

Coat Patterns: Where did coat pattern prejudice begin?

If you read the article last month titled Color the Basics, I am sure you quickly realized that it was not a Judges Education Article. I was working on my regular J. E. article when I was asked by a fellow Board Member to write an article on color for the beginner. I have no memory of how the first paragraph from my unfinished J. E. article made it into the color article. I can only say that like so many of us, I have way too much on my plate these days. I agreed to write the Color article because I believe that understanding the basics of coat color in the Purebred German Shorthaired Pointer is paramount for new breeders. I apologize for my oversight including it under the J. E. banner.

While the basics of coat color is something we expect judges to know long before they become judges, acceptable coat patterns vary from breed to breed. This article may be a nice refresher for judges on the German Shorthaired Pointer's acceptable patterns as well as a primer for the beginner. It is as simple as: **ANY MARKINGS ARE ACCEPTABLE ON A GERMAN SHORTHAIRED POINTER.** None are preferred over another as long as they contain liver or liver and white. Thus if a GSP is white with a single spot of liver that dog is of acceptable color and pattern just as a solid liver dog or a liver dog with a single spot of white would be. **GSP's of any pattern should be judged on their conformation as long as they are the acceptable colors.** I think it is safe to say that successful breeders do not breed for specific markings or patterns but rather the conformation for the performance in the field of our breed.

A BIT of History

Whelped in 1872 and Registered as Number 1 Volume 1 of the Pedigree Register for the Shorthair in the German Pedigree was Hektor. As you can see he was a Piebald with "Irish Spotting". [\(Insert Photo of Hector Please\)](#)

The patching genetics in the German Shorthaired Pointer pass down from the Old Spanish Pointer. It is technically referred to as "Irish Spotting" because that pattern is found on the wild "Irish Rat".

The AKC definition of Piebald is: A dog covered with two colors of patches such as Black and white or as in GSP's Liver and White. Extreme White Piebald is a dog with a solid color present only on head and/or base of tail. The thought that all piebald German Shorthaired Pointers today are a result of a cross breeding is simply NOT true. Hektor the very first GSP registered is evidence that the piebald pattern has always been in the breed. The pattern itself would not indicate a cross breeding but rather the conformation of the dog could. **Judges are to judge on the conformation of the GSP with all acceptable coat patterns being equal.**

How did the coat pattern prejudice we still see on occasion today begin?

History tells us that Hermann Goring a trusted leader of Hitler's Nazi government set himself up to be the arbiter/controller of all things relating to hunting dogs. Hermann ruled that all clear white and liver GSP's must be destroyed in Germany. He used the reasoning that they did not "blend with the forest". Some believe that the real reason was that they did not camouflage in the kennels when the enemy flew

over, or perhaps he himself simply had a prejudice. Breeders were forced to smuggle out the clear white and liver dogs to other countries to save these dogs. We all know that depending on the environment and time of year the clear white ticked and/or patched dog can blend quite well while on the hunt. How did the prejudice against solid liver begin? I have No clue perhaps someone would like to research and give the answer to that in another article. My best guess is that throughout history folks just didn't see many of them.

The difference between Coat Color and Pattern

In our previous article on Coat Color we discussed that the standard states: *The Coat may be of solid liver or a combination of liver and white...* What then is coat pattern? The pattern is Ticking, Patching and Roaning. They may appear in any combination on the Germans Shorthaired Pointer that Mother Nature wants to paint on them. **All are equal.** Patterns would include White and Liver Ticked, White and Liver Ticked and Patched, Liver and White ticked, Liver and White Ticked and Patched, Roan, Roan and Patched, Roan and Ticked, Roan Ticked and patched, Extreme White Piebald, Piebald, Piebald with ticking, and last but certainly not least, Solid Liver. See why the standard says "*a Combination of Liver and White*"? Did I miss one or two possibilities?

Patches may be any size from one that covers the entire dog or multiple patches found across the body in any place or size. Patches are determined by the S gene and are different from the "Ticking." White on the other hand is the absence of color and where it is found on the body is determined by the genes that produce coat patterns. (Patched, Ticked, Roan) Dogs may have all three or may only have one or two.

The easy way for me to remember our acceptable Patterns for Purebred German Shorthaired Pointers is **...As long as Mother Nature paints the pattern on a GSP it is acceptable. No pattern is preferred over another.** If you would like to read more you can go to

<https://www.vgl.ucdavis.edu/services/dog/Piebald-Parti.php>

Until next time...

Christy Douglas-Featherston

Sources: Der Deutsch-Kurzhaar, The German shorthaired Pointer by Georgina Byrne, copyright 1989, first published 1990, Austed Publishing Co. Western Australia

AKC.org Glossary

<https://www.vgl.ucdavis.edu/services/dog/Piebald-Parti.php>

Photos and research Courtesy of Patte Titus GSPCA Historian

