

# *Info shared by Pitbull SA.*

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***Head profile study.***



Above actual examples of head structure that exactly fit the origin of the APBT standard, are modern APBT dogs and bitches - all pit fighting APBT Gr Ch dogs.

These dogs were considered "talented" because the physical structure of their heads provided that which was needed and nothing more or less - moderate, functional working type - nothing is exaggerated, nothing is lacking.

The head should speak of a blending of bull and terrier, of power.

The APBT is no more a head breed than any other breed.  
The planes of the head and muzzle are nearly perfect.  
All 3 these dogs above have decent natural ears.  
Because the Pit Bull is a complete total and balanced dog and genetically and historically bred like that, the head structure should be proportional with the body and a key element of breed type.

## **Head structure is most important.**

It is large and broad, giving the impression of great power, but it is not disproportionate to the size of the body.  
A massive head will never give advantage to the dog when doing the jobs they are bred for - on the contrary a too big head will take the advantage away from a dog.  
It is not the size of the head that gives power to the bite it is proper mechanics and structure.  
A dog with an overly massive head is disadvantaged because they must carry the extra weight of the skull bone and associated meat with the neck.  
This creates a need for a heavier chest and shoulders to compensate (loaded shoulders-a fault), which takes away from the balance between the forequarters and the hindquarters reducing the efficiency of overall movement and agility particularly lateral movement.  
Bitches with overly doggy heads should not be considered the same as males with overly bitchy heads should not be considered.  
Supra-orbital arches over the eyes are well defined but also not overly pronounced.  
The head is well chiselled, blending strength, elegance, and character.

## **Extra thick bone in the head.**

Useless padding or bone in the head structure only cause extra weight.

We have to realize the APBT is not a rhinoceros that hits things with its head so extra thick bone in the skull does not help - it actually reduces the size, strength, and weight ratio causing a distinct disadvantage.

## **Muzzle.**

The muzzles are square, broad, deep and strong, not short, pointed, or brachiocephalic - with a very slight taper from the stop to the nose, and a slight falling away under the eyes - (these are not over done adjectives so do not let them lead to visualizing massively broad or massively deep).

Again note that the stop is slight because we are seeing stops that are way too deep these days.

Selection for deep stops is leading toward that "Bulldog" look and this breed is not American Bulldogs.

The length of muzzle is shorter than the length of skull, with a ratio of approximately 2:3.

This means that if the measurement from the stop to the "occiput" is 150 mm, then the length of the muzzle from the stop to the tip of the nose would be 100 mm = 2:3

This figure provides many of the indications for proper head characteristics including what is meant by 2:3 ratio for muzzle head, what is meant by a slight falling away below the eyes (zygomatic arch prominence), and an example of clean and tight lips.

The top line of the muzzle is straight.

Faults: Snippy muzzle if not related to bloodline

## **Flews.**

The long part of the upper lip that covers the teeth.

Some dogs have very large, hanging flews, like Mastiffs that sling saliva all over the place.

Fault:

Extra lippy and heavy flesh around the mouth.

Especially undesirable are dogs that are very lippy or have extra flesh around the mouth including jowls.

Lips should be clean (not slimy) and tight.

## **Jaws.**

The under jaws are adequate well developed wide deep and strong.

## **Skull.**

The skull is proportionally large, flat or slightly rounded, deep, and broad between the ears, from the front, the head is shaped like a broad, blunt wedge.

When viewed from the side the skull and muzzle are parallel to one another (but the planes should not deviate from the planes of the muzzle) and joined by a well-defined, moderately deep stop and tapers just slightly toward the stop.

The shape of the top skull is of particular interest in these days of overdone and over massive dogs.

Bone structure of the top skull should be well visualize by the judge and certainly not covered or overly padded by flesh and or muscle. This typically looks like a dome skull.

The top of the head should not be overdeveloped as this offers absolutely no advantage to a dog's ability.

The top of the head should be essentially flat with parallel angles to the top of the muzzle.

The padding on the top skull in males should result in only a slight rise, while in females there should be less of a rise.

## **Skin of the head and skull.**

The skin of the head and skull should be very tight except for the quizzical wrinkles of the forehead that give the APBT that puzzled yet intense look.

## **Lower jaw.**

A very important aspect of the head (which is too often ignored) is the lower jaw.

## **Cheek muscles.**

The cheek muscles are also becoming overly developed as one of those fad characteristics.

Cheek muscles should be prominent but not exaggerated.

There is a standard and the standard does not present a dog that has gross overly developed cheek musculature.

## **Neck.**

The neck is of moderate length and muscular.

There is a slight arch at the crest.

The neck widens gradually from where it joins the skull to where it blends into well laid-back shoulders.

The skin on the neck is tight and without dewlap.

*Faults:* Neck too short and thick; thin or weak neck; ewe-neck; dewlap.



Looking at this picture - the head is unique small but not big and a key element of breed type – the size of the head is not disproportionate to the size of the body - broad of medium length - with a broad, flat skull.

A box like straight, wide and deep muzzle (wide and deep muzzle is very important) – giving the impression of great power but not exaggerated - well developed mandible that will not have much to do with the biting power but will endure more punishment.

### **Looking at the dog from the front.**

The head should not be overly wide, especially compared to the width of the shoulders.

A wide head will appear shortened and does not lend any benefit to performance but will add weight.

Note: In this breed characteristic that add weight without significant or comparable performance increase is a very big negative.

**Note:** When considering depth of the skull we should not be considering the stop which should be moderate (not shallow like the bull terrier or steep and deep like the American Bulldog).

Instead when we are talking about the depth we are referring to the depth below the eyes from the “zygomatic arch” to the bottom of the mandible.

The width of a correct head should be approximately 2/3 the width of the dogs shoulders.



The head is about 20% wider at the beginning of the jaw (cheeks) than the neck at the base of the skull.

Looking at the broad, blunt wedge shape.

Perhaps a better way to visualize this is standing above the dog and looking straight the cheeks should protrude from this wedge as shown in the overlay.

When viewed from the side, the skull and muzzle are parallel to one another and joined by a well-defined, moderately deep stop.



This is a batty head and not desired.



What you should know is that The APBT breed has a **wide variety of sub-types** – blood lines – various head shapes.

**Care** must be taken when judging obviously different bloodlines especially the head.

Breeders and judges **should look past** the characteristics of specific blood-lines which lend a specific "look" to the head.

This "Look" may be that of what the breeders and judges fancy or their own "type" of dogs lending bias to scoring.

For judges this should be avoided or judges should not be in the ring.

It is a travesty that so many exceptional examples of the breed are no longer being shown because judges are basing decisions on mental pictures rather than structural and functional understanding.

The crux of the matter is that *the head cannot and must not be overly massive.*



There is a deep median furrow that diminishes in depth from the stop to the "occiput".

This red nose bitch graphically shows what is meant by median furrow, stop, and "occiput".

Cheek muscles are prominent but free of wrinkles.

The top line of the muzzle is straight.

The lower jaw is well developed, wide and deep.

Lips are clean and tight.

Deep is described below however wide for the lower jaw can be visualized above.

For instance: Notice the lower jaw using the corners of the mouth as a marker are as wide or wider than the head between the ears, combined with the cheeks this gives a "round" shape to the head when viewed direction in front including the cheeks or a blunt wedge if the cheeks are ignored.

The jaw is closed by the "Temporal Fossa" muscle exerting pressure on the "Coronoid process".

The deeper the head at this point, (that is, between the "zygomatic arch" and the angular process of the bottom of the jaw) the more likely the dog is to have leverage advantage both in closing the jaw and in keeping it closed.

This is depth of lower jaw.

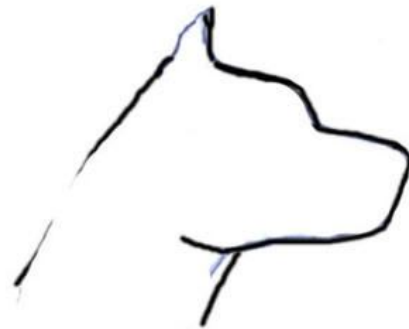
One should not be fooled by a large dome or crown on the head.

This is a serious exaggeration! - and adds no advantage to the dog - in fact the weight of this extra bone and muscle put the dog at a weight disadvantage and create unbalance.

MALE  
HEAD  
STYLE

Weak lower jaw  
Good Backjaw  
Poor angles on skull  
slightly short muzzle  
stop too shallow but good  
depth

Muzzle too  
short  
forehead  
too high  
weak lower  
jaw in  
proportion  
stop too  
deep and  
steep

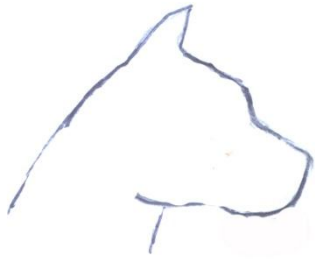


IDEAL MALE HEAD  
Good moderate and  
structurally functional  
Male head!  
Nothing exaggerated  
nothing lacking.

Slightly  
long  
muzzle  
stop to  
steep  
weak  
lower  
jaw  
weak  
back jaw  
good  
backskull

too steep  
angled skull  
weak lower  
jaw  
short  
muzzle  
very poor  
proportions  
stop is  
good

poor  
angled  
backskull  
stop is  
good  
slightly  
weak  
underjaw  
good  
backjaw

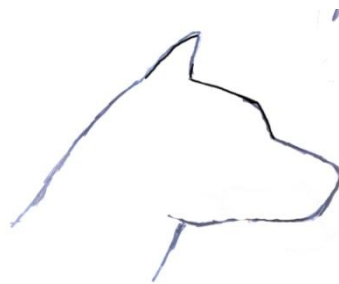


Bully style  
stop too deep and  
steep  
Muzzle short

FEMALE HEAD STYLE



Terrier Style  
Stop too shallow and sloped



Weak back jaw  
long backskull

IDEAL HEAD  
Good moderate female  
head  
No exaggerations  
Nothing weak

Weak lower jaw  
stop too steep  
backskull improper angle  
Muzzle too short

lacking lower jaw  
stop too shallow

Pointy muzzle  
weak backjaw

The above image provides excellent profile studies that apply directly the American Pit Bull Terrier.

The moderate male head and moderate female head both fit with the APBT standard.

As do the deviations from this proper type.

This image provides excellent example of proper moderate type and exaggerations and improper structure of the head as seen profile.

