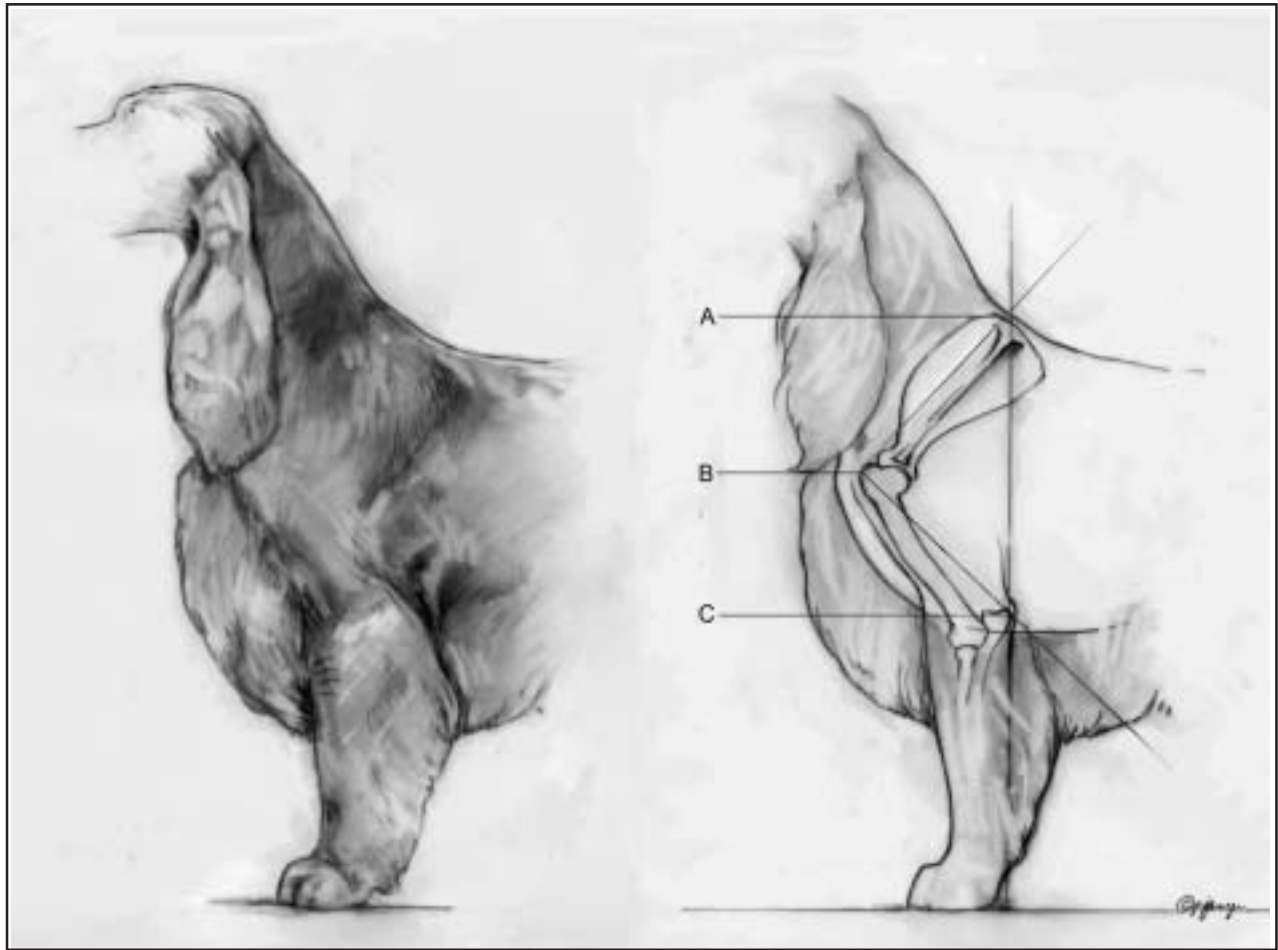

Understanding English Cocker Fronts

Illustrations courtesy of Patty Janzen



The proper front assembly has an equal length of shoulder (highest point of scapula or “withers” (A) to point of shoulder (B)) and upper arm (point of shoulder (B) to elbow (C)). The point of the shoulder (B) is mid-way between the withers (A) and the elbow (C). The elbow is located directly beneath the withers, and is mid-way between the withers and the ground.

We talk about proper “layback of shoulder” (B to A), but if the layback is not combined with the correct angle and equal length of “return of upper arm” (B to C), it is not a good shoulder, no matter how well laid back it is. It is also not a good shoulder if the elbow is not directly beneath the withers.

This dog exhibits the textbook ideal 90 degree shoulder, formed by the shoulder and upper arm. Our standard calls for moderate angulation, so realistically we look for about 100 degree angulation.

To evaluate a front, locate the withers with your right hand. Find the point of the shoulder with your left middle finger and the elbow with your left thumb. Are the withers directly over the elbow? Are the shoulder and upper arm equal in length? Is the angle about 100 degrees or is it more open?

Our standard calls for the forechest to be well developed and projecting moderately beyond the point of the shoulder. The protective forechest will be present with a properly made shoulder.

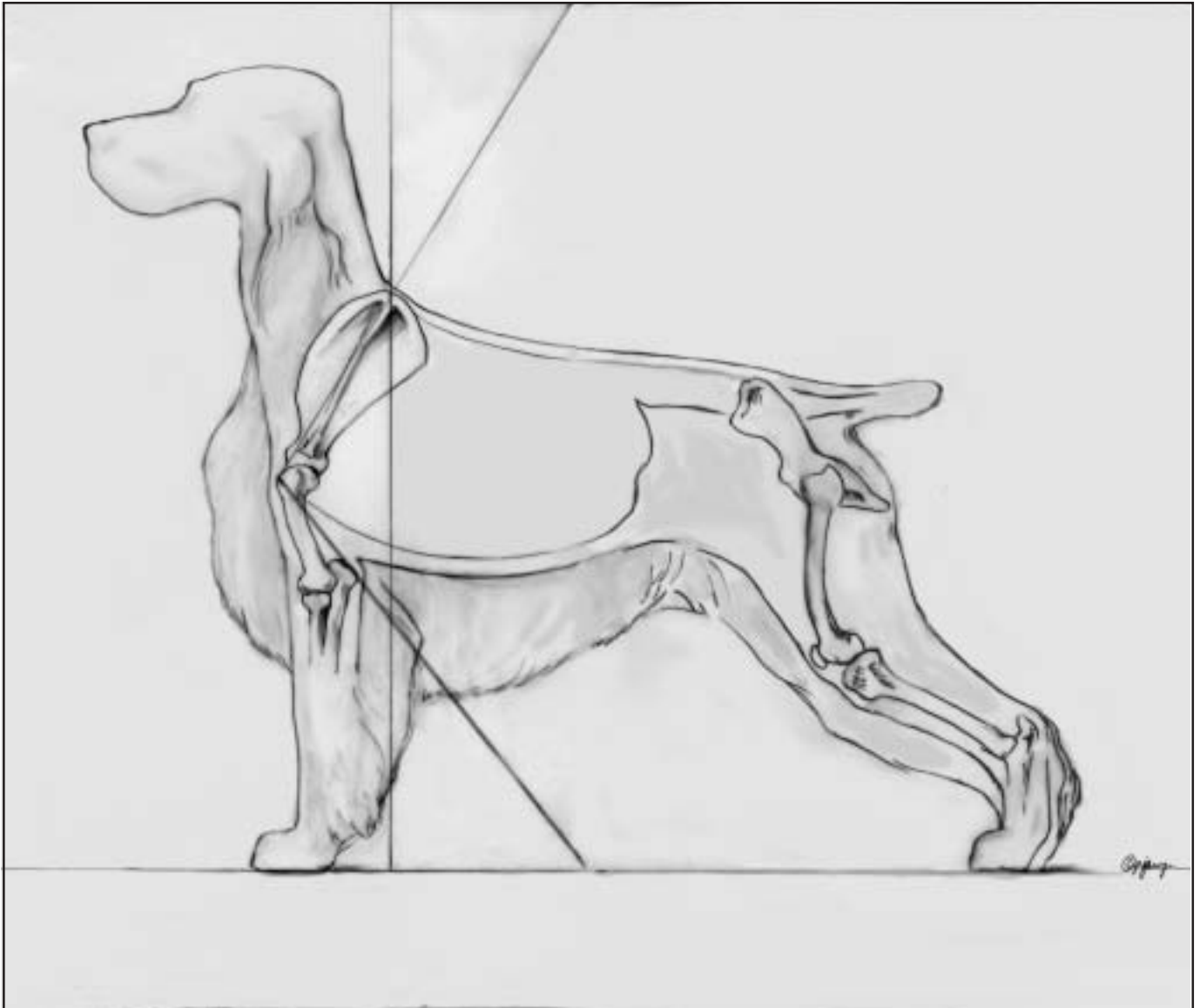
With the correct front, the legs are located under the body, rather than on the forward most end of it. The neck, consequently, is well placed and carried with a natural arch. It blends smoothly and cleanly into the sloping shoulders.



This shoulder assembly is on the lower end of acceptable because of the more open angle. It does, however, have equal lengths of shoulder and upper arm, with the elbow being directly below the withers. Notice the lack of prominent forechest because of the more open angle. The neck is more upright and doesn't blend as cleanly into the shoulders.



This dog has no shoulder layback, which places his withers well forward of his elbow. When he moves, he will look as if he is falling over his front, which is exactly how he is made to move. His neck juts out forward and he would have difficulty lifting a bird high enough to clear his front legs, should a wing be hanging.

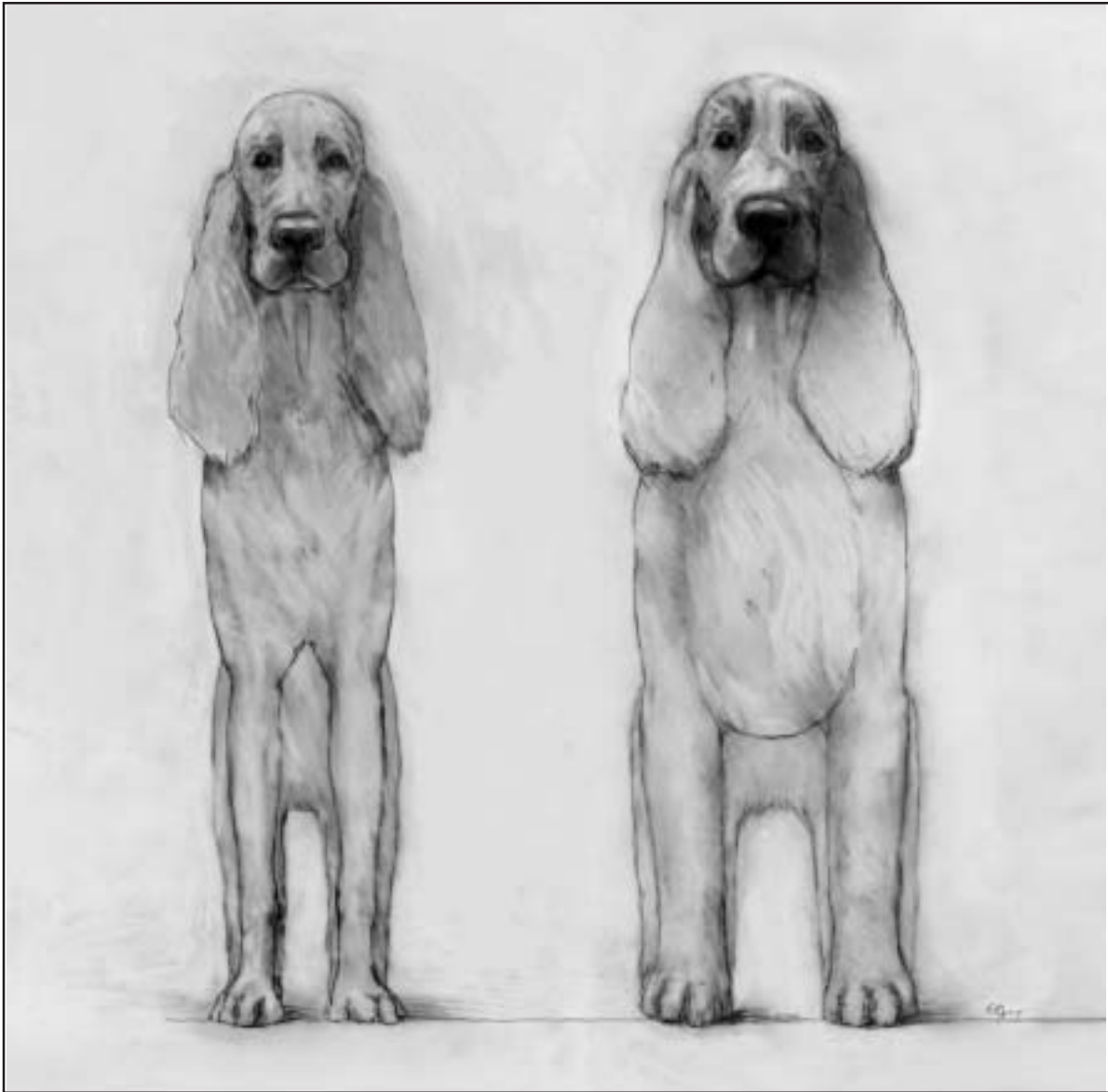


Here is a moderately upright shoulder with a short, practically vertical upper arm. There is no return of upper arm as the elbow is not directly under the withers. The front is set on the forward most part of the dog and the forechest is non-existent.

The neck is upright, going into the shoulders at a right angle, is weak, and ewed. This straight shouldered dog would have difficulty reaching

down to pick up a bird, and the weight of the bird would put a strain on his weak neck. He will move with a hackney action and with very little reach in front.

This particular shoulder assembly, combined with an overangulated rear, as shown here, is the most common structural problem found in the English Cocker ring today.



The chest is deep, the forechest is well developed, and the brisket reaches to the elbow as shown on the dog on the right. He has a generous amount of bone to support his well-made body. The dog

on the left is narrow throughout. His brisket does not reach to his elbows and combined with his upright upper arm, creates a pinched, narrow, and hollow front with no forechest. His bone matches his narrowness.