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# The Azawakh Club of America

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## THE STANDARD OF THE AZAWAKH

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### HISTORY

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The Azawakh serves three distinct yet inextricably inter-related functions for the peoples of Africa's Sahel and Southern Sahara: guardian, hunter and status symbol. Its morphology has been shaped both by the aesthetic criteria of Sahelian cultures and the harsh environment in which it has been isolated for thousands of years.

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### GENERAL APPEARANCE

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With a skeletal structure that is distinguished by straight, architectural lines and extremely open angles of the joints, the Azawakh gives an overall impression that is serene and harmonious. The Azawakh appears tall as a direct result of having long legs and a relatively short back; however it is a medium-sized hound with typical heights ranging from 22 to 28 inches (55 to 71 cm) at the withers and weights from 30 to 55 pounds (13.5 to 25 kg).

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### HEAT TOLERANCE

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The Azawakh is superbly adapted morphologically to withstand the intense heat of the desert. Its muscles are dry, flat and attached obliquely to the bone for maximum cooling surface area. Its skin is fine and highly vascular, functioning as a radiator cooling the blood. Its hair is short, its body devoid of excess fat. The overall morphology, economy of motion and an ability to efficiently radiate accumulated heat provides for a dog with both speed and great endurance. An Azawakh is able to course game repeatedly in extreme heat.

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### TEMPERAMENT

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An Azawakh is typically a "one master" dog and its territorial instinct is highly developed. Suspicious and avoidant, even after thousands of years of domestication, it continues to display feral behaviors. Highly independent and emotionally resilient, it can also be quite sensitive and very affectionate with those it accepts. In Sahelian culture an Azawakh is prized for "*djikke*"—intensity of character—which is considered a sign of nobility. Extreme gregariousness is atypical.

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## HEAD

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The head is moderately long and somewhat narrow, skull moderately wide. The ears are pendant and flat; quite wide at the base and extremely mobile. There is great width between the eyes to optimize binocular vision. The eyes are obliquely set, large and almond-shaped with pigmented eyelids and range from dark brown to light amber in color. Teeth are strong and large with a scissor bite. The nose is pigmented.

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## NECK

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The neck is straight, lithe and set high. The moderate length of the neck enhances the overall impression of a long-legged, short-backed dog.

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## FOREQUARTERS AND CHEST

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The bones of the forelegs are attenuated and vertical, dense and bladed, with no hint of weakness. Withers are prominent, the ribs long and flat. There is conspicuous distance between the point of the elbow and the base of the chest, due to a very open scapular-humeral angle combined with a highly placed base to the chest. The sternum is short and rises abruptly at its distal point to a high tuck-up, giving a distinctive keel-shaped underline. These combined distinctions reinforce an overall impression of generalized elegance and loftiness.

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## HINDQUARTERS

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Hipbones are quite prominent and the croup steeply sloped. The steep angle of the croup mirrors the steep angle of the scapula. The stifles are open-angled and very high, the hocks set very low to the ground. The vertical alignment, when standing, of the hip joints and feet of the Azawakh—which gives an impression of sickle-hocks—is archetypal of animals well adapted to economical movement in a desert environment.

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## LOIN AND BACK

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The topline descends from high iliac crests into the withers, giving the illusion that the hips are higher than the withers. The withers and hips are actually at the same height. The loin is short, lean and flat.

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## FEET

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The feet tend to be cat-like, strong, of moderate size, and have obvious and high knuckles.

## MOVEMENT

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Movements are elastic, graceful and efficient, characterized by a feral quality which echoes the primitive origin of the dog. There is a freedom in the shoulders and hip-joints which allows for unimpeded forward motion. At a trot, the paws barely rise above the surface, without any excess lifting of the legs; the back feet fall directly beneath the center of the back, providing a lissome, balanced gait. The vertical format yields a very upright, double-suspension gallop.

## COAT

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Hair is short and fine and may be absent from the belly.

## TAIL

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The tail is thin, tapered and set low, extending to the point of the hock, and covered with the same type of hair as that of the body. The tail may be curled but a sickle-shaped tail is preferable.

## COLORS

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Any combination of colors and markings, including the absence of markings, is acceptable.