

We Appreciate

...your interest in properly judging the Irish Water Spaniel. If you are familiar with performance focused sporting breeds, you will have no problem understanding the IWS. Above all things, it is a moderate gun dog bred for endurance, with a bold and dashing eagerness to please.

This primer is an effort to help organize your studies. We start with the elements of our Standard and Illustrated Breed Guide. For each, we identify the "Key Points" found in the ideal IWS and provide suggestions for Judging / approaching the IWS in the Ring.

"Keep in mind the importance of various features toward the basic original purpose of the breed"

- IWS Standard

Thank You!

Take Away Characteristics

- **Moderately Structured Gun Dog / Endurance Retriever**
- **Sound & Well Moving**
- **Distinctive Head & Coat**
- **Unique Silhouette**
- **Great Personality**



Irish Water Spaniel Club of America
www.iwsca.webs.com



Standard Illustrated Breed Guide

Proportion & Substance Size/Weight, Neck, Feet

Body
Forequarters
Hindquarters
Gait

Top-knot, Head, Eyes, Ears Coat/Color

Topline
Back
Rattail

Temperament

Key Points

The Ideal IWS Has:

“...smart, upstanding, strongly built” overall presence.
Slightly rectangular shape with a height to leg ratio of about 50/50; **not leggy**.
A well-muscled, arched neck, set smoothly into the shoulders, to carry large waterfowl.
Large webbed feet, able to tread on marsh & bog.

Strength without heaviness, well sprung ribs, carried well back.
Free movement, without dragging toes; effortless, efficient.
Well balanced fore and hindquarters; moderate angulation.
Full leg extension; flexible pasterns; good diagonal leg coordination.

Keenly alert expression beneath the characteristic top-knot, with eyes a warm shade of brown/medium to dark amber (yellow not desired).
Long, square muzzle and strong under-jaw, with a smooth face, tight skin, flews and lids.
Long, lobular, well clothed ears.
Insulating and water shedding coat with crisp curls of dark liver. Can be shown “natural” or trimmed.

Level topline, may rise slightly over the loin but should never be descending.
Strong, broad back.
Rounded croup with low tail set complimenting the contour.
Characteristic rattail, carried parallel to the ground when moving.

Spirited eagerness.
Audacious and gallant disposition.
Stability, with an endearing sense of humor.
...but may be reserved with strangers

Judging:

Judge the entire Irish Water Spaniel, rather than focusing on one particular characteristic. The IWS is graced with a wonderful personality, fitness, sound movement, and unique curly coat. But beneath those beautiful furnishings, naturally dashing good looks and rattail must be a dog capable of traversing all terrains with the **stamina and structure needed for a full day in the field and water**. Because we highly value the history of our dogs as working retrievers, there is **no requirement for the IWS to be shown in a long coat**. Grooming should not be excessive. A short, working coat is quite acceptable. The cut should not be so short as to obscure the curl. IWS coats lighten easily in the sun and water. There should be no penalty for the red caused by weathering.

Addressing the IWS...

These intelligent dogs should not be shy or aggressive. But the breed is naturally wary of strangers; it is best to approach them from the front, not the side or rear. We suggest you confidently walk up to the handler, as much as the dog. In a normal conversational tone, exchange a few words of greeting. It will go a long way in gaining the dog’s acceptance.