

## Belgian Sheepdog or German Shepherd Dog

### Can You Tell The Difference?



Belgian Sheepdog



German Shepherd



Belgian Sheepdog



German Shepherd

Many dogs are referred to the Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust (BSDRT) as Belgian Sheepdogs (BSD) that are not purebred but are in fact German shepherds(GSD) or mixes. Since the BSDRT can only accept purebred BSDs into the program, here are some suggestions on what to look for to help you decide. These are only guidelines and an individual GSD or BSD may vary, depending on the style for which the breeder is breeding and on the random toss of the genetic dice involved in creating the traits described below.

First look at the overall dog. The BSD is a medium weight. They are agile, graceful and have an elegant look. The GSD has a heavier, thicker, larger appearance. BSD are square, the height from the shoulders to the ground being equal to the length from the chest to the rear. The average male BSD weighs about 55-60 pounds and is about 24" to 26" tall. Females weigh about 40-50 pounds and are about 22" -24" tall. The average GSD is about 80 pounds and longer than tall. For example, a male 25.5 "tall would be 30 "long. This length gives the GSD the shape of a rectangle rather than a square. The BSD back or top line is level or straight. The GSD back can have a slope downward toward the tail. The BSD does not have a slope.

The next thing to look at is the feet. The BSD has small round shaped feet like a cat. The GSD has larger feet that fit his larger, heavier appearance. When moving, the BSD appears light on his feet. His strides are moderate and appear effortless. The GSD is a larger, heavier dog, and this is reflected in his movement. He has more powerful and longer strides.

The coat can be confusing because a GSD can be solid black with a long coat. People think of the GSD as being brown and black and having a shorter coat. When one meets an all black, long coated dog, they immediately assume it is a BSD, but it may be a GSD. On first glance, the BSD and the long coated GSD can have a similar coat, which adds to the confusion.

The ears of the BSD and GSD also have differences. The BSD has smaller triangular ear sitting on the top of the head. A GSD has larger, rounded ears that are not triangular and are placed wider apart.

When touching the top of a GSD head, one might feel how broad the head is. The top of the GSD head is moderately arched while the BSD's is flatter and narrower.

A BSD may not have all the attributes described above, yet still be a purebred BSD. An individual dog may have big, flat feet and a longer body. Another may have a soft, not very long, coat and big ears placed wide apart. But a BSD will have an overall look that is apparent to people familiar with the breed. Because of the difficulties in identifying a possible BSD, the BSDRT sends knowledgeable and experienced volunteers to go to look at the dogs.