

**ATAVI**  
**Associazione Tecnica Amatori Volpino Italiano**

**Explanatory Comment**  
**to**  
**Standard of the Volpino Italiano**

**Head**

The head is the principal fulcrum among the essential points of type also in the Volpino Italiano.

The typical head as a whole must be “short” and wide, i.e. not to appear too narrow and long. This beginning with the ascertainment that the “short” head draws convergent cranial-facial axes, as required by the standard; if more it is long, more the axes change becoming parallel or even divergent, so in contrast to type.

With the total length nearly 4/10 of height at the withers, which is almost the norm of dog breeds, what makes it visibly “short” especially is the skull more wide than long.

Other biometric point contributing to the “short” appearance of the head is the muzzle slightly shorter length than the skull.

The head with such biometric characteristics cannot in fact be neither narrow, nor long.

A “short” and wide head contributes greatly to provide the typical expression (cheerful, alert, awake and lively) why it promotes the concomitance of eyes in sub-frontal position taking the correct roundish shape.

The roundish eyes, thanks to their greatest aperture, in fact, have alert and lively expression of awake dog, always ready to perceive his surroundings, as it must make the Volpino Italiano respecting its historical function of “sentry of alert” (guard dog).

Follows that the eyes with the closed aperture up to draw a oval shape (characteristic of the German Spitz) do not represent the typical Volpino Italiano because lose much

of cheerful, alert, lively and awake expression, becoming like a “doze”, meaning “sleepy”, so with less potential for “sentry dog”.

The “short” and wide head also favors the more distant ears location in Volpino Italiano in comparison with related breeds (who have the narrowest skull), then our breed also in this characteristic that so much contributes to typical alert, awake and lively expression.

The approximation of ears in the Volpino Italiano is therefore subordinate to wide skull, which holds less approximated than in the German and Japanese Spitz, precisely so that their gait in “normal” attention, i.e. without excitement, shows up with external border of auricle placed vertically, while it is only the internal border to appear subsequently tilted.

Only when the Volpino Italiano is in a dither the ears are closest, assuming the position of borders both tilted, so the perpendicular dropped from the apex imaginarily divide into two equal parts the triangular shape of auricle (it should be noted that the gait of ears in the Volpino Italiano only in a dither is on the contrary always so in related breeds).

Eyes and ears as they are present in the “short” and wide head represent so distinctive features of the Volpino Italiano which determine the typical expression.

It should also be noted that the auricle affect on typical expression as well in relation to its length, which should be half the length of head, namely that, bending forward, it must be beyond the eyes. This relation is equivalent to an ear far longer than in the related breeds and it is for this reason that the short ears alter the typical expression of the Volpino Italiano why are characteristic of the German and Japanese Spitz.

## **SKULL**

We then described how important is in biometrical head, for the typical expression, the skull wider than long. This also makes the correct ovoid topline of skull in both directions (longitudinal and transversal). As ovoid it seems logical to understand an arched rope outline but not too much.

Oval topline of skull in turn draws the well marked stop and well developed frontal sinus.

The accentuation of skull, becoming round, loses the ovoid topline turning it to ball shape and also further on accentuating the stop up to the exaggerated 90-degree angle or almost, presenting consequently a set stop.

The whole of head with the skull so accentuated becomes very heavy and so disproportionate in the general appearance of the subject. A skull so it loses especially the typical expression because it positions the eyes in front and that position presents prominent the eyeball, causing a look grim and sad.

Nothing is worth that the cranial topline so faulty is still correlated to skull wider than long.

The outline is however also modified into narrow skull, present in long head, causing elusive stop and undeveloped frontal sinus.

A narrow skull, with the correlated negative characteristics above indicated, involves a degeneration of typicalness, wasting even the most basic foundations of type.

The concomitance of eyes placed more laterally and with increasingly closed shape, plus the skull becomes narrow, let understand how the head degenerate into a dilute type up to resemble to head of the Italian Greyhound, which is a type of dog very different from the Volpino Italiano. Also the expression as the Italian Greyhound doesn't suit at the Volpino Italiano.

## **MUZZLE**

Also for muzzle we have already considered the contribution that offers to the type when it is slightly shorter than skull.

We should also consider that it should be well full, that is with bone structure adequately developed in both jaws.

In case of deficiency of bone development in inferior jaw it is shorter than superior jaw and consequently with curved bones instead than rectilinear to draw the inferior line of muzzle. A so inferior jaw loses the chin that disappears under the superior jaw, causing a muzzle too pointed where the nose looks to acute superior angle instead than right.

The correctly developed inferior jaw, so well visible under the nose, also favors a fore width so from predispose the alignment of incisors, in turn well developed, on the contrary to inferior jaw lacks of bone development that, for lack of sufficient space, crosses the incisors, also less developed and so smaller.

An adequate bone development should logically have also the superior jaw, thus promoting not only a well developed nose, but also a harmonious connection of muzzle to skull. The lack of bone development of superior jaw is seen indeed

especially in difference in level caused in connection with the skull, where it contributes negatively to dig the suborbital region (of eyes) which, in turn, affects in making more cropping out the eyeball, consequently with altered expression.

## **BODY**

The standard requires the body inscribed in a square but it seems logical that also it is slightly into rectangle does not alter the type, which still remains one of the Volpino Italiano.

The body may indeed appear outwardly more or less rectangular, even if it is biometrically square, for effect of coat of breast and “trousers” (culottes in French or back hindquartes) more or less abundant.

The body but improves the general appearance of the Volpino Italiano especially when is compact and only the squaring of body gives compactness.

The body in square is besides the better corresponding to morphofunctional characteristics of the Volpino Italiano why it favors the ability of jump, which is fundamental in a prevalently dog jumper as ours. It also favors the gallop, gait in which the Volpino Italiano is predisposed.

## **TAIL**

The tail is not an unimportant element in the Volpino Italiano, why gives a certain value to general appearance. If it is of correct length, that is long slightly less than half of height at the withers, it approaches the neck, promoting the harmony of whole. A subject with the tail near the neck, in fact, is more compact of general appearance.

Follows that to get closer to neck, besides to correct length, the tail should rest on topline of body in right shape and not rolled up.

It seems obvious that the more it is rolled up, more it remains distant from neck, so lose compactness and harmony to general appearance.

When the tail tends only to a slight curvature it risks to fall to the side and also in this chance the compactness and harmony of general appearance lose something when leaving the topline of body discovered by plume of tail.

This means that more the tail is short, more it is faulty, coming less and less the effect of compactness and harmony of general appearance that contributes with its length and gait.

The very short tail, plus stay far away from neck, it is easily confused with the fault from disqualification of congenital partial lack of tail, so is possible understand the extreme seriousness of this problem not to be ignored.

## **LIMBS AND MOVEMENT**

The Volpino Italiano is naturally predisposed to jump and is so facilitated in gallop (sequence of jumping), which is so its congenial gait, thanks not only to body inscribed in a square but also to limbs with moderately open angles. If, in fact, the compact body to be in square makes it easy especially the jump, the same facility comes from middle angles of limbs.

The middle open joint angles, especially in hindquarters, produce the thrust to spring necessary to jump that, on the contrary, both angles too open and too closed cannot provide with equal effectiveness.

The hindquarter with angle too open is stiff, posing as some sort of “stilt”, so unable of thrust to cause the total impossibility to close and open itself to act from spring.

The same negative result damage the hindquarters too closed because, being already in position with closed angles, are incapables to “load the spring” sufficiently for the thrust during the opening of angles.

Before to take a leap, in fact, the dog closes the pelvic limb angles, with lowering of hindquarters, after for open them suddenly for obtain the necessary jump. A dog with pelvic limbs too closed loses the possibility to close the angles (being just already closed) for lower the hindquarters, so the jump is less in the functional effect to leap.

The bone segment of hindquarters fit for maintain the balance of angles in the Volpino Italiano is the tibia (lower thigh), that the standard requires somewhat less of length than the femur (thigh). Necessary that the tibia so length draws the angles of hindquarters according to grades required by the standard, which then are those attuned to corresponding angles of forequarters, precisely for maintain the balance between pelvic and thoracic limbs.

Follows that a modification in length of tibia loses the structural balance with damage of functional movement.

A tibia shorter than necessary is easy to see why it draws the hindquarters too open to result – as already mentioned – stiff, so the movement is insufficient in amplitude and taking of soil for short steps.

The longer tibia, which draws the hindquarter too angled, instead can deceive why it favors the trot. The hindquarter too angled, in fact, is prerogative of breeds predisposed at trot, but this is a gait not in accordance to characteristics of the Volpino Italiano, precisely jumper and galloping dog for excellence.

In the Volpino Italiano the hindquarter too angled, due to longer tibia than required by standard, is also to be inadequately supported by forequarter that keeps unchanged the correct angles for jump and gallop.

Follows that the angles of hindquarters not corresponding with the angles of forequarters cause the loss of structural balance, so the considerable thrust of pelvic limbs, with their ample taking of soil, is not supported by the same spurt of thoracic limbs.

The structural balance that result so impaired cause to such Volpino Italiano the fall on fore limbs and for expert eyes don't have importance if the handler lift the forequarters with the leash pulled towards upward for avoid a walk so too awkward.

The above-mentioned would-be structural balance also presents the “hackney” forequarter that is not only antiaesthetic but especially antifunctional. A dog with such incorrect building, especially in less worst of chances when the gait is not from “hackney”, so averting a antiaesthetic movement, can also present a nice trot from behold and even spectacular for untrained eyes, due to greatest thrust of much angled hindquarter, more still if the handler holds just taut the leash upward to impose an artificial balance. There is however to be noted that the greatest thrust of too angled hindquarter, also if more scenographic, thanks to artificial balance offered by the handler with the leash taut in manner aforesaid, produces only an optical effect that has nothing from give in terms of functionality of movement.

It is therefore of an useless trot, yet the Volpino Italiano don't have need of choreographic dynamics, but of a purely functional movement.

The trot is the gait evaluated in the ring of shows but the Volpino Italiano must to trot only according to its natural predisposition to jump and gallop. This means that the trot properly executed by a correctly constructed Volpino Italiano is “normal”, that is the footprint of hindquarter should cover the foot of forequarter. The covering of ground is therefore still ample but not so oblong from allow to foot of hindquarter of surpass the foot of forequarter.

The “normal” trot is guarantee of a Volpino Italiano with a balanced building by structural balance donated by the hindquarters corresponding to forequarters relatively to angles maintained corrects by ideal length of tibia.

## COAT

Being a long haired breed, the coat is a factor that can improve or worsen the general appearance of the Volpino Italiano, depending the conditions of form of the moment. We must in any case observe the characteristics in fair union between the cover coat and undercoat, as relatively to texture.

The fair union between the two types of coats is present during the most profusion, which obviously is the best moment for the general appearance of the Volpino Italiano.

Only in the best moment in which the undercoat is fully present it is favored the typical condition of cover coat to show up well raised.

It seems logical that a poor undercoat does not allow to cover coat of remain raised, so it tends to fall.

To aid the cover coat for remain raised is also the length. An excess of length of cover coat makes it fall.

However remain essential the fair union why if the cover coat is poor and consequently prevails the undercoat, the coat loses its function of full protective involucre.

The most efficient function is when the texture is correct, namely woolly in undercoat and glassy in cover coat.

The glassy textire is present when the cover coat is consistent to touch, to point of crunching among your fingers.

The glassy cover coat is essential not for aesthetics question, but for act from hydro-repellent and self-cleaning, that only that texture can guarantee. The dust in glassy texture doesn't catch on, keeping clean the cover coat, but especially it repels the rain easing the drying. Dust and rain so do not penetrate into undercoat, which is in turn clean but mostly dry, continuing to act as thermo-insulating of skin.

Just when it is wet and while it is in moment of rapid drying you can notice more easily if the texture of a Volpino Italiano is correctly glassy why it is of “electrified” appearance, i.e. it has the same effect of wool-glass in same wet condition.

When it is dry the glassy texture can be notice not only feeling crunched the coat among the fingers, as mentioned above, but also ascertaining the density and strength. The correctly glassy cover coat, in fact, is not light and only if light comes “erect”. The typical coat of the Volpino Italiano so is not “erect”, but raised, as already said.

The typical glassy texture can also be associated to a specific tonality of color in white variety as red variety. The white coat is therefore of “milk” tonality, while the red coat is of “deer” tonality. Only the milk-white and deer-red are dense just in sintony to glassy texture. The light coat, instead, loses the density, so in structure, as in tonality of color, whereby it becomes white-snow (polish) or light-red (almost orange).

## **SIZE**

The factore of height at withers does not require any interpretation, but only application, as it is well indicated by the standard. The height at withers, in fact, is required from 27 to 30 cm for males and from 25 to 28 cm for females, so this is the indication of principal reference.

The standard admits also a tolerance for aforementioned measures and, whether it’s 2 or 3 cm, this means that it is still admitted a good variability as it is enough ample considering a small size breed as the Volpino Italiano. It must, however, apply correctly the meaning of “tolerance”, which has the zootechnical aim of not lose potential reproducers only for mere size question.

## **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

The general appearance is the synthesis of judgment, as well as the beginning and the end of the evaluation, why everything has to be conducted to total somatic figure of small format, well compact and harmonic, with a compromise between qualities and faults, which gives most value to type, up to forgive a possible fault as long as it doesn’t affect the type itself: only the faults that modify the type should be severely penalized, why the type, if there isn’t, can’t get it even with the selection; don’t have to sacrifice the type severely penalizing a fault that can be eliminated with the selection.



We must also avoid confusion by believing that the general appearance of the Volpino Italiano is “cob”, while this term means “small and sturdy” and this is inherent to the general appearance of the Pug and not of the Volpino Italiano, with the structural difference between these two breeds easily denotable even from neophytes; the general appearance of the Volpino Italiano is instead “hunter”, that is a country dog which, although small, is an agile galloper and jumper: a subject very long and with too angled hindquarters will never be to better of functionality.

Relatively to sexual dimorphism, masculinity and femininity are not factors correlated only to height: the standard of the Volpino Italiano, in fact, permit that are of ideal height both males of 27 cm and females of 28 cm and with the tolerance the females can reach to 31 cm, so with a difference still greater than a male of 27 cm, which can mislead; it is good therefore do not simply evaluate the sexual dimorphism only on factor of size, but evaluating the general appearance.

We must not be fooled even only from the long coat which can make very showy also a subject little or not at all typical: the long coat should further on enhance a typical Volpino Italiano, which remains so even when it is not in good condition of coat.

In conclusive short is necessary bear in mind that the Volpino Italiano should not remember the Kleinspitz or the Zwergspitz (Pomeranian), but neither the larger Mittelspitz or Japanese Spitz, as must not give the impression of looking like a miniaturized Samoyed.