

Considerations when Judging the Pumi



As the Pumi moves into the Herding Group on July 1, the members of the Hungarian Pumi Club of America are concerned that breed-specific characteristics be rewarded. Showing in the Miscellaneous Classes, we have found that there is a tendency to look for the “generic dog” and miss some breed-specific requirements. The HPCA Judges Education Committee has come up with a prioritized list of crucial breed characteristics to consider when judging the Pumi.

Hallmarks of the Pumi (in priority order)

1. Ears two-thirds erect
2. Curly locks of hair
3. Square
4. Moderate reach and drive
5. Light-footed, ready for action
6. Circular tail
7. Light-bodied and well-muscled

1. Ears Two-Thirds Erect



Figure 1: Proper Ears

The Pumi standard on ears is based on the Sheltie standard, with a few significant changes. The Pumi standard says “*set on high, of medium size, and carried two-thirds erect with the tips pointing somewhat towards the sides.*” Where the Sheltie is three-quarters erect, the Pumi is two-thirds, and the ears should point somewhat sideways, not forward as a Sheltie. The ears are also slightly lower set than a Sheltie. There is not a fold or crease in the ear, but a gentle curving.

2. Curly Locks of Hair



Figure 2: Two Types of Hair on the Body with the Proper Locks of Hair

Our biggest concern is the preparation of the coat for show. The only sentence in bold in the standard is **“The coat must never appear fluffed and blown dry, obscuring the characteristic curls.”** The coat is prepared by wetting it down and allowing it to dry naturally, never with a blow dryer. The coat develops curly locks of hair that vary in shape all over the body, legs, and head. *These locks of hair go all the way down to the skin.*

If a Pumi has been prepared improperly by blow drying the coat, the dog lacks a crucial breed characteristic (locks of hair) and must not be put to winners or breed.



Figure 3: Leg Hair

The coat very easy-care with little preparation on the day of the show, and we want this breed to continue that way.

Many, many people have counselled us that we must put this as a disqualification in our standard and we hope that we won't find it necessary to do so.

Profile Standing and Moving

The remainder of the seven elements describe the Pumi's outline. At first glance, the Pumi should have a Pumi silhouette: very square, upright, light-bodied, slightly sloping topline, high tailset, and curled tail sitting on the topline.

The topline is not explicitly described in the standard, but can be implied through the following:

- Withers pronounced and forming the highest point of the body.
- The back is short, straight, and taut.
- The loin is short, straight, and firmly coupled.
- The croup is not too long, slightly sloped, and of medium breadth.
- Tail: set high

From front to rear, the withers form the highest point of the topline, sloping to a short, level back, and extending to a slightly sloped croup with a high tailset. However, the customary trim for the dogs is with a sloping topline from withers straight to the tail. When judging, please check for the actual topline on the table during the exam.

3. Square

The Pumi is square, with the height at the withers equal to the distance from prosternum to buttocks.



Figure 4: Square Outline

4. Moderate Reach and Drive and 5. Light-footed, ready for action

The Pumi was used for herding cattle, sheep, and swine. They need to be quick to think and light on their feet, able to change direction instantly.

The Pumi is moderately angulated, with moderate reach and drive. The picture should be of a tightly held together square, moving in a very collected manner at a moderate trot – with head carried relatively high, tail help up, a light step and springy (not bouncy) motion.



Figure 5: Pumi Movement

6. Circular Tail

The tail forms a full circle with the tip of the tail touching the base and sits right on top of the topline. At the insertion, the base may start off at 45 – 90 degrees, but should still form a circle. Undesirable are sickle tails or tails with multiple curls. You will see a range of amount of curl in the tail, but the ideal is a perfect circle. The tail may hang when at rest but must curl on the move.

7. Light-Bodied and Well-Muscled

The Pumi is like a marathon runner – all wire and muscle with almost no fat. The standard, taken from the FCI Hungarian standard, says “particularly lean”. The depth of chest is slightly less than half the height at the withers. These dogs should be like a coiled spring, ready to go at a moment’s notice.

The Future

The Hungarian Pumi Club of America has provided judges education seminars in most of the main venues, and is willing to provide more as requested, or to answer any questions judges may have about the breed. Go to www.pumiclub.org/about-the-pumi/judges-education/ for much information on the breed and a list of parent club approved mentors. For questions, contact JEC Chris Levy at chris@abiquadogs.com.

We hope that those judges who are approved for Pumi will take this breed seriously and uphold the standard, assuring that the dogs do not change from the heritage that has been given us by those dedicated breeders in Europe.