

Hollandse Herder (Dutch Shepherd)

When looking at the Dutch Shepherd classes of the MHeDC Show you may get the impression that Dutch Shepherds look like brindle German Shepherds. But they do not! Actually the two breeds do not have a lot in common. If you want to compare a Dutch Shepherd to another breed take the Belgian Shepherd.

This article is about the conformation and the color of the Dutch Shepherd - not about their working abilities or temperament - because that is what matters when it comes to judging model dogs.

Three Varieties

The Dutch Shepherd comes in three varieties: short-haired, long-haired and wire-haired with the short-haired variety being the most common by far.



long-haired variety



wire-haired variety

Conformation (Dutch Shepherd vs. German Shepherd)



Both dogs are very good examples of their breed and were successfully shown in conformation. You would not say they look like they were the same breed, would you?

Dutch Shepherd: short back, straight and powerful; firm loins, neither long nor shallow; croup is not short, nor does it slope excessively; stifle angulation normal, without exaggeration; hock moderately angled, rear pastern approximately perpendicular to the ischium

German Shepherd: topline sloping downward from the withers; straight, strongly developed, and relatively short back; ribs long and extending well back; short, broad loin; croup long and sloping; angulation of the hindquarters in balance with the angulation of the forequarters, often appearing over-angled.

Although the show stance of the German Shepherd pronounces the angulation and the sloping back they are much more angled than Dutch Shepherds.

Head (Dutch Shepherd vs. German Shepherd)

The head of the Dutch Shepherd is very much different from the head of the German Shepherd, especially the area around the eyes. The expression is alert - often even appearing "high"!

Both breeds must have a black nose and erect ears with any other kind of ears being a disqualification.



Dutch Shepherd: wedge-shaped, smooth, and dry; flat skull; muzzle is slightly longer than skull; top of muzzle is straight and runs parallel to top of skull; slight stop; dark eyes, medium-sized, almond-shaped, set somewhat obliquely; triangular-shaped ears, small rather than large, placed on top of the head, carried somewhat forward and firmly erect

German Shepherd: broad skull, very slightly domed; cheeks slightly rounded but not protruding. muzzle and skull of equal length; top of muzzle is straight and runs parallel to top of skull; very slight stop; little or no median furrow; dark eyes, medium-sized, almond-shaped, set slightly obliquely (less than the Dutch Shepherd's eyes); erect ears, moderately pointed, medium size, broad at the base, set high

Color

The Dutch Shepherd must be brindle. Brindle is defined as a black or very dark streaked or striped effect, with hairs of a lighter background color (ranging from greyish tan to reddish brown).

A black mask is preferred but it is not necessary that the entire head is black.

Small white markings on the breast or the feet may occur. Some judges prefer completely solid dogs while others do not mind white markings.



A family of Dutch Shepherds in different shades of brindle (from left to right): Daughter "Lena", Father "Amok" (homozygous for brindle), Son "Lotto", Mother "Yuma" (heterozygous for brindle)

Some more examples of short-haired Dutch Shepherds from light brindle to dark brindle:





Other colors?

Sometimes (more often than the breeders will ever admit!) fawn or even solid black puppies were born. But they are not eligible to be shown in conformation or to breed.

Since 2010 in Germany all dogs must be tested prior to breeding. And to avoid puppies of a disqualifying color being born no breeder will mate two dogs which are heterozygous for brindle.

Show Dogs

The Dutch Shepherd - especially the short-haired variety - is, like the Belgian Malinois, not a typical show dog. He is mainly bred for working and usually classes are quite small.

When shown he is presented standing square or almost square looking straight ahead or up to his handler.

A Dutch Shepherd is never presented in the typical show stance of the German Shepherd.



Model Dogs?

I do not know of any Dutch Shepherd figurine so if you want to show a Dutch Shepherd model you need to be creative. Unless you want to resculpt a model dog of a different breed you will have a hard time finding a suitable model. Or you may simply take a Malinois figurine and repaint it. But there are very few Malinois figurines available. And unfortunately some of those are not very good examples of the breed either.

The North Light Malinois and the Naturecraft Malinois (both discontinued if I am not mistaken) would make great short-haired Dutch Shepherds. The North Light Tervuren/Groendale and the Summit Tervuren would make great long-haired Dutch Shepherds

Good German Shepherd figurines - especially the adults - do not make good Dutch Shepherds. A German Shepherd figurine representing an excellent German Shepherd cannot represent an excellent Dutch Shepherd because the two breeds are simply too different. It would be the same as if you took a great Rough Coat Collie figurine, simply paint it black and white (the most common Border Collie color) and show it as a Border Collie. And you wouldn't consider doing that, or would you?