

IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION OF THE GARDEN STATE 20TH SPECIALTY

Sunday & Monday. October 29 & 30, 2023

Conformation Judge,

Mrs. Ursula (Timmy) Ralfe

Firstly, please accept my sincere thanks for inviting me to judge at your IWAGS show. It's been 25 years since I've last been here, and I can tell you that I find that much has improved. It is an honour to have judged Irish Wolfhounds all over the world, and I am thrilled to tell you that I believe my Best of Breed is one of the best 3 dogs I have ever seen. Ever. Of all the breeds I have judged, in over 40 years in the ring. What an amazing moment this was in my life!

Thank you to the exhibitors, who accepted my decisions in a sportsman-like fashion. The Wolfhounds, one and all, did not seem to mind the iffy weather and someone very kindly gave me a few bags of "Hothands" which helped me to keep my hands warm for examining the dogs and for typing my notes.

Thank you to the IWAGS committee also for looking after me so nicely, and for the wonderful gift I was given: an exquisite crystal ice bucket! It now takes pride of place on my "shelf of honours". And a wonderful sweatshirt with the Club's logo. It is cherished and will be envied by all the Wolfhound folks back home! I wish you all the best with your wonderful hounds!

6-9 months dogs

I always find the puppy classes difficult to judge. Simply because the Wolfhounds grow and change at such a rapid pace that what I criticize today, is likely to have turned into a strong point by next week.

1<sup>st</sup> # 15 Really lovely head, ears only have half a fold. Correct mouth. Good bone, nice proportions. Lacks forechest and brisket, which is quite expected at this age. The topline is a bit flat. Strong pasterns, well closed feet. Calm and friendly. Nice long, curved tail, carried a bit enthusiastically at times. Lovely long strides. Best Puppy awarded

2<sup>nd</sup> # 9 Black, rather slight in stature. Well shaped head but quite feminine. Elegant neck of good length. Shoulder a bit straight, hence the topline slopes slightly. The croup drops away too sharply. The stride in front is a bit restricted. Nice effort from the rear. Overall I would expect to see a bit more bone and substance at this age.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 5 Big brindle boy. Very nice head with good ears. At this stage he is steep in front, roaches his back and cowhocked. The croup is very steep in. Rather uncoordinated on the move, front feet slightly splayed. As I said above – Wolfhound pups go through stages where absolutely nothing seems to “fit”. Give him a couple of months and see what he has grown into.

#### 9-12 months dogs

1<sup>st</sup> # 19 Lovely expression. He has just recently dropped much of his coat, but what is left is nice and harsh to the touch. Tall boy, very muscular. Fair angulation front and rear. Great bone, strong pasterns, good croup. Moves with purpose, fairly true both coming and going.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 21 Very nice pup, super head with lovely expression. Just his front feet are doing their own thing at the moment. Very nice topline, ribs nicely sprung. Good coat for one so young. Excellent angulation front and rear. Strides out very well. I really like this pup, and I think he will grow into something very special one day.

#### 12-15 months dogs

1<sup>st</sup> # 25 Lovely planes of skull and muzzle. The lower lip is a bit too open. Ears are only half folded and a bit large. Moderate angulation in front, rear is well made. Good tailset. Super feet. The topline is a bit flat over the loin standing, improves much on the move. Long reachy strides, covering the ground with ease. Nice movement for one still quite young.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 23 Tall boy. Coat is growing in. Gorgeous head with super ears. Good angulation front and rear. Correct topline. The croup drops away a bit too much. Front feet are a bit splayed, pasterns need to firm up. Moves with great enthusiasm. The tail is carried with attitude at times.

### Novice

1 st # 29 A bit fine, the front feet are rather soft. A few incisors displaced. Nice head with super ears. He is clearly new to all this, not a happy camper and cowering at times. Good front angulation, a bit too much in the rear. Very nice croup. His movement may well improve once he becomes more confident.

### Bred By Exhibitor

1<sup>st</sup> # 31 Black rather dainty youngster, topline flat, roaches it on the move. Very well closed feet. Lovely coat. Steep croup. Calm and quiet.

### American bred

1<sup>st</sup> # 35 Handsome head with nice ears. Correct mouth, lovely eyes. The chest is a bit shallow, front is tied at elbows. Good angulation front and rear, nice forechest. Would like a bit more arch over the loin and more firmness in the topline. Very good feet. The coat is a bit soft.

### Open dogs

1<sup>st</sup> # 37 Every now and then a dog comes into my ring that knocks my socks off, takes my breath away, makes me go weak in the knees. He is such a dog! Upstanding gray brindle, such a presence! Super head with beautiful small rose ears, lovely eye, correct dentition. Excellent angulation front and rear, well closed feet, deep brisket, well sprung ribs, strong topline with lovely arch over the loin, flowing into a perfect croup. Great underline as well, deep chest, lean and strong belly. Tail correctly set and carried. Powerful yet elegant on the move. Very well groomed, and handled to perfection. I just could not fault this boy. Winners Dog awarded. Best of Winners awarded. Best of Breed awarded. Best Movement awarded.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 49 Another really good one, well muscled, appropriate angulation. Strong masculine head, ears not quite folded to a rose. He has that bit of wild-boy attitude that I quite like. Lovely bone. Tightly closed feet. Super topline which looks best when he is moving. Almost deep enough brisket, nice tuck-up, beautiful croup. Very impressive on the move, so much reach and drive,

absolutely true coming and going. He certainly has “commanding appearance” by the bucket load. Reserve Winners dog awarded.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 51 Really shapely body, with much to like about him. Strong masculine head. Lovely dark eye. The ears are not rosed. Very nice topline and underline. Deep brisket, good feet. Rather short on the leg. Super forechest, excellent coup. Powerful mover, true coming and going.

4<sup>th</sup> # 39 Handsome head with good ears, wonderful expression. Fairly nice front, a bit narrow across the chest. Good topline and nice depth of brisket. Good angulation in the rear, nice croup. Tied at elbows. Holds his topline firm on the move. Feet not quite as tight as I would like them to be. The coat is a bit fluffy in places.

**Winners dog, Best of Winners and Best of Breed and Best Movement # 37**

**Reserve Winners Dog # 49**

#### Puppy bitches 6 – 9 months

1<sup>st</sup> # 12 This youngster has my kind of head. Strong, long jaws, not too much stop. Beautiful eyes, and wonderful ears. Well angulated front and rear. Super bone. Nice feet. She is still rather loose all over, as one would expect at this age. Plenty of attitude, just wonderful! I predict that she will turn some heads in the future.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 14 Tall and lanky, a bit stubborn, classy outline. Typey head with super ears. She has that “oh really?” attitude which is amazing for one still quite young. Very nice angulation both front and rear. Lovely coat. Croup a bit steep. Love that loooong tail.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 8 Black, very fine boned. Super tight feet. Would benefit from more angulation in the front. Rather too long second thigh. Pretty ears, lovely long muzzle. The brisket still needs to drop. The ribs are rather flat, elbows tight, restricting proper forward stride.

4<sup>th</sup> # 10 Very similar in substance and type to # 8. Perhaps a bit more subdued than her litter sister. Her shoulders, particularly the upper arms, need a bit more

layback. Rather restricted forward stride, a bit tentative in the rear. Well closed feet. The topline is a bit too arched, even on the move. Coat could grow in quite nicely.

### 9-12 months

1<sup>st</sup> # 16 Pretty girl. So feminine, lovely head with super ears. Nice angulation front and rear, topline still a bit soft. Good feet, strong pasterns. Brisket still needs to drop a bit, well sprung ribs. Super bone. Really effective and confident mover. And such an attitude, just love it!

2<sup>nd</sup> # 18 Another very pretty puppy. Nice strong muzzle of good length. Her front assembly is a bit straight. The brisket is of good depth, the ribs need more spring. Very good angulation in the rear, super croup. Still very loose on the move.

### 12-15 months

1<sup>st</sup> # 20 I love this one, she reminds me of some of the beauties in Britain in the 70s. To my mind, everything is “there” already, she just needs time to mature and grow into herself. Old-fashioned head. Elegant and curvy body. I’m pretty certain that her coat will grow in. Super feet, deep brisket. Moves quite well already.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 22 A bit gangly still. The coat is rather soft. Gorgeous head with ears just a bit large. Good angulation front and rear. Croup could be a bit longer. The loin needs a bit more arch, especially on the move. Good depth of brisket for her age. Ribs could do with a bit more spring. Very nice feet.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 24 Tall girl, everything is all over the place at the moment. Strong, well made head. Ears only half-folded. Quite well angulated front and rear. Sometimes she has a good topline, sometimes she roaches it, then she relaxes and it comes down to level. She is very loose on the move, legs and feet flying wildly. I’m pretty sure it will all fall into place in time.

### Novice

1<sup>st</sup> # 32 dark grey, a bit scruffy looking at first, not stripped into shape, but nice over all. Pretty head, super ears. Moderate angulation in front, deep brisket, good rear end, super croup. Very good feet. Fair mover. Presentation and handling needs some fine-tuning.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 36 Love her head. Prettiest little ears. She lacks forechest and brisket at this stage. Nice topline with good arch over the loin. The croup drops away a bit too steeply. Good angulation in the rear. Lovely mover, very sound.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 34 Pretty head with lovely small ears. She could do with a bit more underjaw. Strong topline, good angulation front and rear, correct croup. Super coat. Not quite sound coming and going, which might be due to her moving on a tight lead. Good feet, correct tailset. Her show grooming needs a bit more attention. Good coat structure.

4<sup>th</sup> # 30 Very nice head with sweet expression. Her coat is rather soft. Nicely angulated front and rear. Her elbows are a bit loose, topline is rather flat over the loin. Loose hocks. The toes in front should be closer together. Good angulation in the rear.

#### Bred by Exhibitor Bitches

1<sup>st</sup> # 44 Classy bitch, a touch too much weight on her. Beautiful head, super ears. Perfect shoulder. Lovely long and well arched neck. Super croup, tail carried correctly. Low hocks, excellent reach and drive. Her topline shows a bit of give on the move, probably due to her weight. Great coat. Stacked, she is just picture perfect. Best Bred by Exhibitor awarded. Winners bitch awarded.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 50 Tall girl. Super head, ears half folded. Good bone, feet could be just a little bit tighter. Deep, well made brisket. Strong loin, held very well both standing and moving. Correct croup, strong, well muscled hindquarters. A pleasure to watch her move. Very nice ring presence, calm and confident. Reserve Winners bitch awarded.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 52 Super head, with perfect ears, small and well set back. Correct forechest. Brisket is very deep, ribcage appears to be a bit too well sprung. She is in good coat. Super topline with nicely arched loin. Good bone. Well closed feet, very low hocks. A bit loose in pasterns on the move.

4<sup>th</sup> # 46 Beautiful head with lovely rose ears. Nice angulation front and rear. Her topline is a bit slack, perhaps she is just too relaxed. Good croup. Coat is a bit soft. On the move, she trundles along as if on an afternoon stroll. Elbows and hocks are a bit loose. I think with some training and handling this girl could do a lot better.

### American bred

1<sup>st</sup> 54 Upstanding elegant bitch. Lovely head, super ears. Moderate angulation front and rear. Topline good both standing and on the move. Feet are nicely closed. Good forechest, deep brisket. The croup is of good length but could be lying at a better angle. She covers much ground with each stride, quite sound coming and going.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 58 Gorgeous head but flat ears. Blown coat, as might happen at this time of the year. Good bone. Her topline slopes a bit towards the rear. Nice angulation front and rear. Super croup. Moves very well. Good feet, tight and knuckled up. Low hocks.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 56 Pretty girl. Would like a bit more underjaw. Very shapely all over. Good forechest and deep brisket. Strong, well arched loin. She needs much stronger pasterns and front feet. Everything else is so close to perfect. Lovely coat.

4<sup>th</sup> # 60 Lovely head with great ears. Her coat has been scissored around the neck. She appears to be listless, bored even. Very good feet, good bone. Strong topline. Other than the scissored bits, she actually has a very nice coat. She is rather reluctant, which does not make for a favourable presentation.

### Open bitches class

1<sup>st</sup> # 78 Elegant bitch. Very nice head with super ears. Lovely shoulder, good bone, well closed feet. Exemplary topline with really nice arch over the loin. Broad, strong croup. Her second thigh is rather long, which looks quite flashy but destabilizes her away movement. She is a bit nervy at times. Moves well in profile.

2<sup>nd</sup> # 62 Big solid bitch. Strong head, ears are flat. She turns out her right front leg from the elbow. Her topline is a bit flat. Very well ribbed up, ribs are well

sprung. Good angulation front and rear. Lovely confident mover, she covers the ground with long easy strides. Good coat.

3<sup>rd</sup> # 76 Very pretty feminine head. Ears half fold. Exquisite dark eyes. Love that long strong muzzle. Good forechest, deep brisket. Topline is a bit flat. Strong, effective hindquarters, giving plenty of drive. A bit uncooperative on the move. Not exactly energetic.

4<sup>th</sup> # 66 Nice head. Strong neck, well angulated front and rear. Well sprung ribs. A bit overweight which causes her to be dippy behind the withers both standing and on the move. On the move, her back rolls slightly from side to side. Very good croup. The pasterns are a bit soft. Well presented.

#### Veteran dogs 6 - 8 years

1st # 59 Very shapely boy. Lovely expression. Good forechest and deep brisket. Strong topline with loin gently arched. Well angulated front and rear. Excellent mover coming and going, even more impressive going around. In excellent coat condition, and carrying just the right amount of weight. His sheer presence makes you feel like he is "in charge". Love it! Best Veteran and Award of Merit.

2nd # 69 Another class act. Big handsome male. Topline not quite as firm as the winner of this class. Lovely angulation front and rear. Good feet, strong pasterns. Nice forechest, deep brisket. Strong hocks. Super croup. Powerful, impressive on the move, sound both coming and going. Friendly and confident.

3rd # 57 Wow! This class is just packed with excellence and sheer presence: even the 3rd place makes my heart sing! Strong and elegant male. He is just oozing confidence and masculinity. Moderately angulated in front, well angulated in the rear. Perfect topline. Deep brisket, ribs well sprung. Tight feet. The croup is slightly rounded. This dog has an incredible ring presence.

4th # 67 Super head with really nice ears. Great angulation front and rear. Deep brisket, nice forechest. Good topline, well sloped croup. Lovely bone. Nicely shaped feet, but turns out hind feet both standing and moving. A really handsome fellow, just not quite the charisma of the three in front of him.



### Veteran bitches 6 – 8 years

1st # 96 Class written all over this girl, super ears on a strong but feminine head. Such a pleasure to see really small, well folded, tucked in ears. It has become a rare sight. Good forechest, deep brisket, tight feet. Excellent topline for her age, super croup. Good angulation front and rear. Really easy mover, plenty of reach and drive. Sweetest expression, those Irish eyes were truly smiling.

2nd 84 Another classy bitch, full of quality. Lovely head with tiny well folded ears. Very good angulation front and rear. Topline not quite as firm as it should be. Her nails are a bit long. Her right foot turns out a bit standing only, she moves very well. Very pleasant demeanour, calm and friendly.

3rd # 94 Tall bitch, very shapely. Wants a bit more forechest. Deep brisket. Good topline. Lovely angulation in the front and rear. Croup could have a bit more slope. Excellent mover plenty of reach and drive. Hocks low. Good feet. Carries her tail correctly.

4th # 86 Smaller bitch, very nicely made. Pretty head with perfect ears. Good forechest, deep brisket. Very nice matching angulation front and rear. She carries a bit of excess weight, which affects her topline and pasterns on the move. Strong feet. Her coat appears to have been scissored in places.

**Best Opposite Sex # 120** Tall and elegant, all the right curves in all the right places. A magnificent head with super ears and lovely expression. Strong topline. Deep brisket, nice tuck-up. Correct croup. Her tail can be a bit willful at times. She storms around the ring as if she owns the place. A real show girl!

**Select dog # 71** This boy gives meaning to the words “Grand Champion”. He is truly a champion, and my goodness: yes, he is GRAND, too! Of great size and commanding appearance, this description fits him like a glove. He has a fantastic presence about him that will not be ignored. A big strong dog, so well made and very sound.

**Select bitch # 116** I fell in love with her head. So utterly correct from all sides. Not too wide but broad enough. Just the right amount of stop. Super length and depth of muzzle. Strong underjaw. Her ears are so perfect. Her expression haughty with just a hint of mischief. Oh yes, she is well made and lovely all over, and the moves beautifully, too!

**Award of Merit # 73** A dog that combines size, type and soundness in perfect harmony. Quite tall, with plenty of substance, yet light on his feet – so much lighter than I would have expected him to move. Gorgeous head, muscular neck of very good length, superb forechest. Deep brisket, nicely tucked up belly. Strong topline, his broad croup is well sloped. He carries his tail very well. Feet are nicely closed.

PS My sincere thanks must go to Tom Lydon. He came to fetch me from Newark airport, with my aircraft arriving before sunrise. He became my hero when the airline told us that my baggage would only be available on the following day! He disappeared a few times, talked to a lot of people and eventually returned with my suitcases! Thank you Tom!