

# Comparison Study: Checker Giants, English Spots, Rhinelanders

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The single most important factor within this group of rabbits is **TYPE**. When I evaluate a class of this group I first check for dq's and then let them move about. The more time you can allow them on the table the better chance you will have to get a clear picture of their confirmation. In the junior classes especially, I will typically check for dq's and turn them loose. I may have 6 on the table at the same time. As they are moving about, I will simply stand back and let them do the work. This way you can reduce evaluation time of individually running the animals and the placings should be easier as you can compare them next to each other rather than trying to remember what they look like. You may get a more aggressive animal that will give you a little trouble, separate it out and continue.

The first thing I look for in type is an **ARCH**. The arch should start at the nape of the neck and continue across the top to a well rounded hindquarter. All three of these breeds ask for enough length to show a full arch. I have heard comments of "too long in body". The only time I have seen inappropriate body length on these breeds has been in the shoulder area. I have seen several animals exhibiting a break down in the shoulder where the arch starts several inches past the nape of the neck. Length on these individuals should only be in the midsection. There are some that are a little shorter in leg that will pull the shoulder down as well. In this case you have a two fold fault. Do not expect to find animals in this group, smooth over the hip like a Florida White or New Zealand, however your better animals will be. Typical faults I find when regarding arch would include: late starts, peak too soon, not carrying roundness over hips, and worst of all with a two fold fault is flat which is always coupled with chopped. I have seen some that will run like the wind, with all kinds of leg, with no arch to speak of. Don't be deceived, give them credit as appropriate for leg but cut them heavily for flatness.

**LEG** on these animals should be straight and strong. The ankles should be strong with animals on their toes, not bent at the ankles. They should move like they do not have ankles. They should track straight, meaning the hind legs should be parallel to each other with the space between them equal to the width of the hips. Tracking issues would be tracking narrow or running with

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hocks pointing towards each other. The legs should have plenty of length to keep these animals from hugging the table. Their bellies should not be even close to the table when they are moving about.

***Just as a note colored toenails are permitted on English Spots and Rhinelanders but a disqualification in Checker Giants.***

**Markings** - There is nothing more striking than a near perfectly marked Checker, Spot or Rhinelander. Unfortunately in most cases the animals we find are not and we are at odds as to find placings for the balance of the breed. Side Patterns alone do not dictate winners. One Checkers there are 12 points on side pattern, Spots there are collectively 20, Rhinelanders there are 12.

**Checker Giant** markings are a little more consistent due to the nature of the marking itself. Checkers are allowed to have two groups of spots that balance, but you will find the solid patches are more common. *It is a disqualification to have any markings on the front legs.*

**English Spots** have a very distinct grouping of spots. The spots start out at the nape of the neck and travel downwards to the midsection, this group is called the *chain*. The markings at the midsection are the *body markings*. The pattern then *sweeps* up toward the hip for the *hip markings*. In days of old, judges were required to count the spots on each side to determine balance and distinction. We certainly are not required to do so today but when evaluating pattern it is desirable to have the ability to count the spots. The side pattern points are divided into three groups:

**Side pattern/sweep** – this is the shape of the pattern itself. This is also the distinction. Most common fault are patterns that travel straight back with no form and congested patterns.

**Graduation** – this is the sizing of the spots, they should gain size from the chain to a maximum size of a penny on the hip. Most common faults are feathered spots, lack of graduation.

**Balance** – both sides should be as close to a mirror image of each other as possible.

**Rhinelanders** – Sides are required to have 6 to 8 medium size spots per side. They should be round in shape, not barred. They should be located on the side and hindquarter. Spots should be well defined and separated from each other. Most common faults are unbalanced sides and congestion. *It is a disqualification to have fewer than three spots or group of spots on either side.*

The rest of the markings are pretty well set in stone. Sometimes there are minor faults on the spine or a head spot. It is difficult to make much of a fault on the ears, eye circles, cheek spots when there are only a few points divided between both. Aka - You can't take all the points on cheek spots away if they are heavy (barred). The spine is one of the single most important markings.

**Fur** is actually more important than one might realize. A short dense coat will make the markings stand out much better and not drag out. It will make the spots rounder and the edges sharper.

**Color** – pretty much standard in Checkers and Spots. The biggest question I hear is “what is correct gold color.” There are several shades of gold that could be deemed as acceptable. One of the biggest things I noticed are lighter colored golds not getting a fair shake. Taken into consideration if the same marked animal was a black or chocolate it would get much more consideration for winnings. In reality they should only be faulted for color. Be on the look out for chocolate torts being shown as gold or torts. In Rhinelanders color is much more important. Two things need to be taken into consideration, depth of color and distribution with as many points on color as there are on markings.

In closing you will find a great variation in side patterns and type. I feel that the best animals are those with the best balance of type, have the cleanest markings ( head, no stray markings on body) and have the most distinct markings. The markings have a great spread of points with most of the markings being ingrained into the breed itself. The best typed animals will show the markings off the best and will perform better further in the show. Checkers can be intimidating with their size and energy. Handle them firmly and keep your attention and eyes on them at **ALL** times.