

= Welsh Springer Spaniel =

The Welsh Springer Spaniel is a breed of dog and a member of the spaniel family . Thought to be comparable to the old Land Spaniel , they are similar to the English Springer Spaniel and historically have been referred to as both the Welsh Spaniel and the Welsh Cocker Spaniel . They were relatively unknown until a succession of victories in dog trials by the breed increased its popularity . Following recognition by The Kennel Club in 1902 , the breed gained the modern name of Welsh Springer Spaniel . The breed 's coat only comes in a single colour combination of white with red markings , usually in a piebald pattern . Loyal and affectionate , they can become very attached to family members and are wary of strangers . Health conditions are limited to those common among many breeds of dog , although they are affected more than average by hip dysplasia and some eye conditions . They are a working dog , bred for hunting , and while not as rare as some varieties of spaniel , they are rarer than the more widely known English Springer Spaniel with which they are sometimes confused .

= = History = =

The actual date of origin of the Welsh Springer Spaniel cannot be traced , however dogs resembling the breed with its distinctive red and white coat are frequently depicted in old pictures and prints . This type of dog was known as the Land Spaniel , and is considered to be similar to the modern Welsh Springer . John Caius , writing in 1570 , said " Spaniels whose skynnes are white and if marked with any spottes they are commonly red " . It is thought that these Spaniels may have made their way into the Welsh valleys where local sportsman and hunters managed to conserve them in a pure state .

At one time called the Welsh Starter , it was used to spring game , originally for hunters using falcons . The traditional red and white colour of the Welsh Springer was once also found in English dogs , but by the early 20th century any such dogs were considered to have " died out long ago " .

The Welsh Springer Spaniel was also at one time called the Welsh Spaniel , and also at one point was included in the Kennel Club ( UK ) studbook as Cocker Spaniels , and was known as the Welsh Cocker . During the 19th century were several different varieties of Cocker Spaniel , including the English , the Welsh and the Devonshire as the term was used to describe the size of the dog rather than the breed . Unusually , in John George Wood 's 1865 book The Illustrated Natural History , an image is described showing a Welsh Cocker Spaniel as a solid coloured dark spaniel . The same inscription is used in the 1867 work The Dog in Health and Disease by Stonehenge and he further describes the Welsh Cocker and the Devonshire Cocker as " both being of a deep @-@ liver colour " . The Welsh Springer was relatively unknown during the 19th Century , but this changed in 1900 when Mr. A. T. Williams of Ynis @-@ y @-@ Gerwn won the team stake at the Sporting Spaniel Club Trials . The trials were held on Mr. Williams ' own estate , and it was thought that when his team defeated eight well known teams it was because of the home advantage . This was disproved when dogs from the same kennel went on to win in successive years around the UK . His conformation show champion dog Corrin was the first Welsh Springer Spaniel to be photographed .

Welsh Springers were recognised by The Kennel Club , after the breed had gained popularity , in 1902 under the new name of Welsh Springer Spaniel . Until then the breed was shown alongside the English Springer Spaniel . The Welsh Springer Spaniel was transported to America in the late 19th century and gained recognition by the American Kennel Club in 1906 .

World War I caused problems for the breed in the United Kingdom , and when the war was over there were no dogs whose parents had registered pedigrees . The breed restarted with the remaining unregistered dogs , and it is these dogs that formed the modern day breed . The breeders in the 1920s and 1930s developed these dogs into the type of Welsh Springer Spaniel which remains today . The Welsh Springer Spaniel Club ( UK ) was formed in 1923 , registrations slowly increased between the wars but all records held by the breed club were destroyed in an air raid during World War II . Following the two World Wars , it was thought that no Welsh Springers remained in the United States . The breed was reintroduced , and the descendants of those dogs

make up the breed today in the United States and Canada . The breed was officially imported into Australia in 1973 .

In 2000 , The Kennel Club registered 424 Welsh Springer Spaniels , compared with 12 @, @ 599 English Springer Spaniels and 13 @, @ 445 English Cocker Spaniels . Numbers remained steady , with 420 Welsh Springer Spaniels being registered in 2004 , however numbers of English Springer Spaniels increased to 14 @, @ 765 and English Cocker Spaniels to 16 @, @ 608 . Numbers remain closer to the American Cocker Spaniel which registered 610 in 2000 , and 599 in 2004 . The breed remains more popular than some other breeds of Spaniel , including the Clumber Spaniel , Field Spaniel , Sussex Spaniel and Irish Water Spaniel .

= = Description = =

= = = Appearance = = =

The Welsh Springer Spaniel is a compact , solidly built dog , bred for hard work and endurance . Their body can give the impression of length due to its obliquely angled forequarters and developed hindquarters . The build of the Welsh Springer Spaniel should be slightly off square , meaning that the length of the dog should be slightly greater than the height at the withers . However , some dogs may be square , and this is not penalised in the show ring as long as the height is never greater than the length . Traditionally a docked breed , dependant on legislation in the country of origin , and where allowed the dew claws can be removed .

In conformation showing , eyes should be brown in colour ; yellow eyes do sometimes occur but are penalised in the show ring . Ears are small , pendulous ( suspended and hanging ) , vine @-@ shaped and with a light setter @-@ like feathering . Nostrils are well developed and are black or any shade of brown ; a pink nose is penalised in the AKC standard for the show ring , in Britain the colour is not specified in The Kennel Club 's breed standard . In showing , a scissors bite is preferred with an undershot jaw severely penalised . Unlike the English Springer Spaniel and English Cocker Spaniel , there is no divergence into show and field styles of the breed .

Male dogs are 18 to 19 inches ( 46 to 48 cm ) high at the withers , with females a little smaller at 17 to 18 inches ( 43 to 46 cm ) . On average , members of the breed weigh between 35 to 45 lb ( 16 to 20 kg ) . The back of the legs , chest , and underside of the body are feathered , and the ears and tail are lightly feathered . The only colour is a rich red @-@ and @-@ white . Any pattern is acceptable and any white area may be flecked with red ticking .

Welsh Springers are often confused with the English Springer Spaniel , but there are marked differences . The Welsh Springer is slightly smaller , and its reddish markings on a white background as opposed to the English Springers black or liver @-@ coloured markings . Both breeds are admired for their hunting abilities and their trademark trait of " springing " at game . This can be seen during play also , as a dog may " spring " on his toy . Some experts believe that the Welsh Springer Spaniel and the Brittany share the same ancestry as there is a great deal of resemblance between the two breeds . The colours of the Welsh Springer , while exclusive from the English Springer , appear in the Brittany and the Brittany and Welsh Springers are both of similar sizes . The Welsh Springer is larger than the English Cocker Spaniel .

= = = Temperament = = =

The Welsh Springer Spaniel is active , loyal , and affectionate . They may meet strangers barking when in their territory , or act aloof , cautious or wary . The breed is well known for being friendly and demonstrative to all members of the family , especially children , and accepting other pets of the household with a friendly , playful attitude .

The breed is quick to learn but can be headstrong , though with correct training can become very obedient . The Welsh Springer was bred for work and endurance , and as with many breeds of hunting dogs requires a regular exercise routine to keep them healthy and content . Without

adequate exercise , a Welsh Springer Spaniel may appear hyperactive . Some Welsh Springers can become clingy towards their owners and suffer separation anxiety when alone .

= = Health = =

The Welsh Springer is generally a healthy breed , but some can suffer conditions common to many breeds such as hip dysplasia , Canine glaucoma and like other dogs with pendulous ears , they are prone to ear infections such as otitis externa . In a survey of over a hundred breeds of dog conducted in 1997 , the Welsh Springer Spaniel was ranked 14th for worst hip score , with the average score of the breed being 18 @. @ 45 . The average lifespan is 12 to 15 years .

= = = Eye disorders = = =

Welsh Springers can be prone to entropion , which is a disorder that affects the eyelids . The condition causes them to curl inwards , pressing the eyelashes against the surface of the eye itself and causing them to scratch it . This can lead to irritation and damage to the cornea . In most cases it only affects the lower eyelid on one or both eyes , but in some cases the upper eyelid can be affected as well . Symptoms can include tearing , squinting , the rubbing of the eyes , thick discharge from the eyes and rolling of the eyelid along with wetness on the hairs next to the eyelids . There is no medical treatment for entropion , and surgical correction may be necessary depending on the severity of the case . This condition may be present soon after birth , or later in life as a secondary condition to other eye related diseases or infections . Other breeds also affected by the condition include the Chow Chow , Great Dane , Golden Retriever and the English Springer Spaniel .

Narrow / closed angle glaucoma is an autosomal dominant inheritable trait in the breed . It is a leading cause of blindness in dogs , and is where there is increased fluid pressure within the eye . If the fluid is not reduced , the pressure causes permanent damage to the retina and optic nerve . Loss of eyesight can happen as quickly as within 24 hours if the pressure is elevated enough , or slowly over time if it is only a mild elevation . The sudden , rapid elevation of pressure is more common with narrow / closed angle glaucoma which is more common to the breed than the slower open angle glaucoma . Symptoms can include redness in the eye , the eye itself looking cloudy , sensitivity to light and the dog may rub at their eye , or even rub it along other objects and carpet as the condition is moderate to extremely painful . Treatment can vary depending on the severity of the condition but if inherited glaucoma appears in one eye then it usually occurs in the other eye eventually .