LAKELAND TERRIER

BY NIKKI RIGGSBEE

One Lakeland Terrier expert sent me some opinions on Lakelands especially in comparison with the Wire Fox Terrier and the Welsh Terrier breeds. I found them interesting and helpful and so I am sharing them here.

Most dog people have clear mental pictures of these three Setter breeds: Irish, English, and Gordon. The Irish Setter is royal and stunning, extreme – like the Wire Fox Terrier. The Gordon Setter is like the Welsh, solid, heavily built, a true Welshman in every way. The Lakeland is the middle between the two extremes of beauty, refinement, and elegance on one side and the stout, thick, tough on the other, like the English Setter.

Additionally: temperament is also an important difference between the three breeds. Lakeland Terriers are a pack breed. Their "terriertude" should be trying to engage in play or chasing squirrels together rather than looking for a fight.

We found 33 Lakeland Terrier breeder-judges and mentors and were able to reach 32 of them to invite to take a survey on their breed's priorities and 27 agreed to participate. Fourteen of the group returned completed surveys.

The experts have been in the breed for nearly 38 years on average. Those who are judges have been approved to judge them for an average of 24 years. Some judges judge just one or a few breeds, while others are multiple group judges.

Lakeland Terrier Virtues

The survey included a list of characteristics called for by their breed standard for the experts to rank in importance. The list below is in sequence by the average of those rankings, with one the most important.

1. Square, sturdy build, bitches may be slightly longer
2. Sufficient bone and substance…without any suggestion of coarseness
2. Head well-balanced, rectangular, length of skull equaling length of muzzle
4. Movement straightforward, free…smooth, efficient, ground-covering
5. Temperament bold, gay, friendly, with confident, cock-of-the-walk attitude
6. Shoulders well-angulated, long in proportion to upper arm
7. Neck long, leading smoothly into high withers
8. Body deep and relatively narrow
9. Double coat; outer coat hard and wiry, undercoat close to skin and soft
10. Topline short and level
11. Level or scissors bite
12. High tail set, customarily docked, tip of tail level with occiput
13. Thighs powerful, well-muscled, …hind legs well-angulated
14. Unique mischievous expression
14. Eyes moderately small, oval, fairly wide apart
16. Ears small, V-shaped, fold just above skull, pointed to outside corner of eye

The greatest agreement was on "Square, sturdy build, bitches may be slightly longer" (1st), with ten surveys placing it in the top three.

Eight experts concurred on "Sufficient bone and substance… without any suggestion of coarseness" (tied for 2nd), "Thighs powerful, well-muscled, …hind legs well-angulated" (13th), and

"Unique mischievous expression" (tied at 14th). "Bone/substance" was around midpoint for another four, and five surveys had "Thighs" in the bottom quartile, both of which lowered their rankings.

Those four features above were the only ones with majorities. Most of the rest had split opinions.

Half the group agreed on eight characteristics:
- "Head well-balanced, rectangular, length of skull equaling length of muzzle" (tied for 2nd)
- "Movement straightforward, free…smooth, efficient, ground-covering" (4th)
- "Temperament bold, gay, friendly, with confident, cock-of-the-walk attitude" (5th)
- "Shoulders well-angulated, long in proportion to upper arm" (6th)
- "Neck long, leading smoothly into high withers" (7th)
- "Topline short and level" (10th)
- "Eyes moderately small, oval, fairly wide apart" (tied at 14th)
- "Ears small, V-shaped, fold just above skull, pointed to outside corner of eye" (16th)

The averages were affected by minority opinions, raising or lowering the items' positions in the list. Four had "Head" in the second quartile. Four had "Movement" well below average. Four had "Temperament" and "Neck" in the first quartile. Four had "Eyes" and "Ears" in the third quartile. Four had "Topline" well above average and another four had it well below average.

"Body deep and relatively narrow" (8th) was in the top quartile for six and the bottom quartile for five. Six experts had "Level or scissors bite" (11th) in the bottom quartile. Five surveys also put "High tail set, customarily docked, tip of tail level with occiput" (12th) in the bottom quartile. The other opinions were all over.

"Double coat; outer coat hard and wiry, undercoat close to skin and soft" (9th) was in the second quartile for five, well below average for four, and in the top quartile for three, producing an average that put it about in the middle of the list.

"Square/sturdy" averaged more than two points above the next item, confirming its importance.

Additional input would resolve the ties at two and fourteen. The averages of "Shoulders" and "Neck" were also close and might reposition with more surveys.

Lakeland Terrier Faults

The experts were also asked to prioritize a list of faults taken directly from or derived from the standard, from most serious to least serious. The faults are listed below in sequence by the average ranks, with one being the most serious.

1. Barrel-chested, big-bodied
2. Shy or sharp in mature specimen
3. Coarse
4. Overly aggressive. argumentative
5. Short legged
6. Not squarely built
7. Overly refined, racy
8. Short, wedge-shaped head
9. Lacking good reach in front and drive behind
10. Topline not short or level
11. Overlong foreface
12. Pink or distinctly spotted nose
13. Ears not small or not folded just above skull or not pointing to outside corner of eye
14. Lacking a well-defined, broad pelvic shelf
15. Tail tightly curled over back
16. A deviation of more than one-half inch either way from 14½ inches in height

The group had a bit more agreement on the seriousness of the faults than the value of the virtues. Most of the agreement, however, were on faults that ranked in the bottom half of the list.

Ten of the experts considered the bottom three faults relatively less important: "Lacking a well-defined, broad pelvic shelf" (14th), "Tail tightly curled over back" (15th), and "A deviation of more than one-half inch either way from 14½ inches in height" (16th).

Eight of the group thought these two faults somewhat more of a problem: "Overlong foreface" (11th) and "Pink or distinctly spotted nose" (12th). "Overlong foreface" was around midpoint for the majority, but four putting it in the last quartile lowered its average.

The only majority in the top half of the ranked faults was on "Barrel-chested, big-bodied" (1st), with nine putting it in the top quartile. The remaining faults had split opinions, none of which were shared by at least eight surveys needed for a majority.

"Shy or sharp in mature specimen" (2nd) was in the top quartile for seven and in the second quartile for five.

A plurality of six agreed on the following faults:

- "Coarse" (3rd)
- "Short legged" (5th)
- "Not squarely built" (6th)
- "Overly refined, racy" (7th)
- "Lacking good reach in front and drive behind" (9th)
- "Ears not small or not folded just above skull or not pointing to outside corner of eye" (13th)

"Coarse" was in the top quartile for most, the second quartile for five. "Short legged" had a similar split. "Overly refined, racy" was fairly important for six, but in the third quartile for five. "Lacking reach/drive" was also fairly important for six, but four put it in the bottom quartile. "Bad ears" was in the bottom quartile for the bigger number, but five had it midpoint or more serious. "Not square" was in the top quartile for four, close to midpoint for six, and below average for four.

"Overly aggressive, argumentative" (4th) was in the top quartile for five, second quartile for four, and third quartile for four. Five had "Topline not short or level" (10th) above average as a problem, with another five having it below average. "Short, wedge-shaped head" (8th) was around midpoint for five, and the rest were all over, from first to fourteenth.
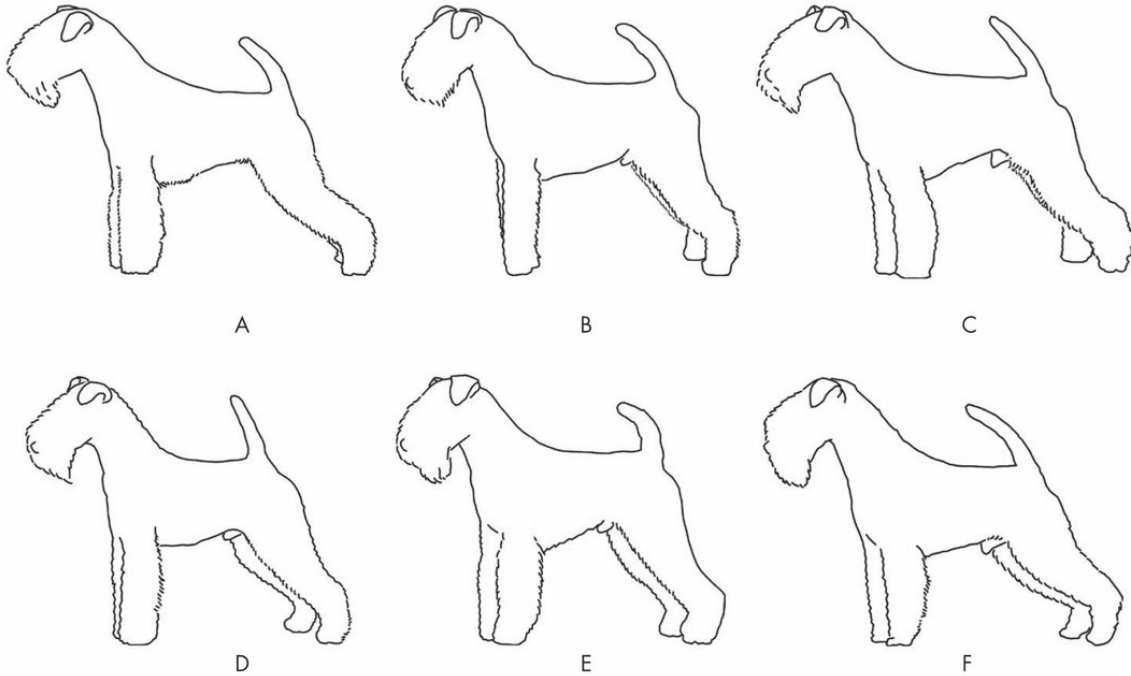
Additional input could change the relative rankings of those faults with close averages. "Overly aggressive, argumentative" and "Short legged" had averages less than one-tenth of a point apart. None of the others were especially close, nor were there large gaps in the averages.

Lakeland Terrier Outlines

Pick Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex

DOGS

A

B

C

D

E

F

Essential Characteristics

The experts listed several characteristics that a Lakeland Terrier must have to be a good one. Correct coat was named most often, hard and wiry. A correct head including a flat skull, broad muzzle, clean cheeks, parallel planes, and long was very important as was sufficient leg length. Excellent movement was also valued by the group.

Outlines

The survey included outlines of six Lakeland Terrier dogs (above) and six Lakeland Terrier bitches (next page). The experts were asked to place the outlines in each set first through fourth, and then select Best of Breed. The outlines were made of photos of real dogs, so none is perfect. Remember that since this is a coated breed, the placements might well change if the group could get their hands on the dogs and feel under the coat.

The male Lakeland with the best average placement score and most first placements was dog "D." Those who placed him first commented "most balanced (length of back, neck, head), elegant, good breed type," "good substance, clean and smooth neck set and transition through shoulder, squarely built," "long neck, short level topline, high tail set, good shelf behind tail," and "correct balance and proportion."

The male with the next best average placement was Lakeland "A." Those who liked him said "most complete dog, beautiful low hock, nice type," "long neck, deep chest without coarseness, good tail set," and "strong, elegant, balanced."

Lakeland bitch "V" had the best average placement and tied with the most first placements among the girls. Those who selected her noted that she was "the most complete bitch," "nice tail set, nice body, nice ear carriage," and "good type, most balanced, lovely rear end."
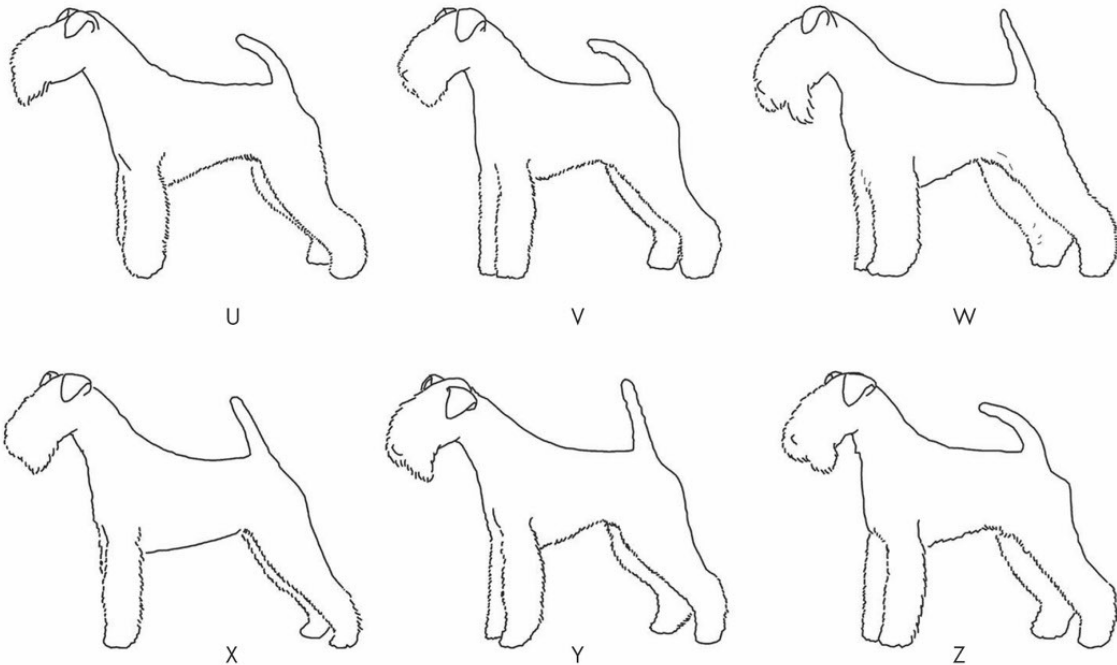
Second place bitch based on average placement was "Z." Comments on her included "feminine, elegant, well balanced, good matching front and rear angles," "balance and breed type, strong rear, acceptable tail, 'workman' type and condition," and "good outline, sufficient substance, strong headpiece, correct ears and ear set."

Tied with the first-place bitch on the number of first placements but having the fourth best average placements was Lakeland "U." Many either placed her first or left her out of the ribbons. Those who placed her first said "a bit rangy, and her head may be coarse and a bit low on leg, but nicely angulated and elegant," "most correct outline and breed type," "good make and shape, nice neck into wither, nice head and expression, moderate," and "good lengths of leg, neck, and head, substance."

Lakeland Terrier Outlines

Pick Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex

BITCHES

U

V

W

X

Y

Z

Lakeland Terrier "D" was selected Best of Breed more than any other. He also was placed first more than any other and had the best placement average of all twelve. Best of Opposite Sex isn't as clear. "V" had the best placement average of the bitches. "U" and "V" tied with four first placements each. "U," "V," and "Z" were each named BOB twice.

Every outline except "Y" placed first at least once. Every outline except "A" was out of the ribbons at least once. Dog "F" and bitch "W" were unplaced the most often.

Additional Notes

The survey asked the experts for comments to help others evaluate Lakeland Terriers. Here are some of the group's recommendations:

• The Lakeland is a working terrier bred to follow and kill the European Red Fox. They need substance, leg, and a narrow body to get into rocky dens. Nothing should suggest toyishness.
• A gay tail is an indication of a faulty rear assembly.
• Its body should flow from one part into the next, a sum of its parts, that carry through moving.
• The head is critical to breed type. The muzzle needs to be full, the ears correctly placed.

• Their temperament should be joyous and the expression mischievous.
• Anything a Lakeland's head can fit through, its shoulders need to fit through (a slight exaggeration), to grab the fox and pull him out of its den.
• Important are narrow, tight, strong shoulders, and a strong jaw.
• A tight, harsh wire jacket is very desirable with profuse face and leg furnishings; should the fox grab at the head or front feet, it will get a mouthful of hair.
• Read the standard, and where it says "small," put in the word "moderate."
• Lakelands are a moderate terrier; extremes are not typical.
• Beware of low on leg, sprung ribcage, wedge-shaped heads.
• Head and expression are critical to Lakeland breed type. Check under the hair to ensure the proportions are correct, the strong muzzle has good fill under the eye, and the eye is moderately small, dark, and oval.
• Reach and drive are important to cover up to fifty miles a day over rough terrain and in all weather.
• The head should be shaped like a brick with flat planes on top, bottom, and sides; not too long and not too short.
• Moderation.

Thanks so much to the Lakeland Terrier experts for sharing their knowledge with this project.