



**By Elijah Marlowe**

### **Finding Conformation Landmarks on a Corded Dog**

Cording is a traditional way of styling the Poodle coat. It is controlled matting that results in uniform, slim, rope-like structures. It is fairly uncommon today, especially when compared to how many dogs are shown in brushed coats. However, there is often a handful of dogs showing in cords at any given time. Therefore it is important to know how to find the landmarks in this style so that dogs can be rewarded or faulted appropriately. Judges often have a difficult time evaluating corded coats, particularly in finding the withers, point of shoulder, and prosternum because cords are thick and can be difficult to get through if examination is not approached appropriately.

#### **Finding the Withers**

On a brush coat (a non-corded poodle coat), it is easy to just drop your hand down over the general area of the withers and feel around to find the landmark you're looking for. On a corded coat, this method is less effective due to the thickness of cords. It can cause you to misjudge where the withers are, or even miss them entirely. Instead, you can place your hand well behind where the withers would normally sit and run your hand forward along the topline toward the withers until you feel them. Depending on how long the cords are, you may also need to use your fingers to work your way under the cords. This allows you to quickly and easily get under the cords, allowing you to accurately find the withers.

#### **Finding the Point of Shoulder**

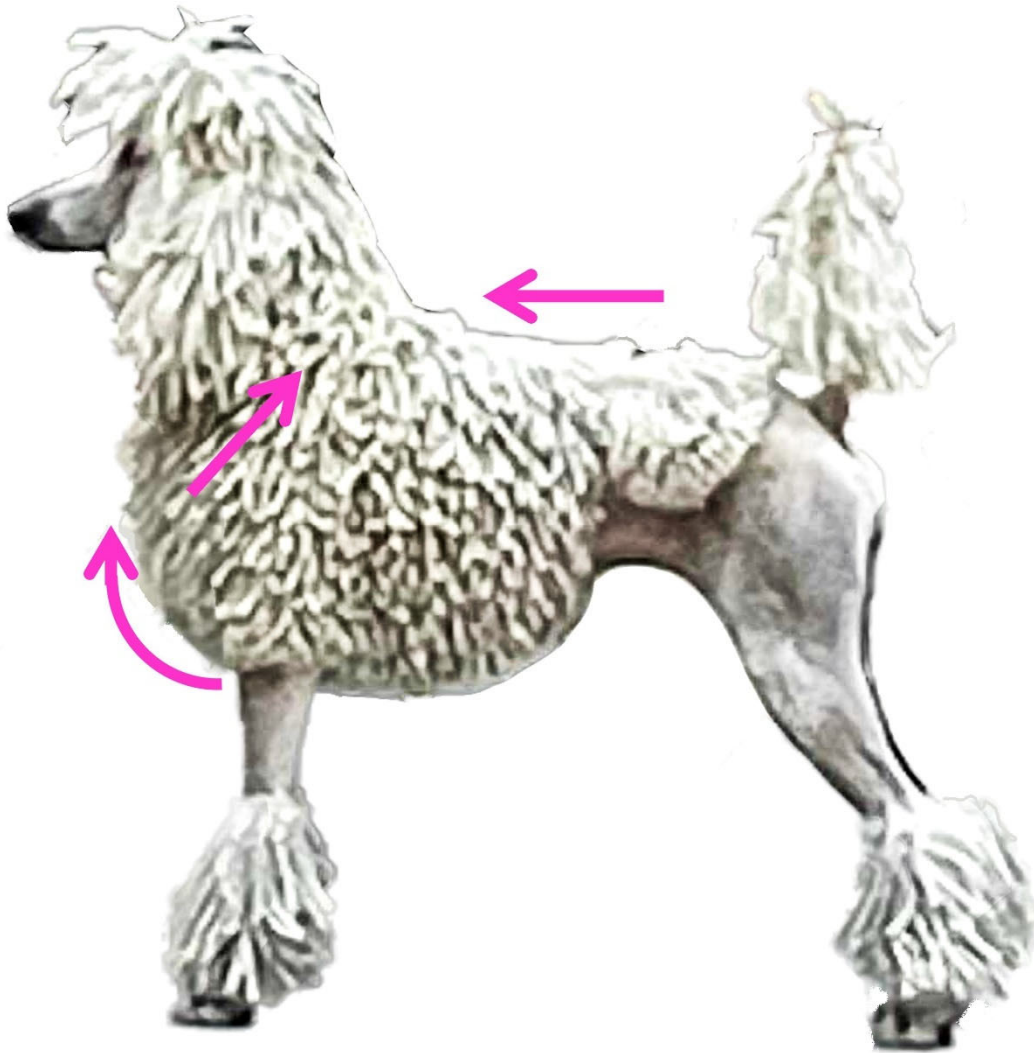
To find the point of shoulder by following the spine of the scapula on a corded dog, you first have to get under the cords. After locating the withers, place your other hand over the general point of shoulder area and run your hand up and back towards the withers. Once your hand is under the cords, you can more easily feel for the spine of the scapula and follow it to the point of shoulder. You may need to use your fingers to continue to separate cords as you follow the spine of the scapula. Once you find the point of shoulder, you can verify your findings by running your hand up from the sternum to get under the cords and feel the point of shoulder better.

#### **Finding the Prosternum**

Sometimes cords can make it difficult to feel for the prosternum due to their thickness. If you're having trouble finding the prosternum by feeling from the top down, you can instead feel from the bottom up. Simply place your hand on the sternum of the dog and run your hand up to get under the cords until you feel the prosternum.

## Summary

It is important to learn how to properly examine and find landmarks on corded poodles so they can be accurately judged. As you can probably tell, the key to finding landmarks in a corded coat is to get under the cords. If you're ever having trouble finding something, try running your hand the opposite direction of how the cords are falling to get under them and find what you need.



Run hand along topline towards the dogs head and use fingers to get under topline cords to find withers. Run hand from point of shoulder general area up and back towards withers to get under cords and find spine of scapula. Continue to separate cords with fingers as needed to follow the spine of the scapula to the point of shoulder. Run hand from sternum upwards to get under cords and find prosternum.