



IS SIZE REALLY AN ISSUE WITH GLOSTERS?®

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Some fanciers think the size of a Gloster is of little relevance on the showbench yet when it comes to stock selection and breeding, a different “standard” takes place! It seems there are just too many judges who seem not to be too concerned about size when selecting the best Glosters in a show. Hence, many fanciers have most certainly become conditioned to seeing large Glosters continually winning at many shows across the globe. Why is that? Is size really an issue with Glosters?

It was certainly an issue with this writer over 20 years ago when an entire article was devoted to the size of the Gloster in an issue of American Cage-Bird Magazine, the premiere bird fancy monthly publication of the time.

Here are a few paragraphs from that old article:

“Come on, all of you Gloster Judges out there! Before you start your 1984 judging assignments, take a bit of time to study the standard for our lovely little gem.

During the course of last year’s exhibitions, after the judging had been completed, what was usually selected was a large, rough Gloster.

We, as judges, must view the Gloster with the standard always in mind. Not, “How does this bird compare with what I or my good friend, Terrence, has at home?” but rather, “How does this entry before me compare to the ideal Gloster?”

Here in America, most Americans have the notion that, “bigger is better.” This is not the case with the Gloster.

A hypothetical question; All other characteristics being equal, i.e. flawless coronas or consorts, superb finish, well filled-in backs, nicely rounded chests, etc., etc., the only

difference between two birds is that one is bigger than the other. Which would you award the ribbon to?

The correct answer should always be the smaller Gloster. All else being equal, the smaller Gloster should always win. Forget about how nice the larger bird would be, studded with the birds in your own birdroom. Forget about the super stock bird you see in the larger Gloster. We are judges at a bird show, looking for the best show birds. The Glosters exhibited that day are birds presumed to be the exhibitors' top show birds."

Now let's return to the present, if you will. Let's look at the current standard of perfection as laid down by the International Gloster Breeder's Association Parent Organization in the United Kingdom. As we review the illustrated pictorial as well as the scale of points, we will find that the scale of points for the breed has a rather ambiguous statement as relates to the size of a "perfect" Gloster. (More on this in a bit.)

When we review this standard of perfection for the Gloster Fancy Canary, let's pay particular attention to the fact that it is the exact same standard from Great Britain used over 25 years ago. Note also that it is the exact same standard used, promoted, and passed on by the United States Chapter of the I.G.B.A., the National Gloster Club and the United Gloster Breeder's Club here in America as well as many other Gloster Specialty Organizations around the world.

Yet, then and today on the showbenches of local and major exhibitions, a totally different Gloster is being awarded top honors under a good percentage of judges. In the quest for type and roundness, size was not an issue and still is not an issue, as the birds were getting larger and larger.

When I started with Glosters over 30 years ago, my quest was to raise a bird with more type and overall roundness with more of a voluminous and well-centered, unbroken crest, regardless of what the standard called for except for one caveat. My main criteria was to use birds in my stud that would insure that I would maintain a diminutive size in all my show prospects. To this writer, smaller was always better.

Getting back to the standard of the Gloster, up to 15 points are awarded if the show bird has a "tendency to the diminutive." Yet, every single Gloster judged at every single event both in the United Kingdom and the United States does not require validation that the judge actually judged each bird on its' own merit while actually focusing on the standard of perfection.

All the Glosters at an event are initially judged against any and all others in a class. Then those selected best of each class are compared to each other, again, looking for the best among all other best-in-class winners exhibited that day and again, all without validation as to why they were selected or rejected.

Since there are no score sheets used, at the end of the judging, none of the winners and none of the losers know what points were really allotted to each entry.

Since there are no score sheets used, none of the exhibitors or observers really have a clue if their entries or any other entries had points deducted for not exhibiting a “tendency to the diminutive” according to the scale of points.

What exactly does “tendency to the diminutive” mean anyway?

Some are under the assumption that it means that the Gloster should have the tendency to look small when taking all other aspects of the head, body and tail into consideration. Does that mean, the approximate length from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail feathers? If so, what is that measurement in detail? There is nothing listed to state that measurement unlike most all other Type Canaries also known as Canaries of Posture in some countries. This now leaves the matter of size open to the interpretation and/or preference of the judge.

We look at the description of each of the other parts of the Gloster as stated in the Gloster Scale of Points and each is clearly detailed. (Well, except for one other issue, as relates to the corona length, where the standard states, “eye discernable.” That issue should be the subject of another article but then again, what exactly does that statement mean? That one can “discern that there is an eye because if one crouches, they can see the lower portion of the eye or that one must be able to see the entire eye looking at it eye-to-eye?)

Anyway, back to size being an issue, my feeling is that the sooner the standard of perfection’s scale of points can be clarified with more exact wording and the illustrated standard can be updated to reflect that wording, the sooner we can get back to our focus of getting the birds down to an actual diminutive size!

But diminutive compared to what exactly? Should that diminutive size be say, uh, 4” or 4 ½” or 4 ¾” or 5” or 5 ¼” or 5 ½” or 5 ¾”?

I must ask again, is size really an issue with Glosters? I think so!

Yours in Friendship, Peace and Great Health on a Healthy Green Planet,

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