rest, the tail may indeed relax toward one o'clock.

COAT

"Double, with hard, wiry, outer coat and close undercoat... Furnishings are fairly thick but not silky" The coat on the Miniature Schnauzer has suffered a great deal in the last twenty years or so. Today, a good hard coat is in the minority and should be rewarded. Study the amount of furnishings on the illustration at the beginning of this article. This drawing was done in approximately 1968 and was considered to be an amply furnished dog. Since that time, generally speaking, furnishings have proliferated ad nauseum. Furnishing and undercoat quantity are directly proportional, proliferation of one means proliferation of both. "Close undercoat" has, of necessity, therefore been simulated by raking. The hard, wiry outer coat becomes more and more difficult to establish and maintain. "but not silky" furnishings have been accomplished by the use of chalk and hairspray.

Watch for, and reward, a good hard coat. Furnishings, which have texture adequate to be shown without chalk and hairspray, are to be applauded. Hard furnishings do not gather leaves, twigs and briars; soft silky ones function like Velcro. One is conducive to the out-of-doors; the other most definitely is not. One is correct; the other is less so.

"The head, neck, ears, chest, tail, and body coat must be plucked." Today you will find many dogs in the ring with clipped chests, heads and ears. Though I would prefer not to, I can begrudgingly forgive the head and ears, but not the chest. Heads and ears are a result of current demand for ultra elegant grooming. Chests are done either to stretch the amount of time a dog can be shown on one coat, to shorten the dog's apparent body length, or perhaps just because the groomer was too lazy to strip the chest to begin with. On the average, it takes 12 weeks to put a dog in coat; you then have approximately 6 weeks to show before the dog's coat is blown and you must start over. The temptation to clipper down an unkempt front is tremendous.

Color

"The recognized colors are salt and pepper, black and silver and solid black".

AKC,CKC are the only locations in the world where the three colors are considered one variety and may be interbred. As a result of this, it has been possible to establish quality dogs in all three colors, but, the price for this color interbreeding has been difficult with the expression of color itself in many of the dogs. Color, and intensity of color are inherited separately. We have blacks, even homozygous black, who have suffered a lack of color intensity as a result of the influence of the undercoat color of the s/p...especially in the furnishings, as they reflect undercoat color more accurately than they do topcoat. The same is true of black/silver.

The muddied color waters (all 3 colors) are all too frequently corrected with "enhancement" rather than the whelping box. Keep color in perspective. Remember that color is only part of coat, and coat is only part of the dog. **Topcoat, ie, hardcoat, must be black in the black or black/silver; banded in the salt/pepper**, beyond that, the waters become very, very difficult. If you cannot tell whether a dog is black/silver or salt/pepper, that dog should be heavily penalized. Beyond this, in your mind's eye, paint all the dogs gray for judging purposes, and let color be the icing on the cake.

I have asked breed color specialists to comment on their chosen colors. Each of them was on the color committee at the time of the last Standard revision. Note, black is genetically dominant, then salt/pepper, and finally black/silver which is recessive to both.

Black - contributed by Beverly Pfaff

"Ideally, the black color in the topcoat is a true rich glossy solid color with the undercoat being less intense a soft matting shade of black." This black can be of several different hues, slate black, or blue black, etc; all are equally correct. The undercoat should be in the same shades, but less intense. Brown or gray shades should not be found in the undercoat. There will be times when there is a little graying on the head and in the leg hairs, or belly hairs. Unless they are really noticeable, they should not be overly penalized. A few white hairs in the body should not be penalized as they are allowed in the standard, as is a white spot on the chest.

Brown tinges can occur in the furnishings as a result of oxidation caused by the weather elements such as sun, sea air, water with excess minerals or chlorophyll. These also should not be overly penalized. Normally, the topcoat will escape discoloration.

Judges should be aware that the more you scissor the furnishings and belly hair, or clipper throat areas and rear ends, the lighter they will become. Beards do become discolored from food and saliva, usually taking on a red tinge.

Salt/Pepper - contributed by Penny Hirstein

There are more salt/pepper miniature schnauzers than there are black or black/silver. The salt/pepper color is a combination of black and white banded hairs and solid black and solid white unbanded hairs sprinkled throughout the top (hard) coat. The

banded hairs should predominate as this is what gives the salt/pepper schnauzer his distinctive coloration.

All shades of salt/pepper from the very dark to the very light, are acceptable. Tan shading throughout the coat is permissible. In fact, most salt/peppers will have tan shading behind the ears and at the very back of the hind legs.

The salt/pepper carries the bi-color pattern. The salt/pepper color fades out to gray or silver white in the eyebrows, whiskers, cheeks, under the throat, inside the ears, across the chest under the tail, into the leg furnishings, and inside the hind legs. Additionally, it may or may not fade out on the underbody; if it does, it must not rise higher on the sides of the body than the elbow. A black saddle on the back of a salt/pepper is acceptable; however, you must keep in mind that the salt and pepper hairs are to predominate.

ANY white discoloration in the salt/pepper section of the coat is a breed disqualification.

Here in America, color cross breeding is allowed and has been of benefit to the black, and the black/silver schnauzers in improving their overall conformation. It has not been as kind to the salt/pepper variation as the color crossing will tend to diminish the banded hairs. When looking at any Miniature Schnauzer, you should never be in doubt as to its color. If you have to wonder if it is a bad salt/pepper with not enough banding, or a bad black/silver because it has any color other than black in its body coat, then this dog is incorrect and should be faulted.

All salt/pepper will have a dark overlay of hair in the whiskers which is called a mask. As a general rule, the darker the salt/pepper, the darker the mask will be. Some salt/peppers will have a solid mask; others will have a striped effect with dark hair under the eyes and again around the nose with white or silver gray hair in between. This mask is very important to the salt/pepper as it is a factor in achieving the proper schnauzer expression.

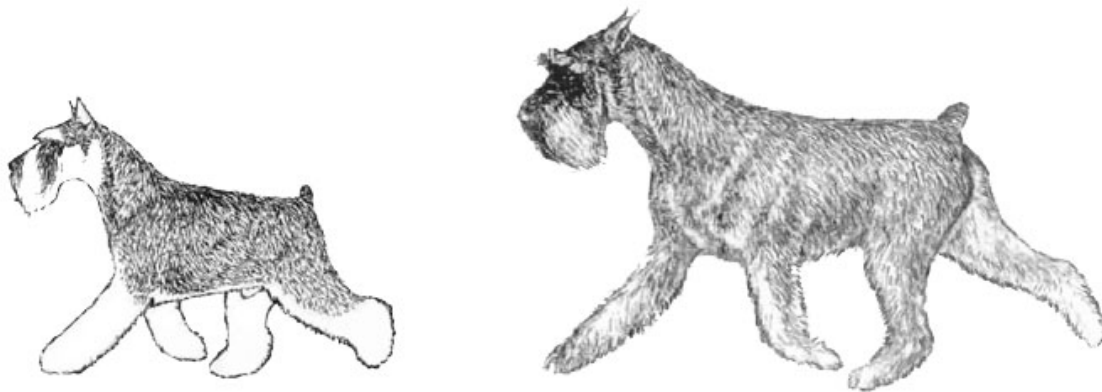
Black/Silver - (my color)

Black and SILVER. Not black and white. This is the bi-color pattern seen in the Rottweiler, Doberman and many other breeds. Visualizing the color pattern of these breeds will give you the pattern that will be visible on an intensely colored black and silver. A well-colored b/s is indeed born black and tan, with his color clearing as he matures, but the furnishings will always minimally retain a very pale pewter or silver color. The black and SILVER will have a black undercoat as called for in the Standard. There will be a black underbelly, black running down the outside of the front legs, and black wrapping around the hock. On a young puppy, this black on the belly and in the furnishings will be very intense, on a mature dog, it will be less so, frequently turning to pewter, BUT - shades of black will always be there.

The crossing of the b/s with the s/p has unfortunately resulted in the all too frequent b/s acquisition of the lighter s/p undercoat and less intense coloring. These puppies are born strikingly black and white and unfortunately, appeal very much to the uninitiated. As they mature, there will be no black evident in the front legs; undercoats are light and rear legs will not have color wrapping around the hock. In the ring, however, rarely will you see the light undercoat, as it will have been corrected. The bowtie on the chest is difficult to deal with in these instances, and will usually assume a more rectangular shape. It is strange indeed to find a b/s with an intensely black undercoat and belly, but with no color running down the front leg or around the hock.

The well-colored b/s pays a tremendous price for his color as he moves away from the judge. The younger the dog, and the more intense (better) his color, the greater the price. The black wrapping around the hock, and black hair on the inside of the foot (where the big toe would be) make the dog appear to be cowhocked or pigeontoed. The astute judge will take this into consideration.

GAIT



Gait is very similar to that of the larger cousin, the Standard Schnauzer. *"When approaching, the forelegs with elbows close to the body, move straight forward...Going away, the hind legs are straight and travel in the same planes as the forelegs."* When a full trot is achieved, a slight inclination will occur. This will begin at the point of shoulder in front, and from the hip in the rear. Single tracking is incorrect.

Temperament

"...alert and spirited, yet obedient to command...friendly ,intelligent and willing to please...never over-aggressive or timid."

What does this mean for sparring? I personally use sparring a very, very small percentage of the time. When a spirited dog spars nicely, he is beautiful - but - I am not sure this is a breed where a dog that stands non-aggressively should be penalized. The Miniature Schnauzer was a farm dog, a family companion and a barn ratter.

Disqualifications:

1. Height: *"Dogs or bitches under 12 inches or over 14 inches"* 12 inches is equally as acceptable as 14 inches. If you are in doubt as to size, please measure. Puppies too. It is heartbreaking to an owner of an in size dog that projects large, to be ignored because the judge assumes the dog to be oversized. Likewise, it is very unfair to the breed, as well as to other exhibitors, to reward a dog that should be disqualified

2. White: *"Color solid white or white striping, patching, or spotting on the colored areas of the dog, except for the small white spot permitted on the chest of the black."* On the bi-colored s/p and b/s there is an area of light gray, or silver white under the dog's throat and on the chest. Between these areas there should be the dog's natural coat color, either banded s/p or solid black; this is the most common location of a mismark. Examination should include a glance at this area.