

Norwich Terrier

Club of America

Dear AKC Judge,

The AKC recognized Norwich Terriers in 1936. The Norwich Terrier Club was formed in 1947 and a breed standard was approved to guide us as breeders and exhibitors. From the beginning, the breed standard has specified that the tail is medium docked. However, the **AKC Norwich Terrier Standard** is written in the positive; no traits are mentioned as “faults” and there are no disqualifications. The Standard states: **“Tail medium docked. The terrier’s working origin requires that the tail be of sufficient length to grasp. Base level with topline; carried erect.”** The tail should not be gay or lying on the back.

The Norwich Terrier Club of America has no immediate plans to change the breed standard as written above. We understand that according to AKC rules (Chapter 7, Section 15), full discretionary power is given to judges. Characteristics of an entry that are not as described within the approved breed standard are deviations from that standard. Accordingly, a judge may choose to excuse a Norwich Terrier with an undocked tail as being inconsistent with the standard, or award the dog. Because tail docking is prohibited in many other countries, judges are seeing more undocked Norwich in the show ring. We realize that because the undocked tail is inconsistent with the standard, judges may be uncertain when presented with these exhibits. For this reason, the Norwich Terrier Club has developed the following recommendation for judges:

Docked tails are preferred, however, when presented with an undocked dog we prefer that the judge evaluate the dog on his merits as described in the standard. Overall type, structure, movement, and temperament should be given primary consideration. The undocked tail should not be a reason to dismiss an exhibit or withhold ribbons and placements. However, the tail set and erect tail carriage are important and would apply to both the docked and undocked tail. Consideration should be given to the length of the docked tail.

