



# The Rottweiler's Head

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## ADRK/FCI Breed Standard

[www.adrk.de/Downloads/Zucht/FCI\\_Rottweiler\\_Standard\\_2000\\_D.pdf](http://www.adrk.de/Downloads/Zucht/FCI_Rottweiler_Standard_2000_D.pdf)

The Rottweiler's head is one of the main features I love about the Rottweiler. Lately, I see a trend that disturbs me, not only as a judge, but more so as a Rottweiler lover. I see so many Rottweiler heads that have nothing to do with the breed standard. I call them "fashion-heads," and personally, I hate them!

I will not focus here on all the details that are in the ADRK/FCI breed standard; but, I will focus on a couple that I think are now becoming a major problem in our breed. I will not use any photos of dogs because I do not want to insult or point a finger at anyone. I just want to explain what the ADRK/FCI breed standard says, and I hope this article will be a wake-up call for some and an eye-opener for others.

### The Standard

The ADRK/FCI breed standard is very clear in describing the head of a Rottweiler. Unlike many other breeds, there are many details in the standard about the head. I agree that you can interpret them in several ways; but, some things you can simply measure or see.

Let me start by reviewing the parts of the breed standard that describe the head of the Rottweiler. The standard can be found on the websites of the ADRK and the FCI.

### F.C.I. Standard Nr. 147 / 19.06.2000 / GB

#### Rottweiler

TRANSLATOR: Mrs. Chris Seidler

ORIGIN: Germany

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE VALID ORIGINAL STANDARD: 06.04.2000

UTILIZATION: Companion, service and working dog

CLASSIFICATION FCI Group 2 (Pinscher and Schnauzer type, Molossian type and Swiss Mountain- and Cattle Dogs and other breeds)

Section 2.1 Molossian type, Mastiff type With working trial.

#### HEAD:

##### CRANIAL REGION:

**Skull:** Of medium length, broad between the ears. Forehead line moderately arched as seen from the side. Occipital bone well developed without being conspicuous.

**Stop:** Well defined.

##### FACIAL REGION

**Nose:** Nose well developed, more broad than round with relatively large nostrils, always black.

**Muzzle:** The foreface should appear neither elongated nor shortened in relation to the cranial region. Straight nasal bridge, broad at base, moderately tapered.

Lips: Black, close fitting, corner of the mouth not visible, gum as dark as possible.

Jaws/**Teeth:** Upper and lower jaw strong and broad. Strong complete dentition (42 teeth) with scissor bite, the upper incisors closely overlapping the lower incisors.

Cheeks: Zygomatic arches pronounced.

**Eyes:** Of medium size, almond shaped, dark brown in color. Eyelids close fitting.

Ears: Medium-sized, pendant, triangular, wide apart, set on high. With the ears laid forward close to the head the skull appears to be broadened.

Neck: Strong, of fair length, well muscled, slightly arched, free from throatiness, without dewlap.

**Skin:** Skin on the head: Overall tight fitting. When the dog is alert, the forehead may be slightly wrinkled.

**FAULTS:** Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

**Head:** Hound-type head. Narrow, light, too short, long or coarse head. Flat forehead (lack of stop or too little stop).

**Foreface:** Long or pointed muzzle; split nose; Roman nose (convex nasal bridge) or dish-faced (concave nasal bridge); aquiline nose; pale or spotted nose (butterfly nose).

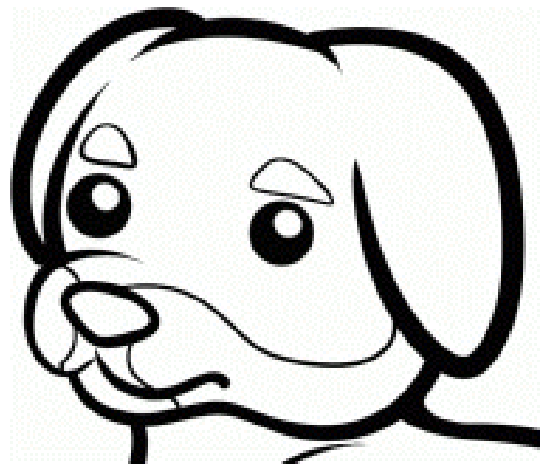
**Lips:** Pendulous, pink or patchy; corner of lips visible.

**Jaws:** Narrow lower jaw.

**Bite:** Pincer bite.

**Cheeks:** Strongly protruding.

**Eyes:** Light, deep set. Also too full and round eyes; loose eyelids.



**Ears:** Set on too low, heavy, long, slack or turned backwards. Also flying ears or ears not carried symmetrically.

**Skin:** Wrinkles on head.

**ELIMINATING FAULTS:**

**General:** Distinct reversal of sexual type, i.e., feminine dogs or masculine bitches.

**Teeth:** Overshot or undershot bite, wry mouth; lack of one incisors, one canine, one premolar and one molar.

**Eyes:** Entropion, ectropion, yellow eyes, different colored eyes.

**Facial Region**

The ADRK instructional diagram, which is printed in almost every catalogue at a German show and posted on their website at [www.adrk.de](http://www.adrk.de), states (Figure 2):

Oberkopf 1.5 / Nasen Rücken 1

This translates to:

Skull 1.5 / Muzzle 1

**What they mean by this.**

Skull: the centimeters from point B - through C - to D

Muzzle: the centimeters from point A - to B (Figure 1)

Explanation of measuring points of the skull and muzzle

- A: Tip of the nose
- B: Start of the stop
- C: Top of the forehead
- D: Occiput

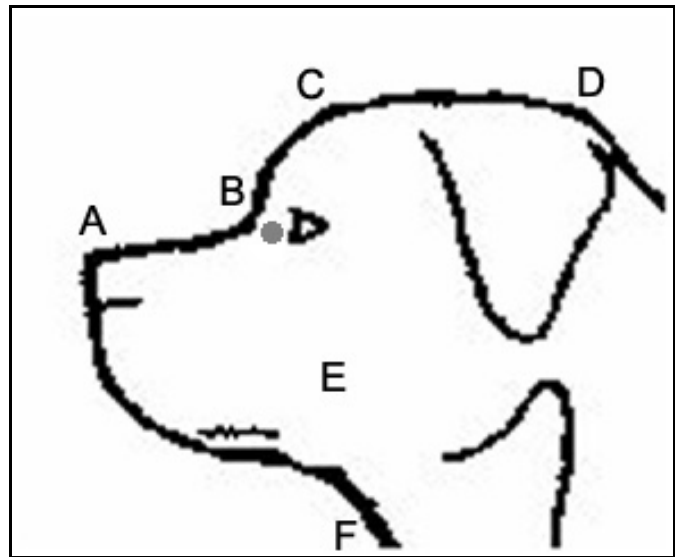


Figure 1



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**Einzelbezeichnungen, Proportionen und Winklungen des Rottweilers**

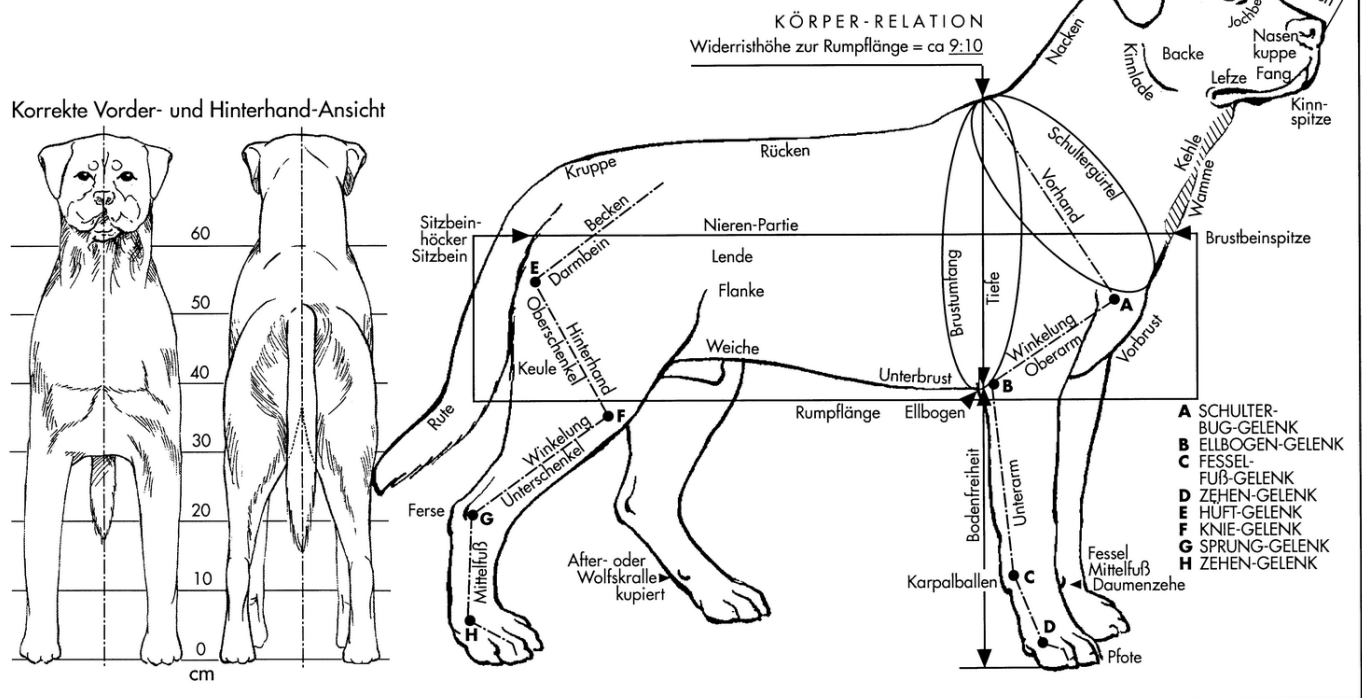


Figure 2

With a measuring device, you are able to measure the centimeters of both parts. (Figure 3)



If you look at the numbers, it is quite easy to see that many Rottweilers do not meet the ideal. However, some Rottweilers go totally off with these numbers.

For example:  
 If the skull is 18 centimeters of length, you should divide this by 1.5 to get the ideal length of muzzle. This makes  $18 : 1.5 = 12$  centimeters.

Figure 3

Length of skull in centimeters	Divided by 1.5	Length of muzzle should ideally be in centimeters
20 cm		13.3 cm
19 cm		12.6 cm
18 cm		12.0 cm
17 cm		11.3 cm
16 cm		10.6 cm
15 cm		10.0 cm
14 cm		09.3 cm
13 cm		08.6 cm
12 cm		08.0 cm

When you are a regular visitor to dog shows, or look around at social media, you can see that the new trend is the shorter the muzzle, the better. Just look at all the "likes" a photo of a Rottweiler with a too-short muzzle gets on Facebook. Sometimes I find it difficult not to react to those photos, but as a judge, I'm walking on thin ice if I do so. Therefore, I only comment on these kinds of dogs when I'm judging. That is the place for me to make my opinion clear and to explain the correct head conforming to the standard. Even that is sometimes hard, because dogs with overdone heads can otherwise be very sound and correct. Then it is great that you can do a written report, as there you can state the faults of the head as well as the beautiful parts of body and movement. I realize that many judging reports will not get any further than the owner/breeder of the dog, especially when a judge says "bad" things about the dog. Then, if we are lucky, only the end result of Excellent will be found. Even worse, we may not find the results at all when a dog gets "just" a Very Good rating. Still, I truly hope that my judging report and explanation in and around the show ring will open the eyes of some people.

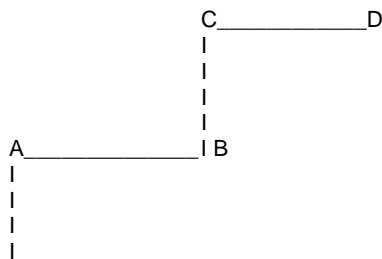
Several problems come with the too-short muzzle. The straight nasal bridge (between point A and B, Figure 1) as described in the Muzzle part of the breed standard is often not straight anymore because of wrinkling of the skin on the nasal bridge. These dogs have more problems with breathing; you can hear them as they make a kind of snoring sound like an English bulldog or Pug (this is not meant to put down those breeds, just to explain what I mean). When the weather is warm, the breathing often gets heavier.

Also, these dogs with too-short muzzles can have problems in the protection work of the IPO sport. They simply cannot grip as well as the dog with the correct length of muzzle. Some people do not care about the IPO sport, but still we have a working breed. In my eyes, even if you do not want to do the IPO sport, the dog has to be able to do the work. The teeth become a problem with the short muzzles. They have less room to fit in the jaw simply because there is no room. Teeth stand across or next to each other, and even become smaller. Teeth are one of the main things that can cause elimination at a dog show or breed survey. Evolution is a beautiful thing, and nature will simply adjust to things that we as humans alter. With breeding, we can make something different in just a few generations, but going back is so much harder!

## Forehead

In the standard, it states: Skull, forehead line moderately arched as seen from the side. Stop, well defined.

This means that the line between points B, C and D are moderately arched and that the stop point B is well defined (see Figure 1). There is nothing in the breed standard that states that a forehead should be high. Some of the "fashion heads" have a very high forehead connecting to a flat skull. The part between point B and C goes straight up, making an angle of almost 90 degrees with the muzzle (A and B) and a 90-degree angle with the top of the forehead (C). This is something we are looking for in some Mastiff-like breeds, not the Rottweiler. The moderate arch is totally gone.



A: Tip of the nose  
B: Start of the Stop  
C: Top of the forehead  
D: Occiput

## General appearance

The dogs with the extreme heads that many people appreciate come with another problem. In the standard, it states that distinct reversal of sexual type, i.e., feminine dogs and masculine bitches, is an eliminating fault. Don't get me wrong, I like a female that has a good head on her body, but when a dog enters the ring, one of the first things I look at is the head. I have been faced with females in my ring where I had to look under the dog to see if it was really a female. Body wise, these females were Excellent, but in head type overdone in almost every way. For me, these dogs will not win their class. Depending on how the rest of the body and movement are, I may not even give them an Excellent. If the body is also masculine, then the decision to disqualify should be made. That's not an easy decision, and luckily, I have not had to personally do this yet!

## Skin

In the standard, it states: Skin on the head overall tight fitting. When the dog is alert, the forehead may be slightly wrinkled. Sometimes I see Rottweilers with so much excess skin that they even have wrinkles when they sleep. This is when I use the phrase "the head could/must be dryer." This excess skin is something we see on several Mastiff-like breeds, but is named as a fault in our standard.

## Eyes

The last part of the head that I want to address is the eyes. In the standard, it states: Of medium size, almond shaped, dark brown in color, eyelids close fitting. When I look at the Rottweiler at this moment, it is almost rare to see a Rottweiler with a nice dark brown, medium sized almond shaped eye (Figure 5). I see so many Rottweilers with big, rounded eyes (Figure 4). A majority of the dogs with the "fashion heads" have these problems, more or less. It makes sense because the form of the skull is so different from that of the Rottweiler that meets the standard. Therefore, it is almost linked to a changed form of the eye sockets. It would be very interesting to

see x-rays of the skull of a correct head and that of a "fashion head" Rottweiler. Personally, I think we will be shocked by the differences that we see.

Another problem is an eye that appears to lie too deep in the socket. Sometimes it goes together with the excess skin. Due to the many wrinkles and the excess skin that comes with it, the part between the stop (B), top of the skull (C) and occiput (D) (Figure 1), the eye looks like it is lying deep in the socket.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Again, this article is not meant to insult or point a finger. I'm not even saying that we do not need the "fashion head" dogs in our breed. Sometimes you can use a dog like that to improve something in your bloodline. I just want everybody to be careful and have a good look at the path they are taking. If you go for the "fashion head" dog, do not be surprised if you do not get the Excellent first place at a dog show. A dog show is meant to find out which dog comes the closest to the breed standard!

Yes, you can interpret the breed standard in different ways. This is what makes showing a fun sport-sometimes you win, sometimes you don't. However, when a judge says that it is too much, please take a good honest look at the dog and the standard. Then make up your own mind if you just "like" the dog or if it best meets the standard!

*Until we meet again!*  
Yvonne