

THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB OF SA INC



SHOW CLASS INSTRUCTION MANUAL Guidelines



THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB OF SA Inc

AFFILIATED WITH:

“DogsSA” - The South Australian Canine Assoc. Inc (SACA) &
The German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia Inc

FOREWORD

The contents of this manual includes instructions, articles and illustrations which are there to educate and supply general knowledge of all facets of handling and exhibiting the **German Shepherd Dog**.

It is therefore essential that Instructors possess and understand this information, as they become the teachers, and in turn influence and guide, both experienced and novice handlers, in their instruction and practical demonstrations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria for sharing with the German Shepherd Dog Club of South Australia their Show Instructors Manual on which this is based.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SHOW TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

To be eligible, a candidate must fulfill the following requirements:

1. To have been a member of the GSDC of SA for at least 2 years immediately preceding the date of invitation or application.
2. To attend lectures on the breed, training, canine behaviour or any other topic which will expand and deepen an understanding and knowledge of the German Shepherd Dog. The GSDC of SA from time to time will offer such lectures.
3. To be an active participant in GSDC of SA activities.
4. To have the ability to teach people and to display decorum in all circumstances.
5. Ideally, to have been involved in exhibiting German Shepherds in the Specialist ring for at least 2 years prior to application. *Note: This does not mean ONLY as a handler, as exhibitors, double handlers and breeders have much to offer in regard to training.*

GENERAL NOTES ON TRAINING

As a show instructor, it is important to understand how and why a dog learns. With this knowledge you can ensure that the most is made from every training class. Training a dog to act in a desired manner should be fairly straightforward and relatively easy.

Although we are teaching different exercises from those in an obedience class, the principles remain the same. As instructors, we should ensure that the training methods we employ are always positive and enjoyable for the dog. Dogs learn by experience, and are therefore more likely to want to repeat an action that they find pleasurable. Likewise, it is not likely that a dog will wish to repeat an unpleasant experience. Therefore, we should aim to make the dog's training an event in which he finds pleasure. Dogs respond well to the use of food, toys and verbal/physical praise, and these tools should be used consistently by the handler/owner, who should be advised to prepare for the training class by bringing along the necessary items every time.

In the early (puppy hood) phase, long before we start our actual formal training, we can begin by conditioning the dog to pleasant stimuli. Play games of tug, ball chasing and hide and seek every day. All of these will build a strong bond between handler and pup, as well as heightening the pup's prey drive. These are essential building blocks for future training. If we can get the pup to develop a strong desire toward a particular toy, or article, this can be used to our advantage in later training. We can also condition the pups to react positively to sound. By choosing which sound (whistle, horn, squeaky toy etc.) a handler may want to use in later training (double handling), they can gain a positive response by pairing the sound with something the puppy likes. Food is a very good way of doing this. Simply make the desired noise, and then reward the pup immediately with a tasty treat. Repetition of this exercise will quickly focus the pup to the chosen sound.

During training, the dogs should be rewarded whenever they perform the required task. If the dog has been asked to stand, and does so, the reward should be **immediate**, upon completion of task. Likewise, after completing its lap on the individual, the dog should receive an **immediate** reward. Choice of the reward is up to the handler/owner. Rewards are anything that the dog perceives as pleasurable. It should be noted; that most people encourage the dog to work by enticing it with a toy or some food, but some of them will actually forget to give the reward **immediately** the dog has earned it. If this practice is allowed to continue, the dog will quickly lose its enthusiasm. After all, what is the point of chasing something you never get to catch? We all want to see our dogs willing and happy to work, and if the process of training is consistently punctuated with **correctly timed** rewards, this will be the outcome. These principles apply to both puppies and adult dogs.

As an instructor, you should ensure that handlers/owners are made aware of these techniques, and that they bring the dog's favorite toy and some food treats with them into class, **including the adult classes**. There is no point in conditioning the pups to respond to these stimuli if they are not continued in later training. Remember, we want to make the training fun for the dog, thus motivating it to perform consistently and happily.

We have established that dogs learn from experience, and will repeat with enthusiasm, things that they find pleasurable. People are pretty much the same. For people to enjoy your class, you must take with you, a positive, upbeat attitude. Any criticism should be given in a friendly manner. Never belittle or demean a class member. People also like a pat on the back for a job well done. So don't forget to remark on the positives. Remember, you are not only looking at the performance of the dogs, but those of the handler/owners as well.

From time to time, you may be asked a question to which you do not know the answer. Don't panic, you are not expected to know everything. If this happens, don't hazard a guess at what you think could be the answer. Be honest and say you don't know, but that you will find out and get back to them. Having said that, you must follow through, and it is suggested you ask the advice of a Breed Surveyor/Judge. By doing this, you will not only help the person who asked you, but also further your own knowledge.

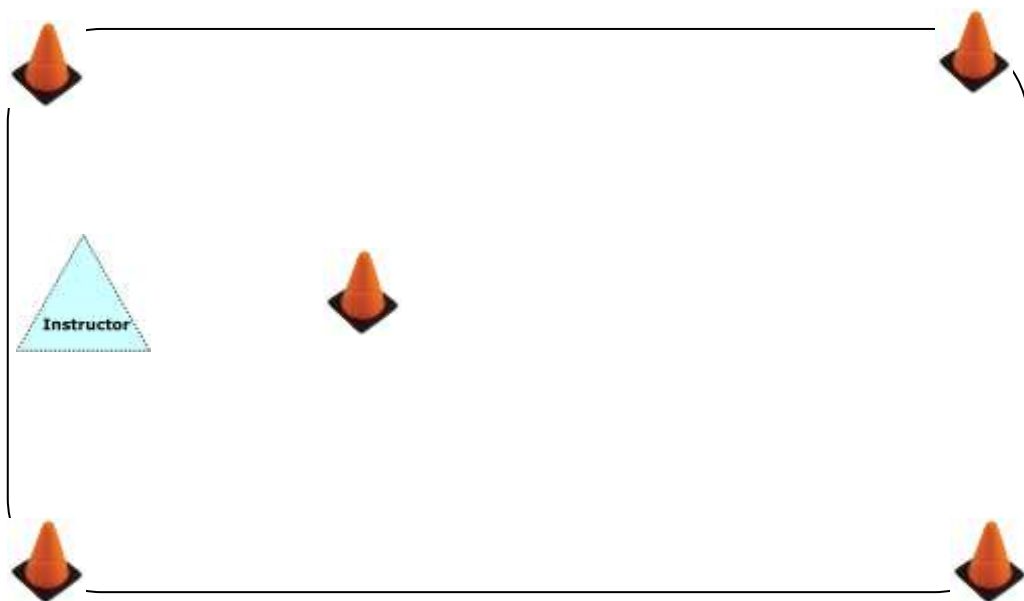
BASIC LAYOUT OF RING & EQUIPMENT

The ring, as a minimum, should be set up with 4 corner “witches hats”. An extra hat can be used as a guide for the “up and back” exercise if required.

The size of the training ring should be constructed based on the number of dogs in the class. If the adult class comprises relatively large numbers ensure that the ring is big enough for the dogs to stride out in.

You will need to obtain the measuring stick from the Clubhouse and ensure that a licensed person is available if the gun test is required. In summer months it is good to remind participants to “water their dogs” at the completion of class.

The Club Secretary has a list of licensed persons.



SPECIALIST SHOW TRAINING CLASS – ADULT DOGS

The points below are the basics to taking a Specialist Show Training Class, the order in which they are performed is not of great importance. It should be remembered by all Instructors that these classes are not meant to be a fitness or an endurance exercise for the dogs. These classes are designed to cover the mechanics of showing dogs and to assist handlers, double handlers etc to learn.

In some circumstances, especially leading up to a show, the number of handlers in class may be high. Do not be afraid to ask someone who is watching and not involved to assist with individuals. This helps to move the class along and keeps everyone interested. If this is done, instructors should work at opposite ends.

1. Call the class into the ring.
2. Instruct the handlers to stand their dogs. Check how this is done and give feedback.
3. Move the class approximately 3 to 4 times around the ring, as they would for warm-up laps at a show. It is important here, to remind handlers that this warm-up should be taken seriously, as it is the first impression the judge will get of the dogs. If the dog is not settled and working well during these laps, it will fail to take the judge's eye and could also have a negative impact. The term "warm-up laps" is actually misleading. Handlers should be instructed to warm their dogs up outside the ring, before they enter.
4. Place the measuring stick over every dog.
5. Commence Individuals. (checking teeth, testicles, stance etc)
6. Move the dog up and back. (ensuring dog is under control)
7. Walk the dog once around the ring follows by gaiting the dog once around the ring. This can be varied with loose lead and off lead options. Ensure the dog is rewarded on completion of individual, preferably with favorite toy.
8. Restand the class.
9. Move the class around the ring approximately twice, and then commence changing the positions of the dogs. (remember to move every dog)
10. Stop and stand the class.
11. Commence up and back in groups of 4 or 5 dogs, then gait them once or twice around the ring/
12. Restand the class.
13. Gun Test the dogs in groups of 4 or 5, standing approximately 15 meters in front of the dogs, noting wind direction. Wind direction should come from behind the dogs i.e.; the sound of the shot should not be carried directly into the dogs' faces. The dogs should be standing and on loose leads, facing the Instructor and spaced approximately 2 meters apart. Note: Gun shall only be used by a licensed person.
14. Temperament test the dogs.
15. One on one - dog on loose lead, approach the dog from front on, noting reaction. If dog is unsure do not continue.
Crowd Test - dogs to move through a crowd of talking and moving people. This is particularly important leading up to a Survey. *Note: common sense is to be used when performing temperament tests and no dog should be forced to endure such if they show apprehension.*
16. Thank and dismiss the class.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN CONDUCTING A CLASS

IN GENERAL

Ensure that dogs are handled gently at all times and that all handlers/owners give praise to their animals.

IN STANCE

1. Dogs are not propped.
2. Dogs are not overstretched.
3. Dog's forelegs and rear pasterns are perpendicular.
4. Dogs are not standing with their legs too wide or too narrow at the front.
5. That the dogs inside Hind Quarter Right is not too far under the body as this unbalances the dog and tends to steepen the croup. Ensure that the outside Hind Quarter Left is in line with the torso.
6. Dogs head is not held too high or too low.
7. Ensure that the handler is not leaning over or falsifying the dog in stance, eg. pushing down on the croup.
8. Ensure that the collar is not resting on the dog's neck and that the lead is not over the back, or between the dog's legs.
9. Ensure dogs are well spaced out and not too close to the dog in front.

IN MOVEMENT

1. When doing the up and backs ensure that the dog is under complete control. e.g. forelegs on the ground, dog is next to the handler at a slow pace.
2. Ensure that the handlers keep their dogs at least 3 feet behind the handler in front.
3. Ensure that the handlers shorten their leads at the corners, thus controlling their dogs.
4. Ensure that the handler is always in balance with his dog.
5. Ensure that the handler has the right length of lead for their dog. Some dogs look better on a shorter length of lead.
6. Check that the dogs are not fatigued, particularly puppies.
7. Ensure that the handlers leads are not dragging on the ground when walking or gaiting
8. Check that the handlers are not holding their leads too tight or too high.
9. Check and control the double handling.

DO'S

1. Explain to the handlers that they should have complete control over their dog. It is most important to adjust their pace to be in complete harmony with their dogs.
2. Check that if the dog is wearing a correction chain, it is on dead lock.
3. Check all collars. A correctly fitted "show" collar is preferable.
4. Check handlers have correct leads, which should be approximately 8 feet long.
5. Check handlers have the appropriate footwear.
6. Advise handlers of the benefits of wearing practical and complimentary clothing to enhance their exhibits.
7. Make sure all instructions given are loud, clear and are understood by the handlers.
8. Advise handlers to watch the judge and listen to instructions when exhibiting.

9. Advise handlers of the benefits of the presentation of their dogs in a clean and well-groomed condition, with particular attention to ears, teeth and nails.
10. Advise handlers that their dogs individual performance is of utmost importance as this could affect their call out position.
11. Advise handlers not to place themselves between the judge and their dogs. e.g. the dog should always be on the handlers left side.
12. Encourage the handlers to show the dogs bite and teeth preferably with the dog sitting.
13. Advise handlers to praise their dogs.
14. Advise handlers to be good sports at all times.

General rules for instructors:

- if required give a practical demonstration.
- Compliment handlers if they present and handle their dogs well.
- always give constructive criticism
- be courteous at all times
- use common sense at all times.
- most of all enjoy the class.

DONT'S

1. Do not allow over shadowing.
2. Do not allow handlers to do their own thing. They must follow instructions e.g. around witches hats.
3. Do not allow the mistreatment of dogs by handler - Report to Club Official.
4. Do not allow smoking by handlers or officials within the ring.
5. Do not tolerate any unruly dogs to disrupt the class. Ask handler to move to the back of the class and request assistance from another instructor present if needed.
6. Do not allow aggressive dogs to remain in the middle of a class, move to the back of the class – Common sense must prevail in regard to dogs that show signs of aggression. Placing them at the back of the class, with no animals following, may allow them time to settle. If the aggression continues ask them to stand aside and discuss with them and/or other Club Officials potential ways to assist the dog.
7. Do not eyeball dogs (stare the dog in the eye).
8. Do not use the measuring stick to check the height of dogs, this is purely a familiarization exercise.
9. Never give critiques on the conformation of a dog. Remember you are a show instructor, *not* a *judge*.
10. Never give veterinary advice.

SPECIALIST SHOW TRAINING CLASS – PUPPIES

PUPPY CLASS – MAXIMUM TIME 30 MINUTES

1. Call the class into the ring.
2. Instruct the handlers to stand their dogs. Check how this is done and give feedback.
3. Move the class twice around the ring.
4. Stand the class and use measuring stick as a familiarity exercise.
5. Commence individual; (checking teeth, testicles, stance etc.)
6. Move pup up and back
7. Gait the pup in a small circle, ensuring reward at end by use of toy, food or praise.
8. Re-stand the class.
9. Move the class twice around the ring, commence changing position of puppies.
10. Stop and stand the class.
11. Do basic one on one with each puppy.
12. Thank and dismiss the class.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN CONDUCTING A CLASS

Refer to pages 5-6, plus note additional points below for puppies.

DO'S

1. Encourage puppies to come to you on their own.
2. Take care when checking puppy's teeth as their gums will be sore due to teething. Do not force a teething puppy. Advise owner to practice at home gently.
3. Always approach puppies from the front and speak with a gentle voice.
4. If you notice a puppy is far too heavy or light in condition, inform the owner when the puppy is presented for his individual.

DONT'S

1. Do not measure puppies.
2. Do not temperament test or gun test puppies. Basic one on one is fine and cap gun only if available.
3. Do not force yourself on an unsure puppy, advise owners to socialize so that it will gain in confidence.
4. Do not allow puppies to pull too hard into the lead as they are still growing and this could be damaging to growth plates, joints and ligamentation (control double handling).
5. Do not allow puppies to become fatigued. This is particularly important and if an owner does not recognize this, then they should be advised that their puppy has had enough for that training session. Also be aware that young animals will fatigue very quickly in hot conditions. If at all possible, such classes should be conducted in the shade, or kept to a short session.
6. Do not force teething pups to undergo teeth check. Advise owners to practice at home gently.

DOUBLE HANDLING

Notes from a lecture on ***Judge and Breeder Responsibility*** by Nikki Ireland-Jones. Extracted from GSDCA National Review, March 1991

In regard to puppy classes a Judge or Instructor should be in total control of excessive double handling of puppies. The hard pulling that our German Shepherds exhibit is not correct and can be most damaging to the bones and particularly the ligaments of the growing puppy. The ligaments, in some cases, will never tighten completely in the adult.

Many exhibitors, owners and sometimes judges or Instructors, are under the misguided belief that their dogs look better if they are pulling hard. The well-trained dog that works evenly without pulling uncontrollably and shows the alertness associated with pulling towards an owner does give a wonderful illusion of power and strength.

However the working GSD does not work the sheep and run the furrow with head held high in the air straining into a lead. These dogs work for hours and stay at a trot with head held level with the body. Hence, it is much easier to assess a GSD on a loose lead. The Judge at a show can then assess the trueness of anatomy and balance.

Puppies are more distorted than older dogs by pulling into the lead. Many of them fall heavily into the centre of the ring and away from the tension of the lead. Resistance against the lead results in a downward motion and therefore gives the picture of dogs falling heavily on the forehand.

Judges and Instructors hold the solution to the problem as they possess the power to stop double handing of young puppies.

GSD IN STANCE

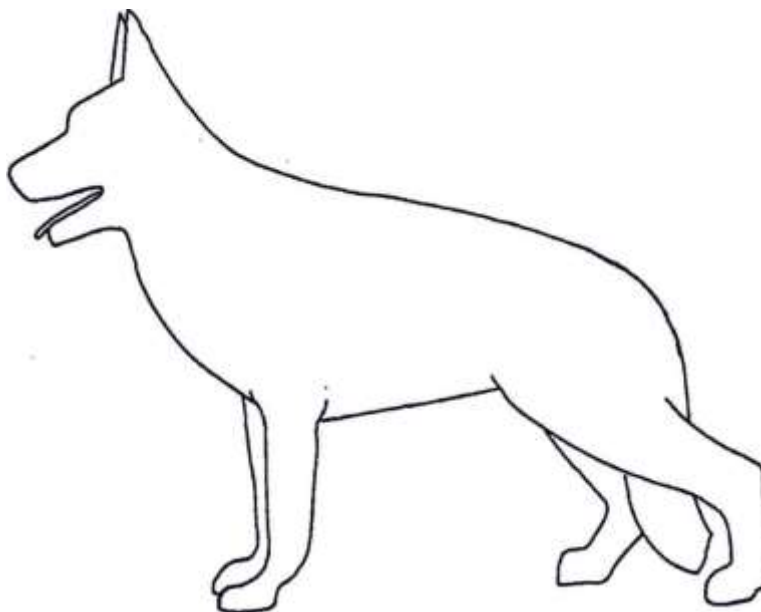


Figure 1

Correct stance, Dog is in balance and is unexaggerated

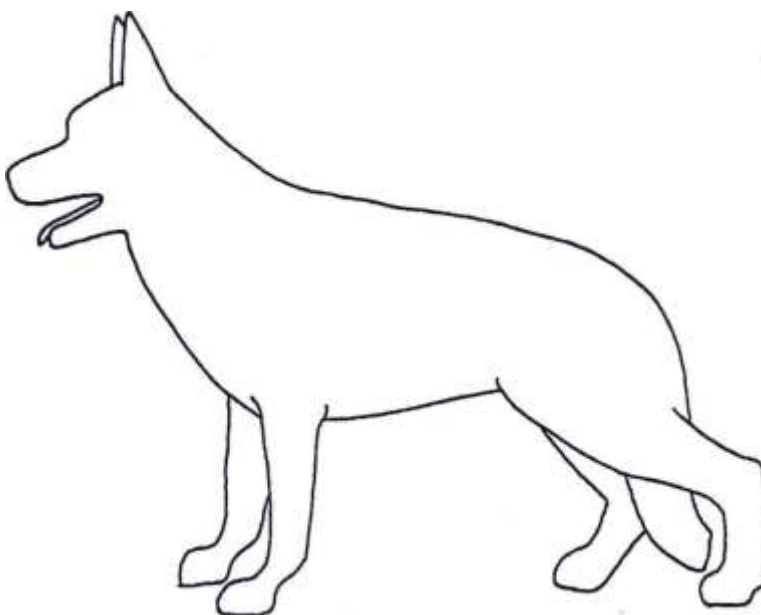


Figure 2

Forelegs are not parallel, slightly lowers the wither

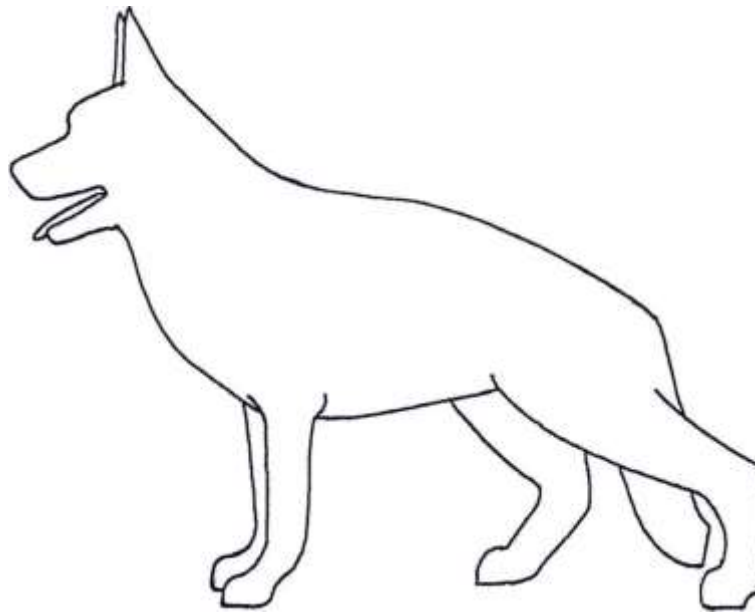


Figure 3

Inside hind leg too far forward, exaggerates the angle of the croup

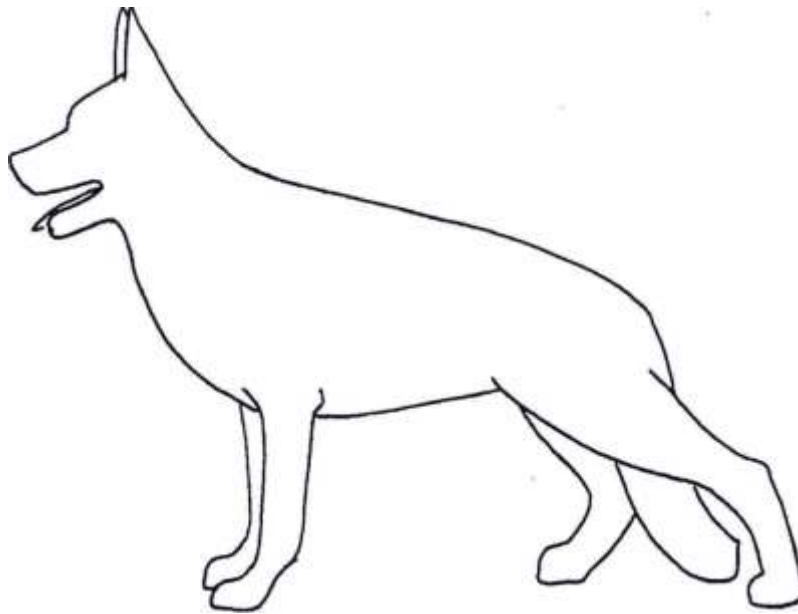


Figure 4

Overstretched in the HQ, this exaggerates the angle of the topline and tends to make the HQ look narrower and lacking in angulation

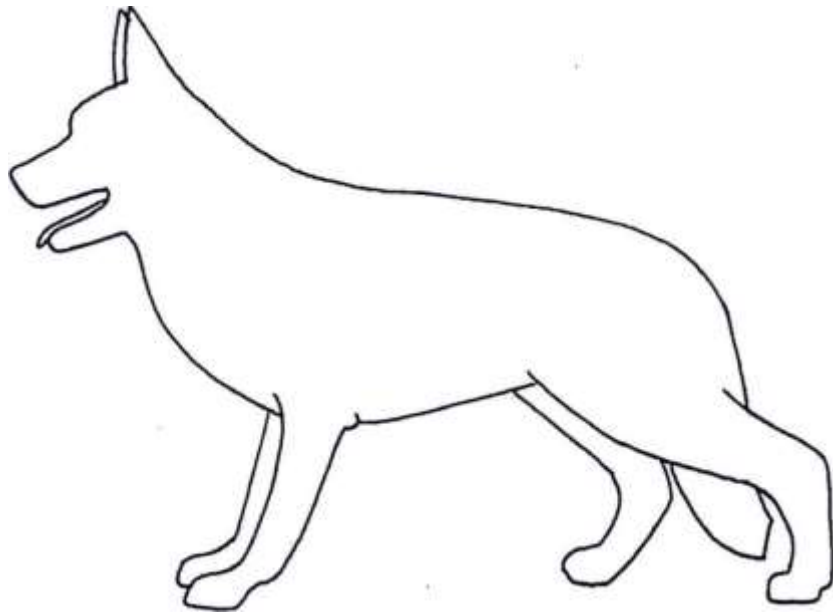


Figure 5

Propped in front, tends to lower wither line and levels out the topline

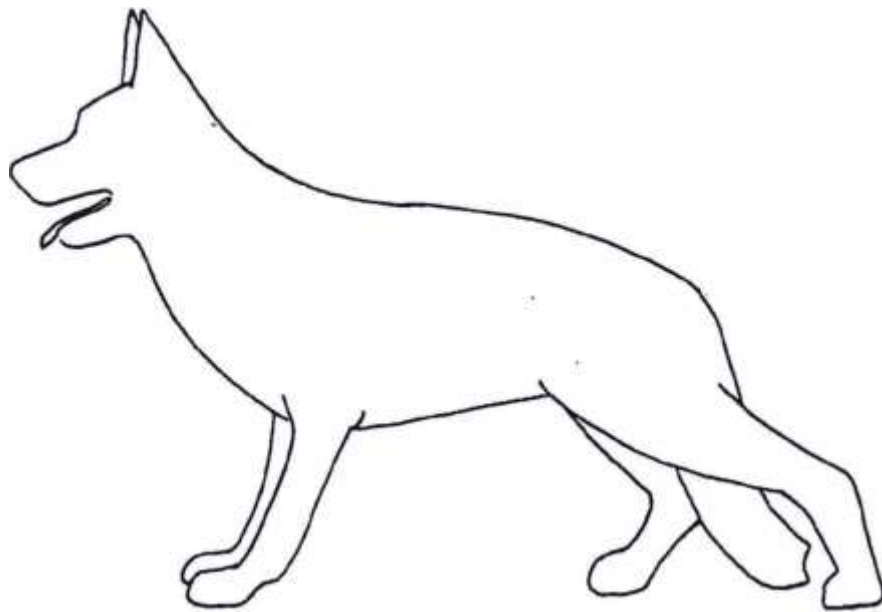


Figure 6

Overstretched in HQ and propped in front, dog is totally unbalanced.
Refer comments in fig. 4 and 5

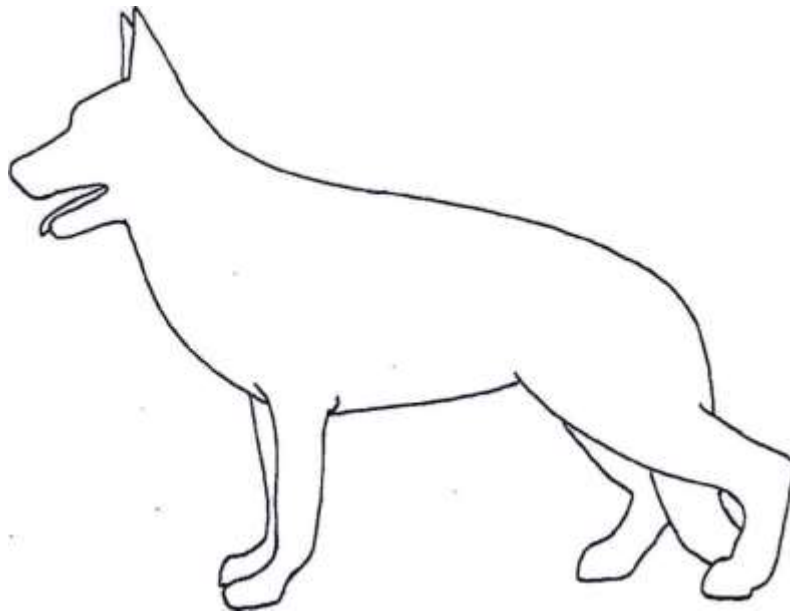


Figure 7

The hock is not perpendicular

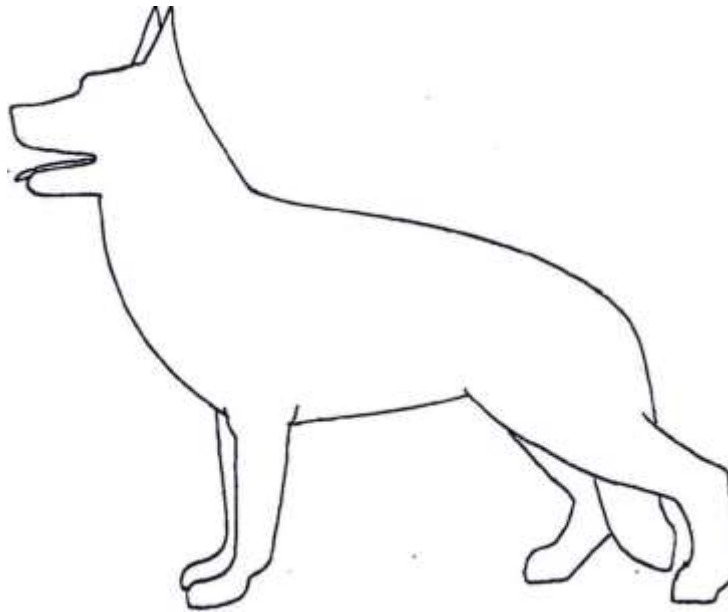


Figure 8

Head and neck are carried too upright, gives the impression that the neck is stuck on, and therefore does not flow into the topline

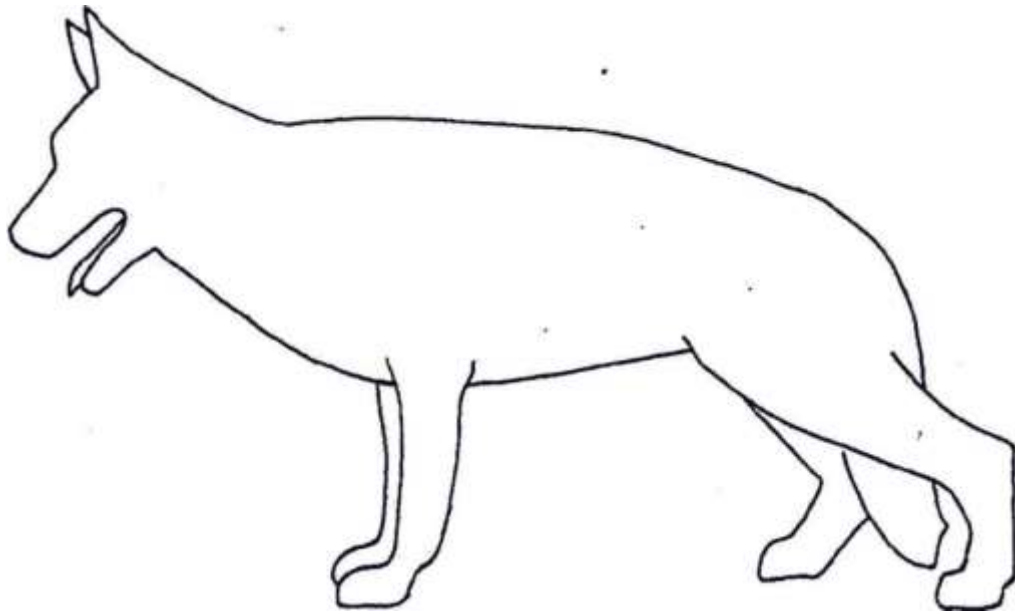


Figure 9

Head is carried too low, this lowers the withers and levels out the topline, also gives the impression the dog is lethargic

GSD IN MOVEMENT



Figure 10 – Gait or Trot

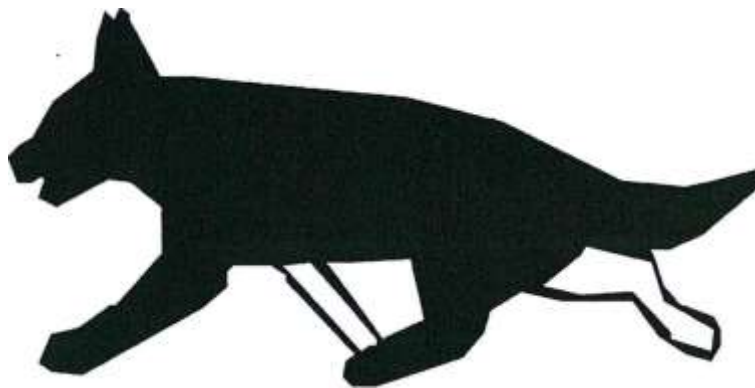


Figure 11 – Pace

GROUND RULES

All Instructors must be aware of the Ground Rules for the GSDC of SA.

These rules apply to all handlers during training sessions and have been formulated for the welfare of you and your dog.

- Any Club member, or any person guilty of unseemly conduct or acts harmful to the club, may be asked to leave the Training area. They may also be dealt with by the Committee of The GSDC of SA Inc. under clause 6, and relative by-laws of the Clubs Constitution.
- Any dog that is **sick WILL NOT** be permitted onto the Club Grounds. Dogs who have suffered a **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WILL NOT** be allowed on to the Grounds until 5 weeks after being cleared by a veterinarian (a vets certificate may be required). Puppies should not be brought out onto the Club Grounds under the age of 8 weeks or at least 2 weeks after they have been inoculated for **HEPATITIS, DISTEMPER AND PARVOVIRUS** (vaccination certificate may be required).
- The owner and or handler takes responsibility for their dogs while on club grounds and must accept any liability for animals in their care at all times.
- Bitches in season are not permitted on the grounds unless at a recognised conformation show.
- The use of switches, spiked collars or whips is **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN ON THE CLUB GROUNDS.**
- Members shall not treat their dog in a manner that may reflect badly on the Club.
- Dogs are NOT to be taken off lead or left unattended, except on the directives, or under the supervision of a Class Instructor.
- The handlers of dogs that foul the Club Grounds will be responsible for cleaning up same, with the equipment provided.
- The Head Instructor has the authority to permit the use of a muzzle or training devices, as required in special cases. The use of the equipment is to be under supervision, and its use on the Grounds, other than above, is **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.**
- Dogs under the age of 12 months **ARE NOT** permitted to use jump equipment higher than 400 mm, or longer than 800 mm.
- Pursuant of the Health act "Dogs" **ARE NOT** permitted inside the Club Rooms.
- In the interest of safety and health, and in consideration of others, parents are required to supervise the behaviour of their children. The Clubrooms and Toilets **MUST NOT** be used as playing areas.
- In the interests of public health the Club Rooms and the veranda area are **NON-SMOKING** areas.
- **Appropriate foot wear** must be worn at ALL times when handling / double handling dogs on the Club grounds. Bare feet, thongs, slip on shoes, high heels, sandals or crocs are not suitable foot wear and members wearing any of the above will be asked to leave the training area.
- **Training Heat Policy** - If the forecast temperature is predicted to be 38 degrees or above on Channel 9 weather at 6pm the night before training, (Wednesday nights or Sunday mornings), training for that day will be cancelled.

THANK YOU.

BE PROUD OF YOUR DOG, THEY'RE VERY PROUD OF YOU!

THE COMMITTEE.