

The black allele B is dominant, and there are no intermediate shades of black, and the nose of a dog with black hair will be black. The nose and coat color of the heterozygous Shorthair (Bb) will be black because of the dominant B allele. Conversely, if the nose is liver, both alleles have to be bb, because there is no B allele present to produce the color black.

It's that simple; liver nose = liver coat color, even though the liver color may range from very dark to a lighter shade. Regardless of how dark a liver coat appears, if the dog has a liver nose, its coat does not contain black hair—bb equals liver color, period.

Once again, we ask those judging the GSP to remember: When looking at a dark liver-colored dog and you for some reason experience *trompe l'oeil*, check the nose! A liver-pigmented nose indicates the dominant allele B is not present, thus there can be no black hairs or area of black in that dog's or bitch's coat. —Patte Titus; chexsix@mac.com

## Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

### Priorities

There has been a general trend while providing judges' education to convey a prioritized list of the order of importance of breed-standard aspects to consider while judging.

The following is extracted from an American Chesapeake Club document:

"A pitfall of judging is judging by preferences rather than by the standard. The Chesapeake standard specifies flexibility such as multiple colors, ranges of sizes and weights, heads, waving styles of coat and variance in acceptable topline.

It is very easy for a judge to prefer a type that is one color, a head style, a certain size, one specific topline, or a coat style. To do so is totally unfair to the dog, the exhibitor, and the breed. This dismisses dogs who may fit the standard very well.

The key to good judging of the Chesapeake is to judge the whole dog, weigh all virtues and faults and then

come up with placements. The final placements should be based on the "judging the whole dog" concept.

The Chesapeake standard provides a "Scale of Points" as a guideline to give judges an idea of where to put the most emphasis.

Extracted from the standard:

*The question of coat and general type of balance takes precedence over any scoring table which could be drawn up. The Chesapeake should be well proportioned, an animal with a good coat and well balanced in other points being preferable to one excelling in some but weak in others.*

#### POSITIVE SCALE OF POINTS

Head, including lips, ears and eyes 16  
Neck 4  
Shoulders and Body 12  
Hindquarters and Stifles 12  
Elbows, Legs and Feet 12  
Color 4  
Stern and Tail 10  
Coat and Texture 18  
General Conformation 12  
(Total = 100)

I feel strongly that when using this emphasis table and/or a list of priorities, one must be careful not to allow a tendency to fault-judge and eliminate dogs too quickly. In other words you must consider all aspects and still "at the end of the day" use your judging talent to judge the whole dog. Scales of points and lists of priorities should only be used as guidelines, and not as strict judging techniques.

My personal priorities that I consider while judging are as follows:

1. Coat and a general type of balance are most important—"balance" referring to a well-structured, functionally capable dog that shows soundness and displays a good "breed type" silhouette.

2. Next is the consideration of the head and the nuances of all the head parts that include the small ears; open, somewhat oval yellow or amber eyes; appropriate length and shape of skull and muzzle; medium stop; good lips; head in general with a clean, "cut away" look (well chiseled), and a good jaw and bite.

3. Size is important in that the standard has specified ranges. Above or

below those ranges is a severe fault and may become a higher priority if the extent of oversize or undersize is excessive. Overdone or underdone dogs also need to be faulted to the extent of the severity.

A lot is wrapped up in number one: structure and silhouette cover outline (from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail) including proportion, topline, underline, leg length, elbows, and angulation. Other things to consider include: hare feet, color, tail, and temperament.

Therefore, a scale of points and/or a list of priorities can only be a guideline. Color scales as only four points but becomes a big issue if the color is black and the dog needs to be disqualified, or if a dog has white spots in places that call for a disqualification.

So keep it all in perspective. —Nat Horn; KCBOY0@yahoo.com

## Curly-Coated Retrievers

### Obedience—Another Plus

In other articles I have discussed the importance of owning obedient Curlies. However, just last week, after having shoulder surgery, I again realized how pleasant it is to live with dogs who respond to our commands.

When I walked in the front door, I did not want a dog jumping up on me nor pushing me. The sit or stay command is useful here until I was settled in a chair. Of course, my dogs knew that something different had occurred, and excitement was there. It is then that all past training is so important.

When we own a well-trained Curly, that dog will actually work as a therapy dog in a natural manner. The retrieving ability of our breed can be so well utilized when dropping or finding objects (the *find or take* command), and very useful when one has a leg injury and it is difficult to walk.

I realize that some of the exercises that create a challenge to us in the obedience ring can be so annoying, but do not give up. After living many years with Curlies, all of whom earned obedience titles, I cannot stress enough that

one's past hard work will be well worth it. The success at different obedience levels will become so important when challenging situations arise. Each year, your dog will be more delightful to live with, and all of your past patience in the ring will manifest itself when one needs it.

Also, since Curlies can become bored with repetition, I have decided to occasionally take a break from the higher levels of training and try one of the optional titling events that some obedience clubs offer. Beginner's Novice is especially tempting, as that combines a little of rally with basic obedience.

I have just received word that the Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America will be holding the club's first Hunting Retriever Test in Ohio this month. Anyone who wishes to see a number of Curlies performing in the field should attend this event. For more information, please contact me. —*Ann Shinkle; Annshinkle@aol.com*

## Flat-Coated Retrievers

### Anxiety Wraps and Calming Caps

The Flat-Coated Retriever can be an excitable breed that can easily develop separation and other anxieties. I've written before about training techniques that calm the Flat-Coat and relieve anxiety, but since those articles we have also learned to use anxiety wraps and calming caps.

The snugness of an anxiety wrap is comforting to the dog and has a calming effect as long as the dog is under the control of the owner, like swaddling a baby. An anxiety wrap can either be a wrap or towel pinned with horse-blanket pins tightly around the dog's chest and body, or a professionally made item. The Flat-Coat is taught to wear it during on-lead training at first, when he or she can easily be trained to leave it alone. As the dog becomes familiar with the wrap, the leash can be gradually eliminated, but leaving a wrapped Flat-Coat unsupervised can lead to unwrapping and eating of the material by a Flat-Coat, who might swallow a band-

age or a toy. We have noticed that some dogs are calmed simply by wearing a very wide plastic collar fitted snugly.

The wrap can be used whenever the dog needs a calming effect, such as when riding in the car, socializing, or becoming anxious about thunderstorms. As the dog's behavior improves through the calming training and wrap, the wrap itself can gradually be phased out. This might take a long time, due to the Flat-Coat's prolonged adolescent period.

Storm-shyness can become worse with age, however, and a variety of techniques should be employed. If your dog is at all sensitive to noise, be noisy and gradually noisier when you feed or play with him. Use tapes or CDs of storms, trains, fireworks, and other sounds—softly at first, and gradually louder during play, work, and feeding, to gradually condition your dog to expect positive things to happen with increasing noise.

We have cured gun-shyness, which was previously thought to be incurable, so patience and persistence pays off.

If your dog is becoming storm-shy, talk to your vet or behaviorist about possible medication as well. Storm- or noise-shyness can be caused by disciplining with noise (such as with newspapers and shaker cans) or by leaving dogs outdoors unsupervised and exposed to noise that is threatening (in the dog's opinion) or severe storms.

Calming caps are made of cloth that your dog can see through, fitted over your dog's eyes, causing him to be less distressed and stimulated about nearby activities. It can be compared to blinders on a horse. You can purchase these or make them yourself. If a dog is overstimulated by squirrels or rabbits while on a walk (on leash) or by the other dogs at training class, a calming cap can be used temporarily until your training of your dog takes over and he learns to be controllable under those circumstances.

We prefer to train dogs to totally ignore small animals, which are nothing but a frustration to the dog anyway. The calming cap can also be used when

your dog is overstimulated looking out of windows in the car, until you can teach him to ride quietly and safely in one place. —*Sally J. Terroux; sjterroux@aol.com*

## Golden Retrievers

### Front Angulation on the Dog

The desired construction of the forequarters is one of the most misunderstood and controversial areas of canine anatomy.

Breeders and judges often mention problems with a lack of balance and angulation in the forequarters, yet sometimes it seems that the definition of a "correct" front is a mystery to most exhibitors and breeders.

Rachel Page Elliott, author of *Dogsteps*, was one of a number of people who involved themselves in extensive research into just what it is that allows a dog to move correctly or incorrectly.

Her research led her to conclude, based on the study of X-rays of dogs in motion as well as standard X-rays, that the most desirable front angulation was not 45 degrees, as is commonly taught, but between about 30 to 35 degrees. This is a considerably more open angle than the right angle we'd been taught to expect.

Some experts disagree with these findings. I've often wondered why the difference.

I offer for your consideration three points that give possible answers to this puzzling question. First, there is a difference between what we see on the exterior of the dog and the actual skeletal structure beneath the flesh and muscle. The angles of the shoulder blade and upper arm are not always easily seen or felt on the body of a dog, especially on a coated breed like our Golden. Often we are required to make an approximation. Making precise measurement points on the outside body of a dog so they are consistent on every dog measured would be very difficult.

Second, much depends on exactly where you do the measuring. Not everyone can accurately pinpoint the