

IWANE Sweepstakes Critique

July 28, 2019

Judge: John Arvin

I wish to thank the Officers and members of IWANE for selecting me to judge Sweepstakes at the IWANE Specialty. It's always an honor to judge other breeds but even more so at a Specialty show. I am very grateful to have been selected, then having such an outstanding entry.

I am overwhelmed at the generosity of IWANE, its members who surprised me with a lovely bottle of wine and other gifts at the hotel, then yet again at the conclusion of the show with a hand painted portrait of my Ridgeback Vera that is so beautiful that words can't describe how I feel. Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you!

Overall impressions of the entire entry

I thought the entry was Very, Very Good. From the very first 6-9 month puppy dog to the very last class of 15-18 month bitches, there were quality exhibits in every class.

I found the following areas to have met the breed standard very well: Heads were long and well-shaped in accordance with the standard. I don't recall seeing any that I thought was too wide a back skull, or too narrow. Not all exhibits carried their head as high as the standard suggests but I was forgiving of young dogs and bitches since a number of them I suspected were at their first show and many of the others had probably not been to that many shows.

Bites were serviceable finding mostly scissors bite, a few were level and just about every exhibit has a strong jaw that would serve the dog well while hunting.

Every hunting hound requires good feet and the exhibits had tight, well knuckled and mostly round cat type feet. Generally there were slightly sloping pasterns, long forelegs with the substantial bone required for this breed.

Many of the entries had strong necks, well attached at the head and widening nicely into the shoulder. I found length of body to be in the back, as required, with good width at the loin and arched as required. I was quite pleased at the conditioning of the exhibits finding even the youngest of entries having good, solid muscle tone.

Coats were generally rough, hard and wiry. I did see some ears that I thought tended towards flat and lacking the Greyhound-like carriage required by the standard.

Overall, I thought the exhibits met the test of a rough-coated Greyhound-like breed. The variations that separated my winners tended to be shoulder layback and length and return of upper arm; stronger rear assembly with thighs and second thighs being long and strong, and finally a well-balanced easy moving dog that showed me effortless movement from the side coupled with trueness coming and going.

6-9 month puppy dogs:

1st - #5. As far as I'm concerned, this puppy set the stage for a very enjoyable day of judging. Lovely outline, very Greyhound-like with easy and effortless movement. Every angle balanced

front and rear. Head was up and with every step I could see the beginning of the commanding presence described in the standard. He set a high bar to follow.

2nd - #7. A puppy nearly as good as the first one. Well-balanced, easy and active movement; his reach and drive was just shy of the class winner.

3rd - #73. My recollection of this puppy was that he wasn't really excited about showing just yet. He was tentative and unfortunately he did not present himself to his best advantage although his handler did everything possible to help him. My photograph shows a balanced, well-proportioned puppy with a lovely head. I suspect this puppy has a bright future.

9-12 month puppy dog:

1st - #9. A balanced dog having a good outline, lovely head and efficient movement.

12-15 month dogs:

1st - #11. A well-balanced, easy mover with a lovely neck, shoulder and return of upper arm balanced with corresponding rear angulation and long second thigh and low hock. Good topline and underline as well. Nice easy strides from both side and front/back.

2nd - #17. A close second to the winner. A little less angulated but very well balanced resulting in the easy and active movement required by the standard.

3rd - #57. As an example of how competitive this class was, this dog won the class in the regular show. Another very well-balanced dog, longer in body than my second place dog, I wanted just a touch more bend of stifle to have placed higher. Still, an excellent example of a young Wolfhound.

4th - #15. The major thing that separated this dog from the others is that I suspect he is in a growth phase where his body mass is lagging behind his height. I would like to see more of a rose ear but that may come too.

15-18 month dogs:

1st - #21. This dog showed commanding presence, easy and active movement, definitely reminded me of a rough-coated Greyhound, had a well laid back shoulder and return of upper arm, strong neck flowing well into the shoulder and it was coupled with a long back, strong loin, nicely turned stifle, long second thigh and low hock. Reach from the front and drive from the rear while moving and the down and back was straight as a string.

2nd - #19. Lovely head, good topline, but less body for his height than the class winner.

6-9 month puppy bitches:

This was an extremely competitive class I knew I was in (good) trouble when these four came into the ring!

1st - #82. This puppy just screamed "Here I am!" with every step she took. Commanding presence, lovely head and every part of her flowed smoothly from one transition to the next. Good reach in the front, strong drive from the rear all while easily holding her topline. Just a joy to watch.

2nd - This young lady pushed the winner all the way. Commanding presence, great movement, lovely outline with a well-drawn up belly. The difference was slightly less angulation front and rear but she was so well balanced she absolutely earned this placement.

3rd - #6. Another lovely puppy, well balanced with good movement but she didn't hold her topline quite as well as the ones who placed before her.

4th - #8. I suspect this puppy was in the throes of a growth spurt and her body hasn't quite caught up to her length of leg.

9-12 month puppy bitch:

1st - #84. Beautiful head, maybe the best rose ears I saw all day. Well-balanced, easy moving, true on the down and back. Another exhibit that really caught my eye.

12-15 month bitches:

1st - #14. The first words of the breed standard state, "Of great size and commanding presence..." this bitch has both. Beautiful head with "ears small and with Greyhound-like in carriage." Lovely strong neck, well laid back shoulders, great length and return of upper arm and a rear to match. Easy and active in movement, sound on the down and back, nice underline.

2nd - #16. This bitch was every bit the equal to my class winner in outline, balance, movement, neck, shoulder and rear. None of the things that usually separate placements in my classes existed for these two lovely girls. I'm not sure how long I took to decide but I can tell you I thought it took an eternity, maybe two of them. My class winner had more of a Greyhound like carriage to her ears.

3rd - #12. A lovely head, neck and shoulder assembly here but not quite the rear assembly of the two ahead of her.

15-18 month bitches:

1st - #22. Flawless movement. Easy and active wasn't enough of a description. Not a speck of wasted motion. Head up, topline held very well while moving. Very balanced reach and drive. I can't recall finding anything out of place while running my hands over this bitch. "Chest deep, breast wide" Plenty of room for heart and lung capacity. Head, neck, shoulders all smooth, flowing, well-placed and correct for the breed. Same with the rear. Exceptional underline. The down and back was every bit as good as her side movement.

2nd - #24. Another lovely bitch who pushed the winner hard. Beautiful front assembly, topline and rear with nearly as good movement as my winner. Commanding presence, strong rear. Lovely to watch as well.

3rd - #118. And yet another lovely exhibit in this class. Magnificent head, strong topline, good movement as well. A touch less angulation was the difference in this placement.

4th - #88. Good outline, fairly well-balanced, could use more of a Greyhound-like carriage of the ear. Small differences separated the exhibits in this class.

Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Sweepstakes: #21 – 15-18 month dog class winner.

Best in Sweepstakes: #22 – 15-18 month bitch class winner

What set these two apart from the rest? Just a little more length on the underline for heart and lung capacity before the well-drawn up bellies. It doesn't really shown in photographs but was there for the hands to find. The movement of the bitch won her the day over the dog.

Thank you again for allowing me to judge your wonderful breed.

John Arvin, Mystic Isle Rhodesian Ridgebacks