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The United States of America Coton de Tulear Club Thanks you for your interest in the Coton de Tulear.

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[United States of America Coton de Tulear Club \(usactc.dog\)](http://usactc.dog)

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Please visit the Official Coton de Tulear website for additional educational documents and mentor listing.

[Resources – United States of America Coton de Tulear Club \(usactc.dog\)](#)

On the Resources Drop Down Menu you will see the Judges Education link.  
Follow that link to find Printable Education Guidelines

AKC Gazette Article illustrating correct **MOVEMENT and TAIL CARRIAGE.**

AKC Gazette Article addressing the **COTON COAT** and how it effects **evaluating** the **CONFORMATION**  
under the coat.

Comparison of the Coton to the Bichon and Havanese

Please contact Gregory Beach, Judges Education Coordinator Chair, for mentoring inquiries at  
[greg@beachcotons.com](mailto:greg@beachcotons.com) 412-726-0199

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## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COTON DE TULEAR CLUB ELABORATION OF THE COTON DE TULEAR STANDARD



**CAVEAT:** In this Elaboration of the Standard, the United States of America Coton de Tulear Club Breed Education Committee has strived to provide the most accurate examples possible. **Measurable ratios are graphically explained by using the skeletal points under the coat. The optical impact that the profuse coat makes on correct proportions becomes very apparent. All definitive Coton ratios, head to body, muzzle to skull, are based on the rectangular body ratio of 2 high to 3 long measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock.** This definite rectangular, visual silhouette becomes further elongated by the profuse coat covering the well pronounced forechest that protrudes well forward of the point of shoulder & by the amount of coat covering the hindquarters & tail of the dog. Exhibits who carry more coat may look longer in body, short on leg, or larger in the head in relation to the body. The reverse is also possible as a short bodied dog

### **STANDARD APPEARS IN ITALICS THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT**

**GENERAL APPEARANCE:** *The Coton de Tulear, also known as the "Royal Dog of Madagascar", is a hardy, sturdy small white companion dog. The breed is endowed with a bright intelligence, is gay and energetic, and at times boisterous but never demanding. The Coton de Tulear is naturally clownish and lighthearted, as well as calm and easygoing. The breed possesses a remarkable gentle, sympathetic awareness to those around and is known for expressing unique vocalizations.*

*In Madagascar, the Coton de Tulear survived in packs in the wilderness, later to become a companion dog of the native Malagasy and Merina tribal nobles. The Coton de Tulear is as unique as many animals found on this wild and isolated island. The Coton de Tulear is characterized by a natural long, white, dry, profuse, cotton-like coat, rounded lively dark eyes, black on white "joie de vivre" expressive smile and witty personality. The breed is somewhat longer than tall. The top line is very slightly arched over the loin with a happily carried tail curved over the back on the move. At rest, the tail is down with an upward hook at the tip revealing the distinguishing outline of the Coton de Tulear.*



## SIZE, PROPORTION and SUBSTANCE

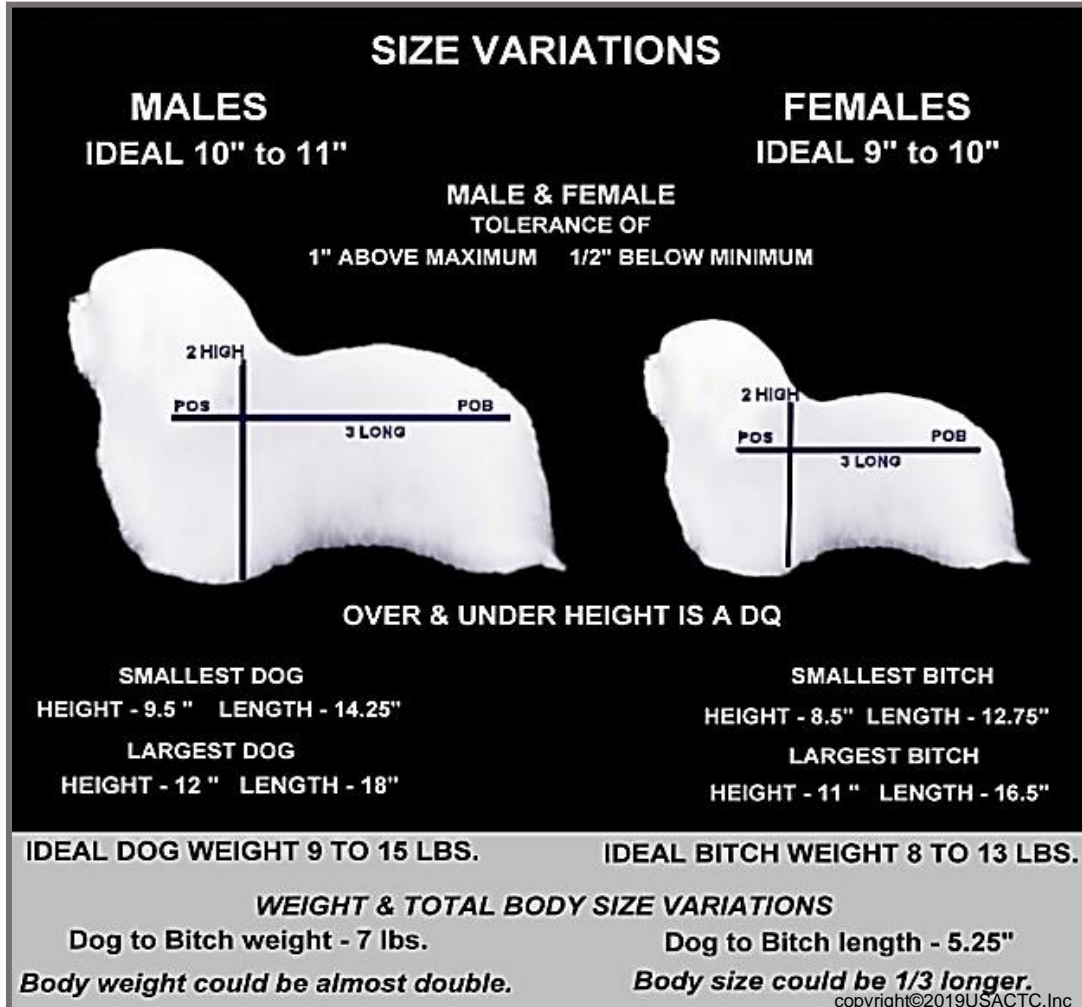
### RATIOS – KEY ELEMENTS OF TYPE

**BODY- 2 HIGH X 3 LONG**

**HEAD TO BODY - 2 TO 5**

**MUZZLE TO SKULL – 5 TO 9**

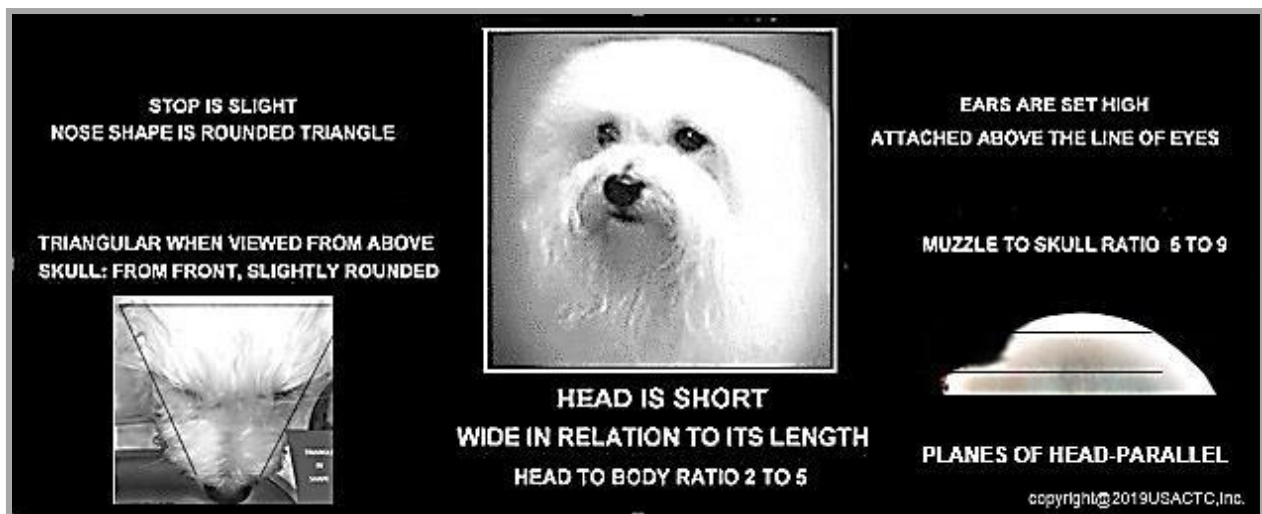
**Height:** The ideal height for bitches is 9 inches to 10 inches and for dogs is 10 inches to 11 inches. A tolerance of ½ inch below the minimum ideal height or 1 inch above the maximum ideal height is allowed but not preferred. **Weight:** The Coton de Tulear is a sturdy small dog and should never appear fragile. The ideal weight for bitches is 8 pounds to 13 pounds and for dogs is 9 pounds to 15 pounds. When dogs are judged equal in type, proportion, coat and movement, the bitch/dog within the ideal height and weight range is to be given preference. **Proportion:** The height measured at the withers is 2/3 the length as measured from point of shoulder to point of buttocks. This proportion creates a rectangular outline. Specimens should never appear long and low.



**DISQUALIFICATION:** any bitch less than 8.5 inches or taller than 11 inches in height; any dog less than 9.5 inches or taller than 12 inches in height. **EXCEPTION:** The minimum height disqualification does not apply to puppies under 12 months of age.

**ELABORATION:** From tallest male to shortest female within standard ranges, height can be a variance of 3 ½ ". Body length can be 5.25 "longer, almost a full 1/3 additional body length. Body weights can be 8 lbs. to 15 lbs. This is almost double in weight! This is a **DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN ACCEPTABLE SIZE**. It is important that judges not be influenced by size & reward an exhibit as a reflection of the merits of the standard and the allowable size for the sex of the individual exhibit rather than compared to each other in height and weight, with the ideal height range being preferred.

**HEAD:** The head is **short** and **triangular in shape** when seen from above. The length of the head (noseto occiput) in relationship to the length of the body (point of shoulder to point of buttock) is 2 to 5. **Skull:** The skull as seen from the front, is slightly rounded. It is rather wide in relation to its length. The superciliary arches are only slightly developed. There is a slight frontal groove. The occiput and crest are only slightly accentuated. The zygomatic arches are well developed. **Ears:** The ears are pendulous, triangular, set high on the skull and attached above the line of the eyes. They are fine at the tips, carried close to the cheeks and reach to the corners of the lips. The ears are covered with white hairs or with some traces of grey (mixture of white and black hairs giving a light grey appearance) or light tan (mixture of white and light tan hairs.) **Stop:** The stop is slight. **Cheeks:** The cheeks are lean. **Muzzle:** The muzzle is straight. The length of the muzzle in relationship to the skull is 5 to 9. The muzzle as seen from the front must be rather large and capacious with a strong chin. **Nose:** At the end of the nasal bridge, the nose continues as an extension of the same line. The nose has the shape of a rounded triangle, is completely pigmented in shades of black with the nostrils well-open. **Total lack of pigment on the eye rim(s), nose or lips is a disqualification.**



**ELABORATION: HEAD IS SHORT (first word used in the standard) & TRIANGULAR IN SHAPE** when viewed from above.

The **SKULL**(backskull) should be **wide** as opposed to long & narrow, to allow for correct eye set, ear set & correct proportions overall. **ZYGOMATIC ARCHES** are well developed.

**NARROW HEADS do not meet the standard requirements.**

**Disproportionate narrow heads can produce disproportionate LONG muzzles.** These muzzles can, and frequently do, result in divergent planes of the head producing an **incorrect long, "down faced" muzzle** which also changes the lively expression of the Coton.

**PLANES** of the head are parallel.

**EARS: Set high** directly above the line of eye. Ears set too low, give head/face a droopy appearance.

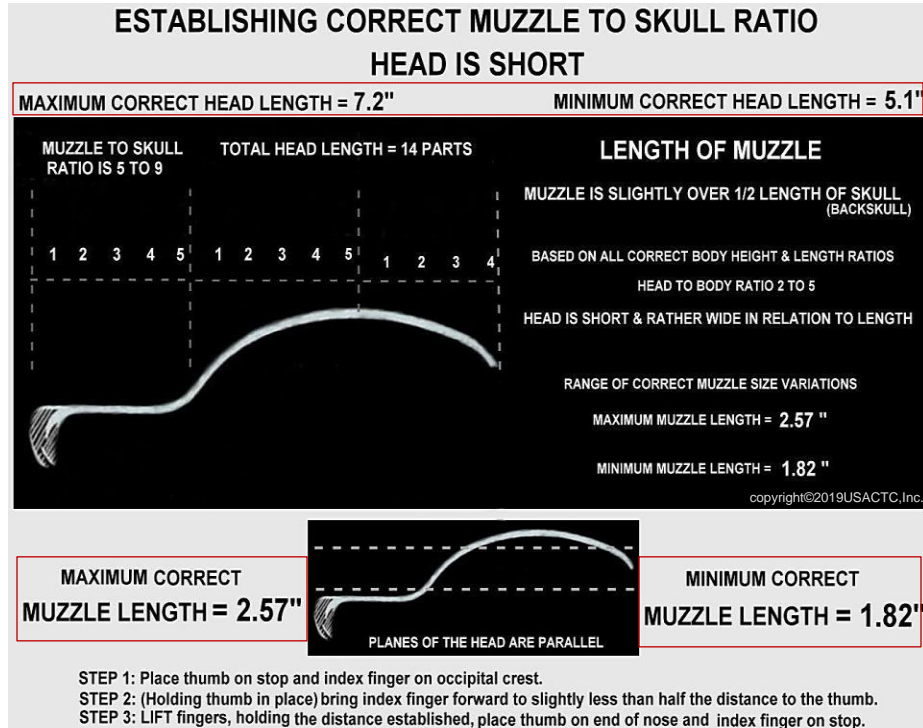
**NOSE:** Shape of a rounded triangle. Pigmented in black. **DISQUALIFICATION:** Total lack of pigment.

The **STANDARD** does not define a difference between male and female heads.

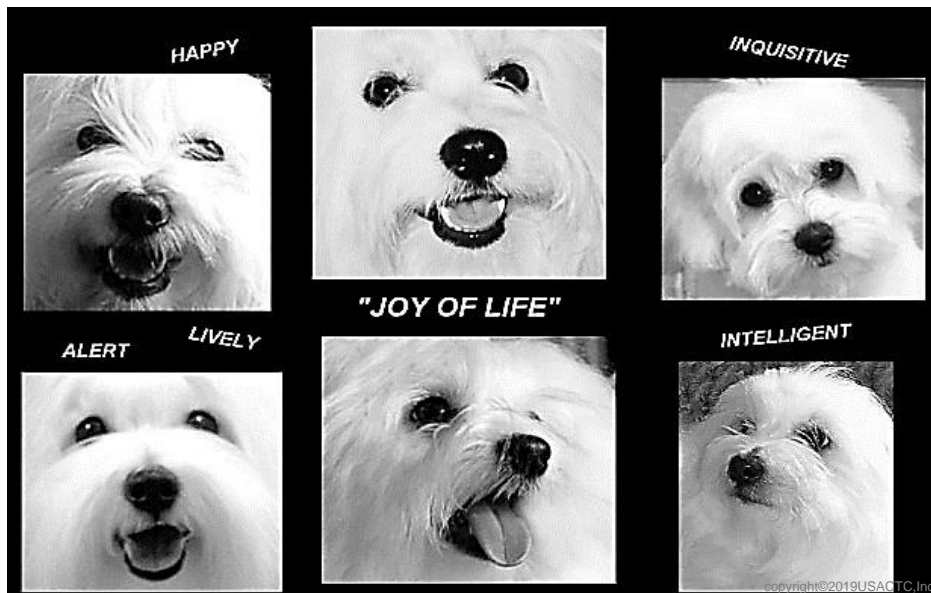
## MUZZLE

**MUZZLE:** The muzzle is straight. The length of the muzzle in relationship to the skull is 5 to 9. The muzzle as seen from the front must be rather large and capacious with a strong chin.

**ELABORATION:** Disproportionate narrow heads can produce disproportionate LONG muzzles. Such muzzles can & do produce divergent head planes & an INCORRECT LONG, "DOWN FACED" MUZZLE. Down faced muzzles change the Cotons' expression. **PLANES of the head are PARALLEL.**



**Expression:** The expression is lively, intelligent, inquisitive, alert and happy. The Coton's "joy of life" displayed in their expression



**Temperament:** Of a happy temperament, stable, very sociable with humans and other dogs, adapting perfectly to all ways of life.

**The temperament of the Coton de Tulear is one of the main characteristics of the breed.**

## EYES

**Eyes:** The eyes are rather rounded, dark brown or black in color, lively, set wide apart with the inner corners and the outer corners on the same level. The rims of the eyelids are completely pigmented in shades of black. **SEVERE FAULT:** An overly large or bulging eye is a severe fault as is an almond shaped, obliquely set eye. **Disqualification - Eye/s of any color other than brown or black.**  
**Disqualification - Total lack of pigment on the eye rim(s), nose or lip**



**ELABORATION: PLEASE NOTE:**  
**Eye Pigment** refers to the “eyeliner” on the inner regions where the upper eyelid rim meets the lower inner eye rim. Some Cotons have additional pigment around the skin of the eyes, referred to as “halo”. While this is acceptable & enhances the eye, it is not taken into consideration when judging for eye pigmentation & “lack of halo” should, in no way, be considered a fault. There should be no white showing in the iris when the dog is looking straight forward. **DISQUALIFICATION: Total lack of pigment on eye rim(s).**

**Elaboration: Ideal eye color is dark brown or black. That dark eye color is a key element in achieving correct Coton de Tulear expression.** Dark brown or black eyes soften the dog's expression creating a much friendlier appearance. Light eyes have an adverse effect on the soft look of a Coton. The color of the iris is very visible in dogs with light eyes and the resulting clearly visible direct stare often results in an unconscious perception of a stark look of an unfriendly nature, which is totally contrary to the expression displayed in a dog whose temperament is considered one of the main characteristics of the breed described as happy, stable, sociable with humans and other dogs.



**ELABORATION: DISQUALIFICATION: Eye(s) Any other color than brown or black.** That color could be a distinctive color other than brown or black or a heavy saturation of any other color that causes the brown or black eye to be so light as to be out of alignment with the ideally standard color described as dark brown or black.

## LIPS-FLEWS-TEETH-BITE

## NECK-TOPLINE-BODY

**Lips:** The lips are fine, tight, and completely pigmented black. **Disqualification -Total lack of pigment on the lips.** **Flews:** The flews are tight.

**Teeth:** The teeth are well-aligned, strong, white. Complete dentition is preferred with the exception of the PM1 and the M3. **Bite:** The bite is a scissor or level bite without losing contact.



**ELABORATION:** The width and depth of the muzzle, accompanied by a strong chin, provides sufficient room in the mouth to accommodate well aligned dentition **DQ: Total lack of pigment on the lips.**

## NECK, TOPLINE and BODY

**NECK:** The neck is slightly arched, of moderate length, blends smoothly into the shoulders and is in balance with the height and length of the dog.

**ELABORATION:** the NECK is slightly arched, graceful and moderate in length.  
It should never appear thick nor long and/or slender.

**TOPLINE:** The withers are only slightly pronounced. The top line runs smoothly from the withers to the loin. Beginning over the loin, is a graceful natural arch, not too accentuated that carries through over the croup. The arch is continuous without flatness, resulting in a low tail set.

**Fault - A dip behind shoulder blades or a steep or flat croup is to be penalized. Severe Fault - A wheel back or flat back are to be severely penalized.**

**BODY:** The body is longer than high. The length of the body as measured from the point of shoulder to the point of buttocks is 3 to 2 as compared to the dog's height at the withers.

**CHEST:** The chest is long, well-developed and well-let down to elbow level. The forechest is well-pronounced and protrudes well-forward of the point of shoulder.

**RIBS:** The ribs are well-sprung. The ribcage extends well-back.

**ELABORATION:** Well-sprung ribs allow for greater lung capacity & stamina in the active, agile Coton.

**UNDERLINE:** The underline follows the profile of the sternum, then rises slightly toward the belly. Tuck-up - The belly is tucked-up but not excessively.

**BACK:** The back is strong.

**LOIN:** The loin is well-muscled and short. It is fundamental that the loin is short. If it is wide and strong, it helps to give stability to the entire dog's movement. **CROUP:** The croup is oblique, short and muscled.

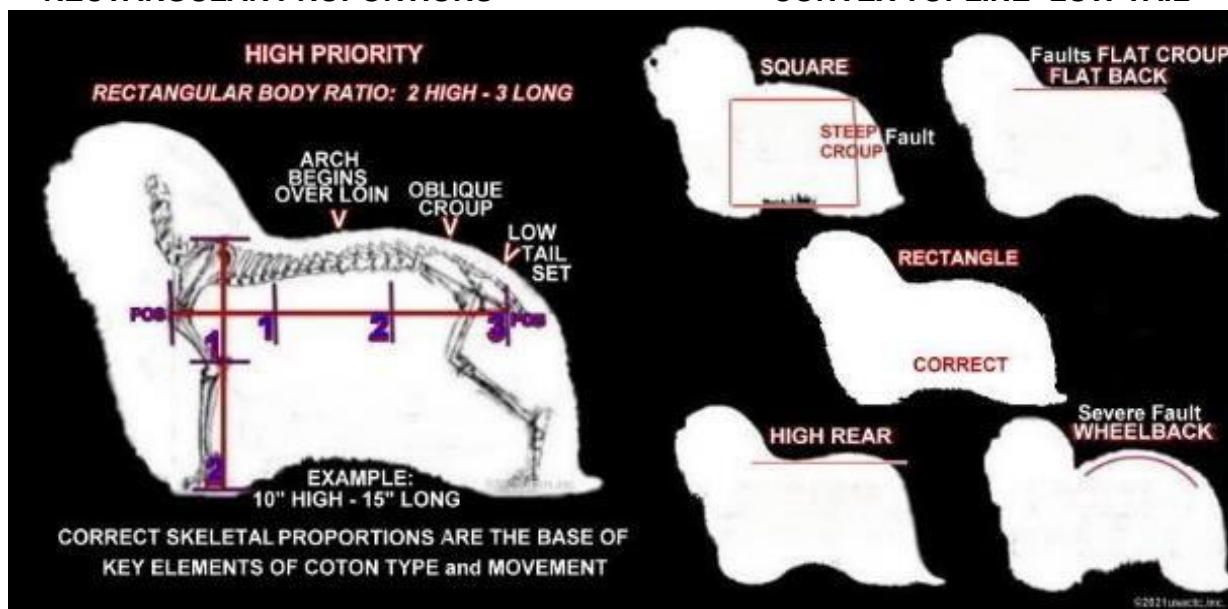
**ELABORATION:** The combined structural components of the Coton de Tulear result in the standard described 2 high x 3 long DEFINITELY RECTANGULAR DOG.

The main element in creating this rectangular body is the length of the ribcage as it extends well-back. The last rib of the ribcage is "coupled" to the onset of the hindquarters by the short, wide & well-muscled loin. The "short coupling" of this distance is key to providing strength and stability to the LONG BACK of the Coton de Tulear.

## HALLMARKS OF THE BREED

### RECTANGULAR PROPORTIONS

### CONVEX TOPLINE- LOW TAIL



**TOPLINE & PROPORTION EVALUATIONS ARE PERFORMED WITH TAILS DOWN.**  
**TAILS "UP & OVER" THE BACK DISTORT RECTANGULAR OUTLINES & CAN DISGUISE FAULTY TOPLINES.**

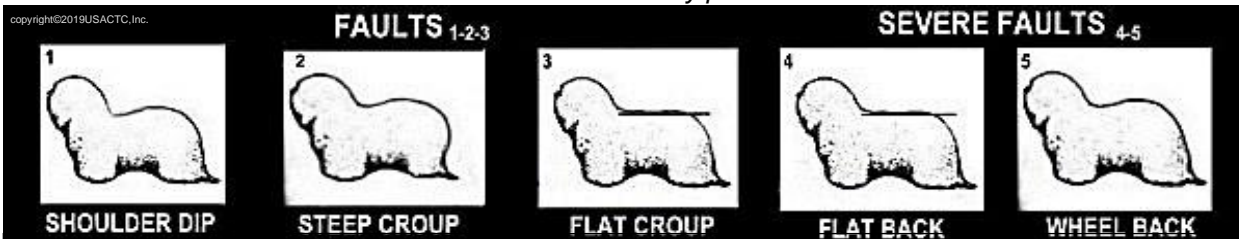
**ELABORATION:** The "graceful natural arch" of the slightly convex topline is created, not only by the natural rise & fall of the spires of the lumbar vertebrae over the short, well-muscled loin, but also by the fall away into the oblique croup. The low-set on of the tail completes the curve of the natural arch as an extension of the spine creating a gently rounded continuation of the topline.

**THE TOPLINE SHOULD NEVER BE FLAT OR HIGH IN THE REAR.**

Topline faults produce an incorrect overall silhouette. **Coats can be groomed to change the visual illusion.** A "hands on" examination is necessary to reveal the true conformation of the Coton.

**TOPLINE: Fault** - A dip behind shoulder blades or a steep or flat croup is to be penalized.

**Severe Fault** - A wheel back or flat back are to be severely penalized.

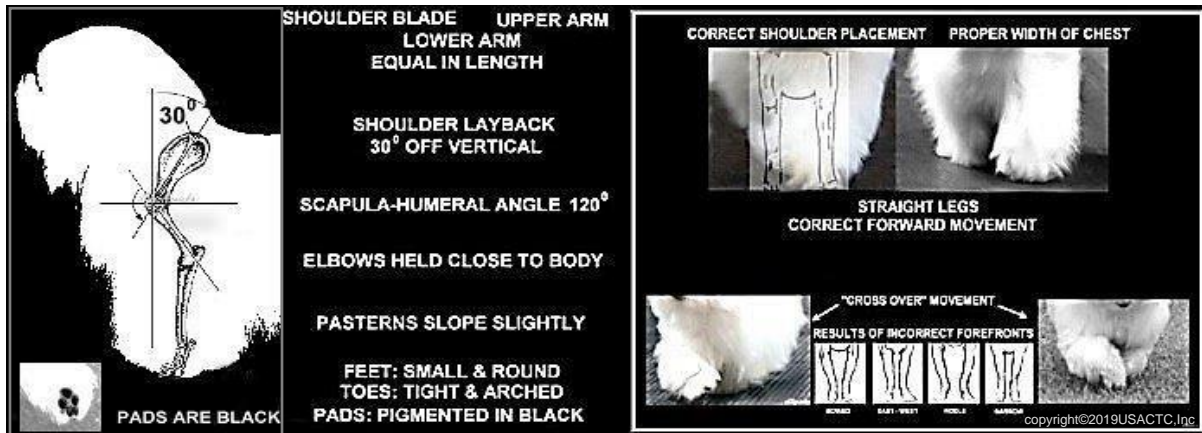


**ELABORATION:** Faulty toplines and incorrect croup angulations affect the correct set of tail.  
Example: A flat croup or a flat back produce a faulty high tail set as does a topline that is high in the rear.  
 Topline and croup faults carry through the entire conformation of the hindquarters & create a faulty gait.

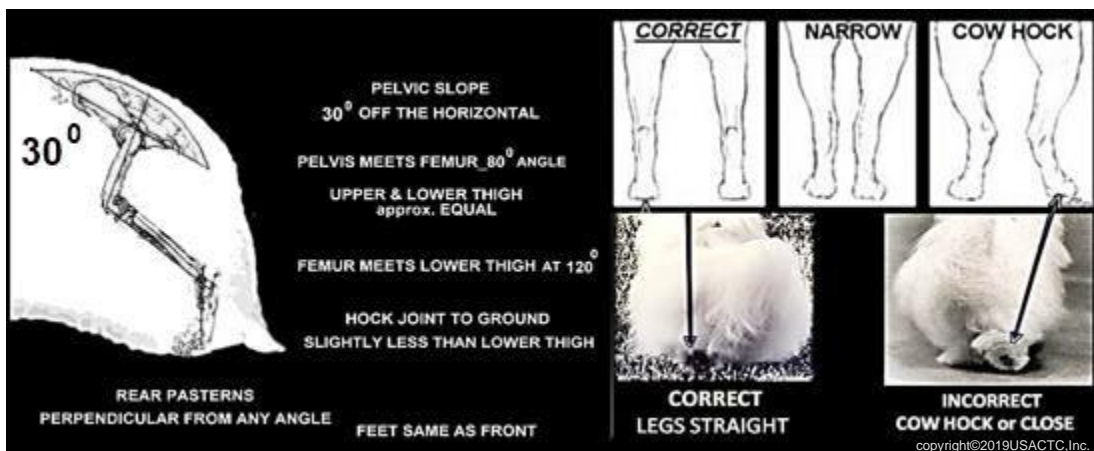
**TAIL:** The tail is low set in the axis of the spinal column. At rest it is carried below the hock with the tip being raised. On the move, the tail is carried happily. It is curved over the back so that the hair of the tail rests on the back with the point towards the nape, the withers, the back or the loin. In specimens with abundant coat, the tip may rest on the dorsal-lumbar region. **Fault** – A tail that does not reach the hock; A tail that has a complete curl loop); A gay tail; A tail that is carried completely flat over the body (snap tail). **Disqualification** – No tail. **TAIL SET & CARRIAGE IS FULLY ELABORATED ON PAGE 13.**

## FOREQUARTERS AND HINDQUARTERS

**FOREQUARTERS Shoulders:** The shoulder is muscular. **Shoulder Blades:** The shoulder blades are laid back to somewhat near a **30 degree angle** off the vertical. **Upper Arm:** The length of the upper arm corresponds approximately to that of the shoulder blade. The upper arm extends well back so that the elbow is placed directly below the top of the shoulder blade when viewed from the side and structurally the elbows are held close to the body. **The scapula-humeral angle is about 120 degrees.** **Legs:** The front legs are upright. The lower arms are vertical and parallel. They are well-muscled with good bone. The length of the lower arm corresponds approximately to that of the upper arm. The corpus (pastern joint) is a continuation of the line of the lower arm. There is no bow or curve in the forearm or wrist. **Pasterns:** The pastern is strong. When seen in profile, it is sloping very slightly. Dewclaws may be left natural or may be removed. **Feet:** The feet are small and round. **Toes:** The toes are tight and arched. **Pads:** The pads are completely pigmented black.



**HINDQUARTERS: Angulation:** The pelvis is sloped at approximately 30 degrees off the horizontal. The pelvis meets the femur at an angle of about 80 degrees. The angle of femur to lower thigh is about 120 degrees. **Legs:** The hind legs are muscular from hip to hock. **Upper and Second Thigh:** The upper thigh and lower thigh are approximately equal in length. **Hock Joint:** The hock joint is dry and well defined. The height of the hock joint when measured to the ground is slightly less than the length of the lower thigh. **Hocks (Rear Pastern):** The rear pastern is perpendicular to the ground from any angle. **Dewclaws:** Dewclaws may be left natural or may be removed. **Feet:** The feet are small and round. **Toes:** The toes are tight and arched. **Pads:** The pads are completely pigmented black.



## A HALLMARK OF THE BREED

WHITE COAT

TEXTURE OF COTTON

SOFT AND SUPPLE



**PLEASE NOTE:** The standard describes coat color as color on the ears and color on the body. Body is any area OTHER THAN THE EARS. It further describes acceptable color in both the ideal adult coat and the puppy coat under 12 months of age. It is very important to remember these distinctions as there is a greater color allowance for a puppy.

**COAT:** This is one of the main characteristics of the breed from which its very name derives. The coat is very soft and supple, with the texture of cotton. It is never hard or rough. The coat is dense, profuse and can be very slightly wavy. A puppy coat is much softer in texture than an adult coat.

**Severe Fault** -Atypical hair or hair that is tightly curled, wooly or silky.

**Skin:** The skin is fine and stretched tight all over the body. Although of pink color, it can be pigmented.

**The coat is dense and profuse and should not lay flat against the body. It can be slightly wavy.**

**TEXTURE:** very soft, supple, never hard nor rough, with the texture of a natural ball of cotton.

**Evaluate texture** by taking the coat within your fingers, lift it up, twist it, and then let go of the coat. You can expect to see a good textured coat that doesn't fall down but stays up by itself.

**Severe Fault** -Atypical hair or hair that is tightly curled, wooly or silky.

Coat quality, that truly reflects correct texture, is more important than amount of coat, as long as the coat is healthy and groomed, without scissoring or sculpting, according to standard. It is not necessary for the coat to reach the ground. Adult coats reaching slightly above the ground, allowing some daylight under the dog up to 1 to 3 inches, should be considered equally acceptable when being judged if all other coat considerations are equal. Any visible portions of the legs or feet should be fully coated.

SEE PRESENTATION PAGE 14

## COLOR

**COLOR-Coat color is white. ON THE EARS:** A few slight shadings of light grey (mixture of white and black hairs) or of light tan (mixture of white and light tan hairs) are permitted on the ears. These shadings are only tolerated but are not desirable. **Exception: Ears are not considered when applying the excess of 5% color to the body as a serious fault.**

**ON THE BODY:** Light tan shadings (mixture of white and light tan hairs) are permitted on 5% of the body of an adult Coton over 12 months of age. These light tan shadings may appear in one area of the coat or scattered throughout the coat. These shadings should never be so intense or deep in color or be so heavily marked on the coat that they alter the overall appearance of a white coat.

When all other considerations are equal, the judge should give preference to the dog whose coat has the most amount of white.

**Severe Fault-** Any color, except 5% of light tan (mixture of white and light tan hair) appearing in one area of the coat or scattered throughout the coat is a severe fault in an adult Coton over 12 months of age. **Disqualification - Black on the body is a disqualification at any age.**

### COAT COLOR IS WHITE

When all other considerations are equal, the judge should give preference to the dog whose coat has the most amount of white.

**EARS**



**MINIMAL LIGHT COLOR IS ALLOWED ON EARS AND/OR BODY OF AN ADULT COTON.**



**ACCEPTABLE COLOR IS DEFINED ON A PUPPY AS IT DILUTES & FADES TO AN ADULT**

**PUPPY EARS MAY BE DARKER THAN AN ADULT.**





**ADULT EARS**  
Light tan or light grey.  
Color is tolerated-not desirable.  
Not part of 5% body color penalty

**5% BODY**  
Light tan only.  
5% on one place on the body or scattered throughout the body.

**SERIOUS FAULT** over 5% of light tan on the **BODY ONLY**.

**PUPPY UP TO 12 MONTHS**

**EARS & BODY**

Light tan, light brown, dark brown, chestnut or grey.

**Puppy color is NOT FAULTED.** It has the potential to fade to the acceptable amounts of light tan adult color.



**BLACK-(SOLID BLACK) anywhere on the BODY and/or EARS is a DISQUALIFICATION AT ANY AGE.**  
**SOLID BLACK-color that is NOT heavily saturated with sufficient white or grey hair to change the appearance of BLACK to a DEFINITE LIGHT GREY on the ears of an adult and the ears and/or body of a puppy.**

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**ELABORATION: The Coton de Tulear presents the OVERALL APPEARANCE OF A WHITE DOG. This is a statement that is DIFFERENT from the description of the Coton de Tulear is a white dog.**

ADULT COTONS MAY HAVE LIGHT GREY OR LIGHT TAN SHADINGS ON THEIR EARS.  
 ADULT COTONS MAY HAVE LIGHT TAN ONLY ON BODY PARTS OF THE COAT UP TO 5%.

The color SEVERE FAULT applies to the **adult dog**. This refers to **any body parts** having no more than a total of 5 % of color in a single place on the coat or scattered throughout the coat. This excludes any color on the EARS. Color on the EARS is tolerated but not desirable on adults as long as that color is light tan or grey as described in the standard.

*When all other considerations are equal, the judge should give preference to the dog whose coat has the most amount of white.*

## COLOR DISQUALIFICATION

## COLOR OF PUPPIES

### ***Disqualification - Black on the body is a disqualification at any age.***

**BLACK:** any definite marking of solid black, anywhere on the coat of a Coton de Tulear is a DISQUALIFICATION. This DQ DOES APPLY TO COTONS OF ALL AGES.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The DQ does not refer to the HEAVY intermingling of black hairs and white hairs that diffuse solid black to LIGHT GREY which is an acceptable color on the EARS of an adult and puppy Coton. The color GREY is also allowed on the face and body of the PUPPY COTON UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE.

### **COTON PUPPY COAT AND COLOR (UNDER 12 MONTHS)**

#### PUPPY COAT TEXTURE IS SOFTER THAN ADULT COAT TEXTURE

The coat becomes more profuse and dense as the dog matures.

**COLOR Exception: Puppy Color** - Does not apply to puppies with color under 12 months of age. Puppies with color under 12 months of age may have the acceptable colors of light tan, light brown, dark brown, chestnut or grey on the body and head. These colors have the potential to fade to the acceptable 5% allowance by one year of age and should not be penalized. **Disqualification - Black on the body is a disqualification at any age.**

ELABORATION: Cotons de Tulear can carry a "color dilute gene. **Cotons born with color, possessing desirable elements of conformation and temperament, can be a valuable addition to a breeding program. The standard takes this into consideration by describing acceptable colors up to 1 year of age, allowing such a specimen the opportunity to be presented for conformation.**

Puppies color markings can appear on the head, ears and anywhere else on body in the colors of light tan, light brown, dark brown, chestnut or grey. **Under the age of 12 months**, this color has the potential to fade progressively as the Coton matures and should not be penalized.

**Upon reaching 12 months of age**, color markings should have faded sufficiently making it necessary to evaluate color present based on the 5% COLOR ALLOWANCE on the body and of acceptable shades of color on the ears.

**EXCEPTION ELABORATION: BLACK: any definite marking of solid black anywhere on the coat of a Coton de Tulear is a DISQUALIFICATION**

**THIS DQ DOES APPLY TO COTONS OF ALL AGES**

**3 MONTHS OLD**



**6 MONTHS OLD**

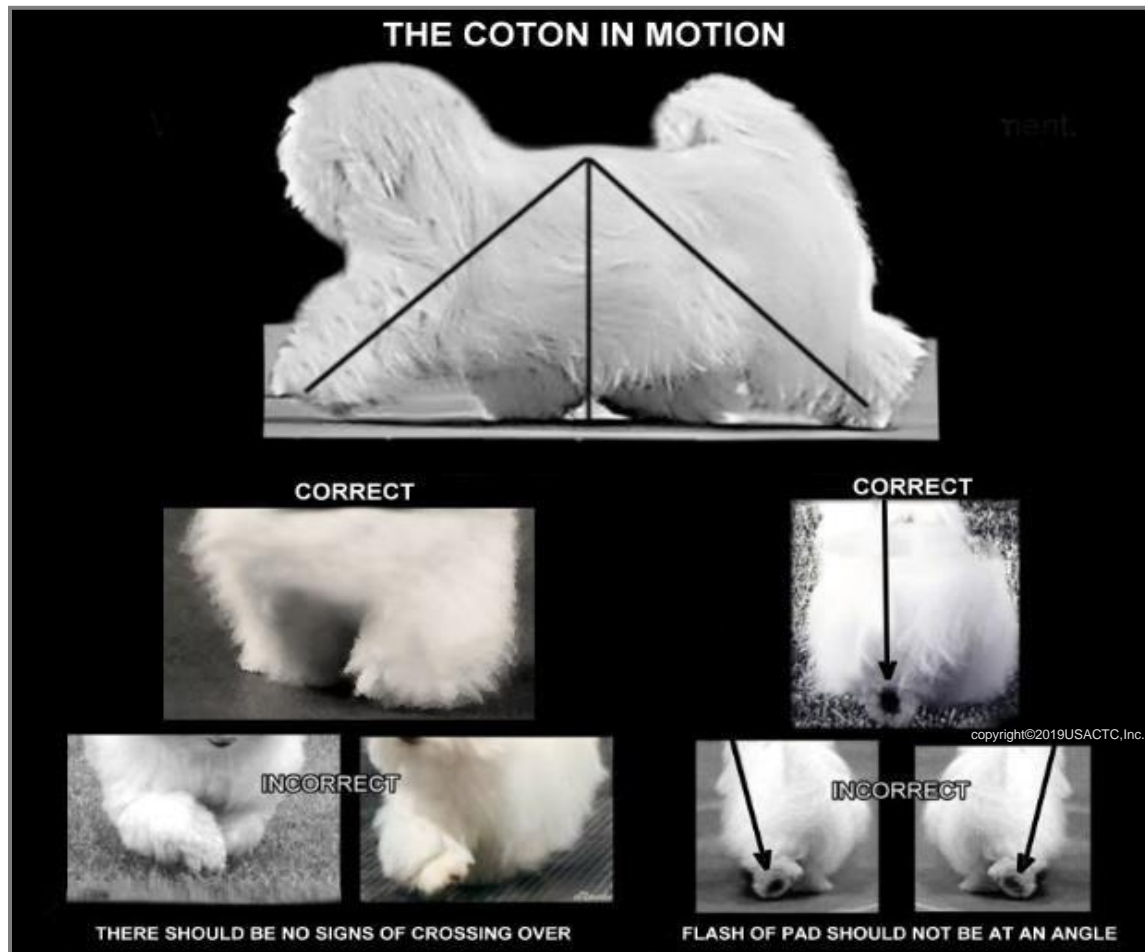


**NOTE: PROGRESS OF HEAD, NECK & CHEST COLOR FADING & DILUTION**

**SEE FULL COLOR ELABORATION PAGE 10**

## GAIT

**GAIT:** When trotting the gait is a moderate free and easy movement. The topline is retained on the move. There should be no sign of uneven movement.



**ELABORATION:** The trot is a "short trot" without covering ground, as becomes evident when evaluating the elements of conformation effecting movement of the definite rectangular Coton de Tulear. The topline should be retained in motion. The movement is "free and easy" showing no signs of lateral roll, bouncing or skipping. As speed increases, the head has a tendency to extend forward. The neck is short and will give the appearance of being approximately horizontal with the backline. Coton movement can be best appreciated when shown on a loose lead at a moderate pace. Cotons shown "strung up on lead" may exhibit exaggerated forward lift and excessive rear "kick back". That exaggerated extension may also be caused by incorrect conformation. Judges are then advised to instruct the exhibitor to use a slower pace on a loose lead in order to make a proper evaluation.

**When viewed from the front,** the Cotons legs move forward in a free and easy motion. The legs and feet should show no signs of crossing over or interfering with each other. Topline is retained in movement. Faulty construction will be very apparent as the topline WILL NOT be retained and side to side movement will occur. A rolling side to side or bouncing movement will occur. **Viewed from the rear,** the hocks should drive well under the body, following the same line as the forelegs, without being too wide or too closely spaced. A straight line is maintained at all speeds of the trot, from hip to pad. The "flash of pad" seen from the rear reveals the construction of the rear leg. The straight leg will show the pad balanced perfectly and in line with front movement. The close or cow hock leg will show the pad at an angle.

**Cotons may "hop" over high grass, but, on level surfaces there should be no signs of "skipping".**

## A HALLMARK OF THE BREED

## DISTINCTIVE TAIL SET & CARRIAGE

**AKC STANDARD-TAIL:** *The tail is low set in the axis of the spinal column. At rest it is carried below the hock with the tip being raised. On the move the tail is carried happily. It is curved over the back so that the hair of the tail rests on the back with the point towards the nape, the withers, the back or the loin. In specimens with abundant coat, the tip may rest on the dorsal-lumbar region. **Fault - A tail that does not reach the hock; a tail that has a complete curl loop; a gay tail; a tail that is carried completely flat over the body (snap tail). Disqualification - No tail.***

### RANGE OF CORRECT TAIL CARRIAGE IN MOTION

#### KEY WORDS: CURVED TAIL CARRIED OVER BACK POINT OF TIP LOCATION

The correct, low set, Coton tail carriage in motion creates a **discernable curve** over the back. The **hair of the tail rests on the back** with the **point** towards the **nape, withers, back** or **loin**. On heavily coated dogs, the **tip** may rest on the **dorsal-lumbar region**, due only to the weight of the hair.



Graphic is designed to illustrate tail carriage only. It is not the representation of an ideal Coton or an ideal Coton in motion.



### FAULTS & DEVIATIONS FROM THE STANDARD

#### KEY WORDS: STRAIGHT VERTICAL FLAT SNAP LOOP

**FAULTS:** *A tail that has a complete curl loop; a gay tail; a tail that is carried completely flat over the body (snap tail).*

**AKC STANDARD:** *"Any deviation from the ideal described in the standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation."*

**DEVIATIONS:** Coton tail carriage deviations include, but are not limited to, tails carried vertically without the required "curve (arc) in the skeletal structure of the tail." Tails carried above the horizontal level of the back. Tails not rising to any ideally described standard positions while in motion.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** *No tail.*



**TAILS AT REST:** *Carried below the hock with the "tip" being raised.*

**TAILS DOWN AT REST:** when hard stacked to enable the judge to fully evaluate the hallmarks of the breed: distinctive rectangular silhouette, slightly convex topline and low tail set.

**TOPLINE & PROPORTION EVALUATIONS ARE PERFORMED - TAILS DOWN.**

**TAILS "UP & OVER" THE BACK DISTORT RECTANGULAR OUTLINES & CAN DISGUISE FAULTY TOPLINES.**

**PRESENTATION:** *The dog must be shown as naturally as is consistent with good grooming. His coat should be clean and free of mats. In mature specimens, the length of coat may cause it to fall to either side down the back but it should not appear to be artificially parted. The long, untrimmed head furnishings may fall forward over the eyes, or be brushed backwards over the skull. The fur on the very bottom of the feet and between the pads may be trimmed. Any other trimming or sculpting of the coat or any grooming which alters the natural appearance is to be severely penalized.*

**SEE CAVEAT PAGE 1**

**ELABORATION:** Coat texture can be altered dramatically by overuse of artificial products bleach, chalk and or powder... It is the judge's responsibility to determine correct "cotton like" texture, regardless of the reason for coat condition. (Procedure described in coat section on page 9.)The head fall may come forward and cover the eyes or may be pushed back over the skull. TOPKNOTS are NOT allowed.



It is permissible to trim the outer perimeters of the feet and pads only. From the Standard: **Any other trimming or sculpting of the coat or any grooming which alters the natural appearance is to be severely penalized.** For example, raking or stripping the coat produces a thin, flat coat resulting in the loss of the standard prescribed profuse coat. A thin coat will appear to "wave like a silk tassel" in motion.

Profuse coats may "naturally" part, however, the coat should never be groomed with a definitive part to fall to either side of the topline. **Creative grooming frequently results in altering the visual of the natural structure of the dog.** E.G. grooming a rise in the backline beginning near the withers, creating a camel back or grooming a roach back to make it appear correct. **Exaggerated head grooming** and back combing creates a disproportionate head to body ratio. This technique results in the unnatural, incorrect illusion of a large domed and rounded head with a deep stop. **Grooming styles are also used to create the appearance of correct muzzle length.**

Coat quality, that truly reflects correct texture, is more important than amount of coat, as long as the coat is healthy and groomed, without scissoring or sculpting, according to standard. It is not necessary for the coat to reach the ground. Adult coats reaching slightly above the ground, allowing some daylight under the dog up to 1 to 3 inches, should be considered equally acceptable when being judged if all other coat considerations are equal. Any visible portions of the leg or feet should be fully coated. Coat quality and condition should take precedence over a profusely coated dog with damaged or incorrect coat type.

### Did your hands confirm what your eyes perceived?

It is imperative to perform a thorough "hands on examination" when evaluating the Coton de Tulear.

Coat length and creative grooming can be Extremely deceptive in a dog carrying such a profuse coat.



**FAULTS:** Any deviation from the ideal described in the standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

**A tail** that does not reach the hock; a tail that has a complete **curl (loop)**; a **gay tail**; a tail that is carried **completely flat over the body (snap tail)**.

**A dip behind shoulder blades** or a **steep or flat croup** is to be penalized.

**SEVERE FAULTS:** A **wheel back or flat back** are to be severely penalized.

**An overly large or bulging eye** is a severe fault as is an **almond shaped, obliquely set eye**.

**Atypical hair** or hair that is **tightly curled, wooly or silk**.

**Any trimming, sculpting or grooming** of the coat which alters the natural appearance.

**Any color, except 5 percent of light tan (mixture of white and light tan hair)** appearing in one area of the coat or scattered throughout the coat is a severe fault in an adult Coton over 12 months of age.

**DISQUALIFICATIONS: Height** -Any bitch less than 8½ inches or taller than 11 inches in height; any dog less than 9½ inches or taller than 12 inches in height.

The minimum height disqualification does not apply to puppies under 12 months of age.

**Eye(s)** of any color other than brown or black.

**Total lack of pigment** on the **eye rim(s), nose or lips**.

**Color -Black on the body** is a disqualification at any age.

**No tail.**

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This document is the elaboration of the AKC Coton de Tulear Standard, effective October 1, 2013.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COTON DE TULEAR CLUB, Inc. Gregory Beach, President 2019

USACTC BOARD APPROVAL: 11/6/2019

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Additional information is available on the AKC Coton de Tulear Parent Breed Club **Website-**

**[www.usactc.dog](http://www.usactc.dog)**

**<https://www.usactc.dog/resources/judges-education/printable-education-guidelines/>**

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**  
**USACTC COTON DE TULEAR STANDARD ELABORATION**

**ANGULATION:** The angles formed by a meeting of the bones; mainly the shoulder, upper arm, stifle and hock.

**BACKSKULL:** The area extending from the stop to occiput.

**BALANCE:** The pleasing, harmonious, and well-proportioned blend of an animal's parts and features. A symmetrical appearance.

**BRISKET:** The lower part of the chest between & in front of the forelegs & extending past the forelegs. Brisket depth indicates depth of chest.

**CAPACIOUS:** Capable of holding much, roomy. The jaw of the Coton de Tulear is "capacious" allowing ample room for full, uncrowded dentition.

**COUPLING:** The part of the body between the ribs and the pelvis; the loin. The Coton de Tulear loin is "short" therefore a Coton is "close coupled."

**COARSE:** Too heavy or overdone with bone, lack of refinement; lacking in quality

**CRABBING:** Movement with the body at an angle to the line of travel Also called SIDEWINDING.

**CROSSING OVER:** Unsound gait which starts with twisting elbows and ends with crisscrossing and toeing out. Also called "knitting and purling" and "weaving".

**CROUP:** The region of the pelvic girdle, formed by the sacrum and surrounding tissue. The muscular area just in front of and around the set-on of the tail. Rump. The croup includes the sacrum portion of the pelvis and the first four or five tail vertebrae. The CROUP ANGLE and the pelvic angle is a different measurement. The croup of a Coton de Tulear is "oblique", slanted. The CROUP ANGLE determines the TAIL SET which is influenced by the muscle mass over the croup. The Coton has a "FALLAWAY CROUP", a continuous arch beginning over the loin & carrying through and over the croup resulting in a low tail set.

**COW HOCK:** Hocks turning in, accompanied by toeing out of rear feet.

**DRIVE:** A solid thrusting of the hindquarters, denoting sound locomotion.

**DORSAL:** of, on, or relating to the upper side or back of an animal. **DORSAL LUMBAR REGION:** The seven vertebrae of the loin region.

**DOWN FACED:** A dog whose muzzle inclines downward from the stop to the tip of the nose creating DIVERGENT PLANES of the skull where the muzzle diverges or slopes down from the planes of the backskull. (See PARALLEL PLANES)

**DOWN IN PASTERNS:** Weak or faulty pastern set at an incorrect angle.

**EAST-WEST FRONT:** Incorrectly positioned pasterns that cause the feet to turn outwards.

**EYE SHAPE- ALMOND:** An elongated eye shape, rather than rounded. **OBLIQUE:** Eye aperture where the outer corners appear to be higher set in the skull than the inner corners

**FIDDLE FRONT:** Forelegs out at elbows, pasterns close, and feet turned out. French front.

**FLEWS:** Upper lip pendulous, particularly at their inner corners.

**HITCHING-SKIPPING:** A definite skip or hop in the rhythm of the trot in the rear occurring on one leg or the other.

**HOCK:** The joint of the hind leg between the lower thigh and the rear pastern. The dogs true heel.

**LEVEL BITE:** Meeting of front teeth at edges with no overlap of upper or lower teeth.

**LOIN:** The lumbar area extending from the end of the ribcage to the start of the pelvis.

**MOVEMENT: FREE AND EASY:** Movement showing no signs of lateral roll, bouncing or skipping, unencumbered by structural faults, e.g. bend in forelegs, cow hocks or insufficient angulation.

**MOVING STRAIGHT:** Balanced gait in which angle of inclination begins at the shoulder, or hip joint, and limbs remain relatively straight from these points to the pads of the feet, even as the legs flex or extend in reaching or thrusting.

**MUZZLE:** The head in front of the eyes. Foreface.

**NECK-ARCHED:** an arch neck has a graceful curve forward and then upward from its base, supporting the head in a position well above and slightly forward of the prosternum. The Coton de Tulear has a slightly arched neck.

**OCCIPUT: Occipital crest:** Dorsal, posterior point of the skull.

**OVERSHOT BITE:** A bite in which the upper incisors (front teeth) protrude over the lower.

**PASTERN:** Region of the foreleg between the carpus (wrist) and the digits.

**PARALLEL PLANES OF THE HEAD:** The muzzle & the backskull are on the same plane as seen in the Coton de Tulear. (See DOWNFACED-DIVERGENT PLANES)

**PELVIC ANGLE:** The angle between the horizontal and the slope of the sacrum or pelvic girdle bones. Croup angle and pelvic angle are two different measurements.

**POINT OF SHOULDER:** The lower or front end of the shoulder blade joint that connects to the upper arm in the region of the forechest.

**PROSTERNUM:** Point of forechest. Well pronounced prosternum: extends forward of the points of the shoulder blades when viewed from the side.

**REACH:** Length of forward stride by forelegs without wasted or excessive motion.

**ROACH BACK:** A convex curvature of the back involving thoracic and lumber regions.

**SCISSORS BITE:** A bite in which the outer side of the lower incisors touch the inner side of the upper incisors. The Coton de Tulear bite is scissors or level. (See LEVEL, UNDER AND OVER BITE)

**SHORT TROT:** The hind foot does not reach the front paw print. The rear foot sets down a short distance behind the front paw print. Coton de Tulear movement is a SHORT TROT.

**SHOULDER LAYBACK:** The angle of the shoulder blade as compared with the vertical. The Coton de Tulear has a 30 degree shoulder layback.

**SNIPY:** A pointed, weak muzzle.

**SOUNDNESS:** The state of mental and physical health when all organs and faculties are complete and functioning normally, each in its rightful relation to the other. A dog with all its breed physical and temperament characteristics functioning properly, each in its rightful relation to the other.

**STIFLE:** The joint of the hind leg where the upper and lower thighs meet. The dog's knee.

**STOP:** The setup up from muzzle to skull; indentation between the eyes where the nasal bone and skull meet.

**TAIL SET:** see **CROUP**.

**TROT:** A rhythmic two-beat diagonal gait in which the feet at diagonal opposite ends of the body strike the ground together; i.e., right hind with left front and left hind with right front. The Coton de Tulear gait is a short trot. (See **SHORT TROT**.)

**TYPE:** The term "breed type" includes the silhouette, head, body proportions, coat and color. By definition, "breed type" means that a dog looks like its breed.

**SUPERCILLARY ARCHES:** The frontal bones that from the brows.

**TOPLINE:** The dog's outline from just behind the withers to the tail set.

**UNDERSHOT BITE:** A bite in which the lower incisors (front teeth) protrude over the upper.

**VERTEBRAL COLUMN, Spinal Column:** The bones of the central axis of the dog posterior to the skull, including the cervical (7 neck), thoracic (13 chest), lumbar (7 abdominal), sacral (3 pelvic), and coccygeal (tail vertebrae) composed of 6 to 23 vertebrae.

**WALLEYE:** An eye with a whitish iris; a blue eye, fisheye, pearl eye.

**WEEDY:** An insufficient amount of bone; light boned.

**WELL SPRUNG RIBS:** Well sprung ribs, come out horizontally from the spinal column for a distance prior to turning downward. The Coton de Tulear has "well sprung ribs" but with no suggestion of barrel shape. A good curvature of the ribs provides good heart & lung capacity.

**WHEELBACK:** A marked arch of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae

**WITHERS:** The bony projections of vertebrae in the vicinity of shoulder blades, the third, fourth and fifth vertebrae are called the top of the withers.

**WITHOUT COVERING GROUND: Covering ground:** The distance traveled by a dog with each stride as it gaits. **WITHOUT COVERING GROUND:** a short distance traveled by a dog with the length of each stride.

**ZYGOMATIC ARCHES:** The bony arch at the outer border of the eye socket and union of the cheekbone. Forms the cheekbone, located below the eye. The zygomatic arch determines the width of the head. Greatly influences the contours and shape of the face. The stop and zygomatic arch are the major contributors to head shape. **WELL DEVELOPED ZYGOMATIC ARCHES** contribute to the width and triangular shape of the correct Coton de Tulear head.

Additional information is available on the AKC Coton de Tulear Parent Breed Club Website-

**Please note: USACTC PBC site is .dog as follows: [usactc.dog](http://usactc.dog)**

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