

GSDCV and National Council Structure and Breed Schemes

An Overview of the GSD in Australia

How does it all fit together ?

This article is designed to educate members about our Club and its organisation, its relationship with our National Breed Council, and the Breed Improvement schemes that have been put in place to manage the breeding of the German Shepherd Dog in this country.



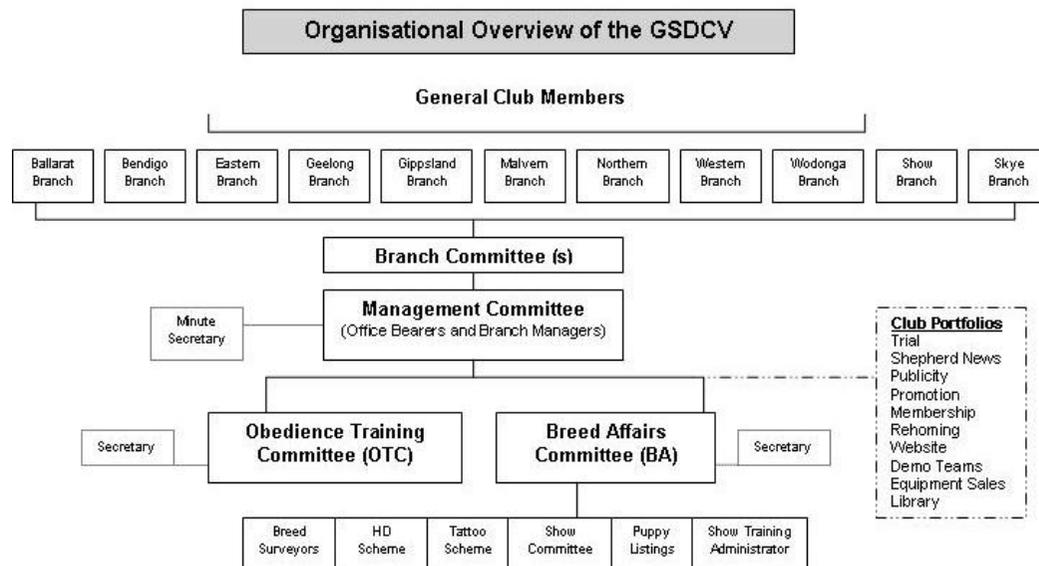
The **German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria Inc.** (GSDCV) is a non-profit organisation, and the official custodian of the breed in Victoria and is dedicated to the improvement, promotion and protection of the German Shepherd Dog. The club encourages fellowship and strives to assist in the education of its members, and the public, to a better understanding of the breed, responsible breeding practices, and responsible dog ownership.

The **GSDCV is the largest single breed club in Australia today**, with a membership in excess of 2,400 and has a long and strong history of which we are justly proud. In 1929 the Alsatian Club of Victoria was founded, and in 1945 when the name of the breed was officially recognised in Australia, from Alsatian to the German Shepherd Dog, the GSDCV was formed. Today we boast a total of **11 Branches** serving metropolitan Melbourne (Eastern, Malvern, Northern, Skye, Specialist Show, Western) and regional Victoria (Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Gippsland, Wodonga).

Each Branch of the Club is managed by a **Branch Committee** and training is offered by qualified GSDCV Instructors. The **Management Committee** of the GSDCV is made up of an elected Executive of seven Office Bearers (President, Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Obedience Training Administrator and Breed Affairs Administrator) and the Branch Managers of each of the eleven Branches, who vote at the Management Committee on behalf of their Branch members. Other position holders look after different tasks on behalf of the club and report to the Management Committee (Minute Secretary, Shepherd News Editor, Webmaster, Publicity/Promotions, Membership, Re-homing and Merchandise sales).

The **Obedience Training Committee (OTC)** is responsible for training of Instructors, conduct of all Club obedience training, and the organisation of GSDCV Obedience, Agility, Tracking and Endurance Trials. The Chief Instructor of each Branch sits on the OTC, representing the Instructors from their Branch. The Assistant OTC Administrator and Trial Manager are also part of the OTC.

The **Breed Affairs (BA) Committee** is responsible for training of Show Instructors, conduct of all Club show training, the administration of the GSDCA Breed Survey scheme and Breed Improvement schemes in this State, and the organization of all GSDCV Shows through the Show Committee. Each Branch is represented on the BA Committee by a Breed Liaison Officer. The BA Committee also includes the Assistant BA Administrator, Chief Breed Surveyor, Show Training Administrator, Show Manager, and all Victorian resident Breed Surveyors. The BA Secretary, Breed Survey Registrar, Tattoo Registrar, Hip/Elbow Registrar, and Puppy Listing Officer also report to the BA Committee.



The **German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia** (GSDCA, aka National Council) was founded on the 13th April 1960. It is directly affiliated with the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) and comprises all the German Shepherd Dog clubs and associations in the states and territories of Australia (see Affiliate Clubs below):

- Australian Capital Territory German Shepherd Dog Assoc Inc
- Broken Hill German Shepherd Dog Club Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Association of Western Australia Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Club of South Australia Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Club of Tasmania Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Club of the Northern Territory Inc
- German Shepherd Dog League of New South Wales Inc
- German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria Inc
- Newcastle and Hunter Region German Shepherd Dog Club Inc



GSDCA History

The **initial aim of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia was to lift the ban** imposed on the importation of all German Shepherds into this country in 1929. At that time there was a large amount of hostility against the breed and especially vocal were the farming community throughout the land. It had reached such a high crescendo that the Victorian State Parliament was considering destroying all 'German Shepherds' in that State. Complete annihilation was prevented, however other restrictions were put into place in regards to higher registration fees and an attempt to restrict a balanced breeding program by placing a ban on any further imports of German Shepherds into Australia. 1972 saw this ban lifted after 43 years. This was due to the concerted effort of the members Clubs and by the Executive of this Council lobbying and working tirelessly to campaign to restore equal rights for the breed in Australia. It should be noted that the ban was not lifted in Western Australia until some five years later.

This has seen the Council recognised for its authority and respect not only from other Breed Clubs but also from overseas countries for the way that the Member Clubs and the breeders have shown an inherent and overwhelming desire to see their breed prosper and develop beyond any other breed. After the lifting of the importation ban the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia has initiated the Breed Improvement Schemes and has seen the rebirth of the German Shepherd Dog in Australia, which has now become a healthier and sounder dog within our community. It cannot be understated that it is the breeders with the guidance of the senior and most respected people within our breed that have set these guidelines and taken the responsibility to put in place a structure and organisation of schemes and requirements that will ensure the breeds ongoing development which will ultimately be for the overall betterment of the community.

The GSDCA was the first National Breed Council to be recognised by and affiliated with the ANKC. They were also the first canine organisation to institute such things as the Breed Improvement schemes, and to request the ANKC to impose Litter Registration Limitations which dictate the terms under which German Shepherd Dogs can be officially registered in Australia. We have been leaders amongst the canine world in this country and are the envy of other breed organisations both in Australia and Internationally. We can be justly proud of what we have achieved on behalf of our chosen Breed.

The rules and procedures for the **GSD Council schemes and awards** are set in place and/or amended by agreement between the member Clubs of the Council. This is normally done at the Council's Annual General Meeting each year, where votes are allotted to each Club based on a formula related to their membership numbers. The Council also holds a **National Breed Commission** (NBC) meeting and Judges Committee meeting each year, where such issues are discussed in detail, but recommendations from those meetings must be subsequently moved and voted on at

an AGM by the Member Clubs. In addition to these agenda items, the annual elections for the GSDCA Executive and position holders take place at the AGM. The Executive (President, Secretary, Treasurer, NBC Chair, Judges Chair, Obedience Chair and Editor) are charged with leading and administering the organization throughout the year, but the 'power of the vote' is held by the Member Clubs.

How does the GSDCV communicate with National Council?

In order to establish the wishes of our GSDCV members and to direct our Club delegates how we wish them to vote on our behalf at the AGM and other Council meetings, our Club holds several Special General Meetings each year. At these meetings general members have the opportunity to raise issues for discussion, put forward motions to be placed on the agenda for the NBC or AGM, vote on motions placed on each agenda by other Member Clubs, and register their votes for the election of National Council position holders. Those who are interested in National Council affairs, and those wishing to have a say on how our National organization and its breed schemes are administered, should make an effort to attend these SGMs and take advantage of the opportunity to play their part in the 'bigger picture' which is the GSDCA.

Breed Survey & Conformation Shows – what's the link?

Whilst the Breed Survey provides a detailed structural critique of the animals, it differs from a conformation show in that the Breed Survey critique is intended to describe an animal's attributes (and shortcomings) for breeding, along with advice for selection of breeding partners, whereas a show critique is describing the animal's physical makeup and movement as compared to the Breed Standard.

At Breed Survey, animals are classified as being 'above the breed average' (Class 2) or 'far above the breed average' (Class 1), and both classifications are recommended for breeding.

At a show, dogs are placed from first to last in order of merit when compared to others exhibited on the day, and also receive a 'grading' which relates to their quality in comparison to the standard.

There is a link between Survey and Show however, and this is that a dog must have been classified Class 1 or Class 2 at Breed Survey before it can be eligible for the highest grading of 'Excellent' in a show and be awarded the GSDCA Excellent medallion. These medallions are only presented at GSD speciality shows conducted by GSDCA member clubs (or approved shows run in conjunction with a member club, such as the Working Dog Club and Ballarat Dog Club shows in Victoria). As well as being Breed Surveyed, dogs must be over two years of age and entered in the Open Class to be eligible for an 'Excellent' medal.

GSDCA BREED IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

NATIONAL TATTOO SCHEME & Microchips for Identification

The German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia National Tattoo Scheme has been in operation since 1979. The Scheme was designed to form a National database and to positively identify all German Shepherd puppies, which are born to breeders/members of the State Clubs affiliated with the German Shepherd Dog Council.

Each breeder must apply to the National Tattoo Registrar for a unique kennel tattoo prefix which consists of 3 letters. This prefix is non-transferable and only applies to dogs bred under that registered kennel name (e.g. Canine Control kennel name 'FIDELITAS' Tattoo Prefix 'FID' The first puppy tattooed by this kennel would read as follows - 'FID001'). The State Club appointed Tattoo Officers tattoo the puppy in the right ear at seven weeks of age. It is also the responsibility of the Tattoo Officers to ensure that the litter is kept in conditions of the required standard set down in each State Code of Ethics.

This tattoo has been the basic requirement for entry to all of our Breed Improvement Schemes and it was until recently the only recognised form of positive identification accepted by the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia. In October 2011 a Special General Meeting of the GSDCA voted to approve a **microchip number** as an alternate form of identification for the Council's schemes, commencing from January 2012.

NATIONAL BREED SURVEY SCHEME

The GSDCA National Breed Survey Scheme was introduced in 1977. This scheme is the most important Breed Improvement Scheme that is undertaken by the Council and has led to the improvement of German Shepherds in both soundness of mind and body. The objective of the Breed Survey System is to promote and offer guidance for the uniform development of the breed and to improve its inherent working qualities. All States of Australia participate in this Survey scheme. The position of a Breed Surveyor is a very responsible position and is only awarded to the judges and people that have an outstanding knowledge of the Breed. Not only must these Breed Surveyors be aware of the construction of a German Shepherd but be able to assess temperament and character and give breed advice to long-time or to the first-time breeders.

Dogs and bitches are surveyed to strict criteria requirements, which include not only the anatomical virtues of the dog, but also it must display firm and good-natured, confident temperament and character. Dogs and bitches are awarded classification in either Breed Survey Class 1 or Breed Survey Class 11 and it is expected that they will contribute to the overall improvement of the breed in Australia. Dogs and bitches that display character and temperament faults or are not of the required anatomical standard are failed and these animals are not recommended to become part of any breeding program.

(Dogs and bitches that are imported from overseas must also meet the criteria set down in this country and be presented to a Survey in Australia for confirmation of their overseas Survey where applicable.)

The Breed Surveys are recorded and a certificate detailing the specific qualities and faults are forwarded to the owner. At the end of each year a Breed Survey Book is published by the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia detailing all surveyed dogs, all hip and elbow results for the year and may be purchased by breeders to evaluate the best stud dog when seeking a suitable breeding partner.

BREED SURVEY CRITERIA:

For animals to enter a Breed Survey the following criteria must be adhered to:

- The animal must be 18 months of age and not over 8 years of age.
- The animal must be tattooed by a Tattoo scheme recognised by the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia Inc. or be microchipped as from 1 January 2012.
- The animal must be in possession of an 'A' stamp for hips and a 'Z' stamp for elbows, (or have passed any other GSDCA approved evaluation scheme for hips and elbows.)
- The relevant paperwork is to be forwarded to the State Registrar prior to the survey date. The paperwork must include the following: the required fee, certified pedigree and certificate of ownership, copies of the 'A' and 'Z' stamp results/certificate, five generation pedigree. (Please Note: Dogs which are listed on the Limited Register cannot be accepted for Breed Survey.)
- All imported male dogs must possess the GSDCA certificate for 'H Neg' clearance prior to being submitted to the Breed Survey Scheme.
- All male progeny from imported bitches must also provide an Australian 'H Neg.' certificate.
- Specific requirements to qualify for Breed Survey Class 1 or Class 2 can be found on the GSDCA website at www.gsdcouncilaustralia.org/breedschemes.htm

NATIONAL HIP DYSPLASIA CONTROL SCHEME

The German Shepherd Dog Council Hip Dysplasia Control Scheme first came into existence in 1982 when a committee was set up, chaired by Mr. Tom Luxton to investigate the possibility of approaching the Melbourne University to assess x-ray plates for a national scheme. After several meetings and discussion with Dr. Malcolm Willis (UK) and Dr. Roger Lavelle the scheme was passed at an Annual General Meeting of the German Shepherd Dog Council in 1984.

An application form is purchased via the State Registrars and there are detailed instructions to the Veterinarians as to how the animal must be x-rayed and how the x-ray plates must be identified. Failure to adhere to the correct procedure requires the animal to be re-x-rayed. The x-rays must be identified radiographically with the GSDCA Tattoo number (or microchip number from 2012).

In January, 1987 the 'A' stamp became a prerequisite for all animals to achieve a Class I grading at Breed Survey and as from 1994, for an animal to receive either a Breed

Survey Class 1 or Class 11 classification they must be in possession of a GSDCA 'A' stamp (or a GDSCA approved equivalent.)

The German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia has appointed specific qualified Veterinarians responsible for reading and assessing the German Shepherd Dog Hip X-Ray plates, details of which can be found on the application form.

The responsible attitude that the breeders have taken, in regards to not breeding with animals that have not passed the above scheme, is to be commended and has meant that the incidence of Hip Dysplasia in the German Shepherd Dog is being controlled and improved upon each year.

* To pass the GSDCA 'A' stamp, a dog must achieve an official score of no more than 8 on either hip, with no more than 3 in any scoring area (i.e. max score of 16 overall).

NATIONAL ELBOW DYSPLASIA CONTROL SCHEME

At a National Breed Commission Meeting in 1990, the German Shepherd Dog League expressed concern at the high incidence of Elbow Dysplasia that was being diagnosed over recent times. It was decided after consultation with Dr. Roger Lavelle that a scheme similar to our Hip Dysplasia Control Scheme be introduced on a voluntarily basis to ascertain whether there was a major problem within the breed. The following year it was agreed that an Elbow Dysplasia Control Scheme would be introduced with the same guidelines in regards to identification of x-rays as the Hip Dysplasia Control Scheme.

As from 1995 it was a requirement that to participate in the German Shepherd Dog Council Breed Survey Scheme the animals must be in possession of a GSDCA 'Z' stamp or its approved equivalent. The responsible attitude that the breeders have taken in regards to having the elbows assessed, and then taking into consideration the elbow status prior to breeding, is to be once again commended.

* To pass the GSDCA 'Z' stamp a dog must achieve an elbow grading for both elbows of 'normal', 'Grade 1', or 'Grade 2' (with less than 3mm of arthritic change).

How Are We Improving Our Breed's Health?

*** As the result of a request from the GSDCA for a national breeders survey conducted in 2010, the ANKC now enforces a Litter Registration Limitation for the GSD, which dictates that no litter of GSD puppies can be registered if either parent has a combined hip score in excess of 20, or an elbow score worse than Grade 2.**

NATIONAL HAEMOPHILIA SCHEME

During 1987 subsequent to a visit to Australia by Dr. Malcolm Willis, the attention of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia was drawn to the potential problem of Haemophilia within our Australian bloodlines. From the initial suggestion by Dr. Willis, the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia under the direction, and guidance of Dr. Bruce Parry (Werribee Research Clinic, University of Melbourne) introduced the Haemophilia Testing Scheme.

After screening of all males prior to Survey for several years, it was concluded that there were currently no local bloodlines which produced haemophilia, however we still need to guard against this problem being introduced via animals imported from outside Australia.

All imported males are now tested through the scheme prior to being used at stud and prior to participating in the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme. All sons of imported bitches are also required to be tested prior to participating in the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme.

* Animals which are tested and found to be 'negative' for Haemophilia A are given the certification 'H Neg'

Long Stock Coats (LSC)

From January 2012, the German Shepherd Dog Breed Standard will now encompass the Long Stock Coat variety (longer outer coat, still with undercoat present) and is in line with the country of origin standard (Germany).

To be eligible to enter a conformation show or have a litter from a Long Stock Coat registered, Long Stock Coat German Shepherd Dogs (with undercoat) born before 1 Jan 2012 must be assessed by three judges to be transferred to the new LSC register with the VCA/Dogs Victoria. (Long coated dogs which do not possess undercoat can not be registered as LSC variety).

Any LSC born after 1st Jan 2012 can be registered as LSC by the breeder and do not need to be assessed.

Interbreeding between the normal Stock Coat GSD and the LSC variety is not allowed.

Recommended Reading

- THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG IN WORD AND PICTURE by the founder of the breed Captain Max vom Stephanitz
- THE EXTENDED GSD BREED STANDARD refer ANKC website: www.ankc.com.au
- THE DOG OWNERS MANUAL by Dr Karen Hedberg
- A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG IN AUSTRALIA – 1929 to 1990 Published by the GSDCA Inc. – Edited and Compiled by JWH Rodger
- A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG IN AUSTRALIA – Golden Jubilee Edition, Completely Updated and Revised. Celebrating the GSDCA's 50th Birthday Published by the GSDCA Inc. 2011 – Edited and Compiled by JWH Rodger

Useful Breed Facts & Info

GSDCV Breed Liaison Officers - How can they help you ?

Each Branch elects a Breed Liaison Officer (BLO) to assist members with GSD breed issues, and provide a point of contact for any questions. **If you or a member are considering x-raying your dogs hips & elbows, or perhaps thinking that breeding with your dog might be an option, would like to breed survey your dog or even if you would like to show your dog, your branch BLO is the best person to speak to.** They'll be able to provide advice and answers, and also point you in the right direction for all else !

What is a BLO's role?

It must be remembered that the GSDCV is a Breed Club. The Breed Liaison Officers Role at branch level is to promote the German Shepherd Dog

- To make their members aware of the Breed Standard and how it relates to the dog
- To promote the GSDCA Breed Improvement Schemes and educate and encourage their members to adhere to the GSDCA Breeding Guidelines and the GSDCV Code of Ethics
- To discuss any topics that are on the Breed Affairs (BA) agenda so their members opinions can be heard and aired at the meeting
- To inform members of the BA discussions, outcomes of any voting or decisions made and pass on the minutes
- To encourage their members to come to Breed Affairs meetings and contribute. The meetings are open to all GSDCV members and all are encouraged to have input
- To engage their members and listen to any issues/concerns they may wish to raise
- To introduce their members to the GSDCV Breed Survey panel to whom they may be referred for advice when necessary

▪ **For any breed or health questions, the BLO is the first point of contact**

GSD Pedigrees

What is the difference between the Main Register and Limited Register pedigrees?

Pedigree registrations are issued by the VCA (Victorian Canine Association) after application by the Breeder (who must be registered with the VCA).

The Main Register pedigrees are blue in colour, whilst the Limited Register pedigrees are orange in colour, and are both A4 size.

Dogs registered on the Limited Register may not be exhibited in conformation shows, nor can they be bred with, but can still be entered in Obedience Trials. Dogs registered on the Main Register are eligible to participate in all of the above areas.

Did You Know ?

GSD Hips are Getting Better !

Our GSD's hips are getting healthier and it's because of....

The Success of the GSDCA Hip X ray Scheme

- The GSD Breed hip average 35 years ago was 18
- This has gradually reduced over the years to the current breed mean (2004-09) of **6.63 !** (the lower the better)
- The non GSDCA GSD mean is 10.74

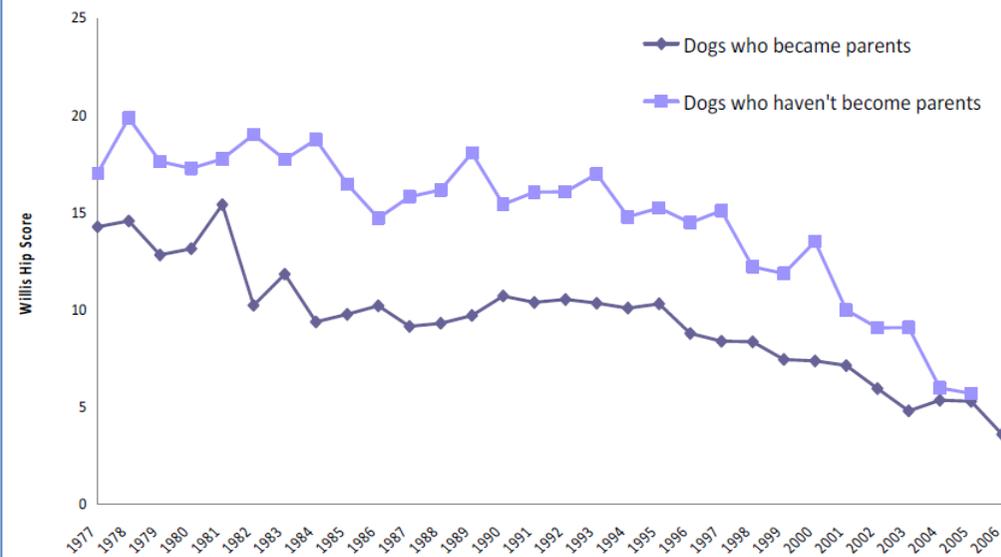
There are 4 main reasons for the success of the scheme

- Having a cut off point ('A' stamp - max score of 8/hip)
- Regular publishing of sire averages
- Breed survey and excellent show awards
- Introducing compulsory HD/ED Xrays LRL in 2000



Average hip score relative to breeding

Average Willis Hip Scores of German Shepherds by Year of Birth



Courtesy Dr K Hedberg, GSDCA Hereditary Diseases Chairperson

Breed Facts

Height and Weight

The GSD is a medium sized breed.

Males stand between 60-65cms high at the withers and weigh 30-40kgs

Bitches stand 55-60cms at the withers and weigh 22-32kgs

In Australia, the following scale is used to determine and describe the German Shepherd Dog's height when critiquing at specialist shows:

Dogs	Bitches	Description
60-61cm	55-56cm	Small
61-62cm	56-57cm	Under medium size
62-63cm	57-58cm	Medium size (Ideal)
63-64cm	58-59cm	Above medium size
64-65cm	59-60cm	Large

All the above sizes are correct and acceptable according to the Standard and should not be faulted.

Note: One centimetre above and below the range is not a disqualifying fault.

Dogs	Bitches	Description
65-66cm	60-61cm	Very Large

The dogs and bitches in this size range are not to be penalised, as it is allowed for in the standard. Generally, in the GSD breed, animals are generally within the larger parameters of size. Animals over 66cm and 61cm, for dogs and bitches respectively, are to be penalised as oversize.

The length of the body is greater than the height at the withers by about 10 to 17%

- A GSD should not be square, as it is then unable to extend its limbs properly to produce the far-reaching movement desired.
- A GSD should not be too long, particularly in the coupling (loin), as during movement, much of the forward drive from the hindquarter will be lost.

The depth of chest is 45% to 48% of the height of withers.

What is an acceptable hip score?

Dogs must be x-rayed under the GSDCA Hip and Elbow Dysplasia Scheme.

Pass rate: a maximum total score of 16, which is made up of a maximum total score of 8 on either side and a maximum of 3 in a given section.

What is an acceptable elbow score?

Pass rate accepts Normal, Grade 1 or Grade 2 if there is less than 3mm of arthritic change.

What is the minimum age for a GSD to be mated ?

18 months of age, after having successfully passed the GSDCA's hereditary disease schemes and Breed Survey.

Puppies & Exercise

There is a mistaken belief that a young puppy (up to 12 months of age) should have plenty of exercise. This is INCORRECT.

As a general rule, up to 12 months of age - on lead exercise should be very limited. Natural free running is the best form of exercise for a youngster, because when they tire they can easily stop.

Puppies (and dogs) should have a regular form of daily exercise and interaction (amount as appropriate for their age) that provides physical exercise but also just as importantly, mental stimulation and socialisation.

For more information, read 'Should You Exercise Your Young Puppy?' on the GSDCA website

A GSD's Coat

The German Shepherd Dog is bred in the coat varieties: stock coat (normal) and long stock coat, both with undercoat.

Stock Coat (normal):

The top coat should be as dense as possible, straight, harsh and close lying. It should be short on the head, including the inside of the ears, the front of the legs, and on the feet and toes; it is a little longer and heavily coated on the neck. The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms moderate breeching.

Long Stock Coat (Long Coat):

The top coat should be long, soft and not close fitting, with feathering on the ears and legs, bushy breeches and bushy tail forming flags below. It should be short on the head including the inside of the ears, the front side of the legs, on the feet and toes, it is longer and heavily coated on the neck, almost forming a mane. The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pasterns or hock joints; and on the back of the thighs it forms distinct breeching.

What coat type is a disqualifying fault?

Long, soft top coat without undercoat, usually with a parting down the middle of the back, flags on ears and legs and tail.

Coat Colour

Black with reddish tan, black/tan, black/gold to light grey markings. All black, grey (commonly known as sables) with dark shadings; black saddle and mask are all accepted in the breed standard

Unobtrusive small white markings on chest as well as very light colour on insides of legs permissible but not desirable. The nose must be black in all colour types. Lacking mask, light to piercing eyes, as well as light to whitish markings on chest and inner sides of the legs, light nails and red tip of tail are to be rated as lacking in pigment. The undercoat is of a light grey toning. The colour white is not permitted.