

SPORTING GROUP

The Chesapeake coat color encompasses all shades of brown, matching the hunting environment. The deep bittersweet-chocolate blends with the mud banks of the bay or river, as the medium milk-chocolate melds with the grasses growing along the banks, and the light-yellow dead-grass coat disappears in the dry, dead wheat stalks and grasses of the autumn fields. Along the Chesapeake Bay in fall, sedge grasses turn bright red, so the sedge-colored Chessie vanishes into the background. Game birds should not notice the camouflaged dog waiting with the hunter in his blind as they fly in.

There are three basic colors. *Brown* includes all tones from the darkest brown to light cocoa brown. *Dead grass* includes all the yellow hues of dead grass, from faded tan to dull straw. It can be so light as to seem almost white. *Sedge* is a red Chesapeake, from bright, Irish Setter red, to deep mahogany, to light strawberry-blond. In keeping with the camouflage theme, there can be lighter and darker shades and patterns, including masking, bridling, and saddling. Solid and self-colored dogs are preferred, but varied markings are acceptable.

Disqualifying colors are any black, and white, except for a small area on the chest and belly, the toes, and rear pad. The smaller, the better.

It is important to note that the breed's color is not particularly important. It counts for only 4 points in the judging scale, while the correct

coat texture counts for 18 points. The double coat texture, the thick undercoat, harsh outer coat, and the oily feel are what protect the dog in the icy water. These are the significant qualities that make up that marvelous Chesapeake coat.

—Audrey Austin,
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Curly-Coated Retrievers

Recently, while stewarding in the obedience ring up in Pennsylvania at our annual Curly-Coated Retriever national specialty, I was reminded that Curlies are still out there enjoying obedience. Jenny Dickinson, our guest columnist this month, brought up the subject of the importance of our Curlies still enjoying obedience and shares with us a very important topic that follows.

TRAINING CURLIES IN OBEDIENCE

You will enjoy obedience a lot more if you understand the breed you have chosen. I do not like the word “stubborn.” Curly-Coated Retrievers are noted for their persistence. Your job is to harness that persistence! Our standard describes our dogs as “wickedly smart,” and Curly fanciers take great pride in their clever antics and sense of humor. This is a problem solver and thinker—a worthy teammate!



Curly-Coated Retriever

Even though you will first show in Novice, I suggest that you start training scent games right away. These dogs will feel pride in working with you on something they enjoy. Success is motivating, and you will combine that with the pleasure of completing a maneuver together. You cannot drill with a Curly the way you can with some other retrievers. You cannot do fronts and finishes over and over in front of a mirror, as you might expect from another partner. Use your own intelligence to integrate

retrieving games into your training. A few repetitions should be followed by gratifying release. Throwing a ball is an easy but valuable reward. Reclaim your relationship, because that is why you are doing this sport in the first place.

I am a big fan of freestyle, and freestyle maneuvers keep the handler's mood light. If you tend to get frustrated, impatient, and/or cranky in training, teach some spins and side passes. My young Curly notices my lightened mood and responds with delight. *That is the*

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attitude I want from my dog! You are less likely to be stern if you are teaching something that you will not be judged on.

It does take a fair amount of self-discipline to train a Curly, because if you have trained more compliant dogs, your expectations will be off. However, a boldly heeling Curly is a thrilling sight. You will be richly rewarded if you persist! Before you start heeling, take the time to systematically teach *attention*. I use Janice DeMello's strategies for teaching attention. Do not skip this step!

I started out in Rottweilers, and I quickly learned to have a plan before every training session and not to expect bright performance and engagement for more than 20 minutes at a time. Other trainers may have other thoughts on this, but I find that this plan still holds with Curlies. Pay attention to your stride length, as some Curlies tend to pace if you do not move out. Drive through your heels and keep moving forward briskly. Curlies do not heel like Goldens, but you will want to think of heeling as an attention exercise and keep the dog engaged. If your dog starts to go blah, break him out and play. Again, this is not a dog who will successfully tolerate a lot of drills.

Even though you will not be doing stays off leash in Novice, do not forget to clearly distinguish waiting for a recall and staying put until physically released. Staying put is a life skill,

and you do not want to let yourself get sloppy in distinguishing the two. I learned from Teri Arnold to always follow through with your come-when-called, even out in the backyard. Teri famously says that it is "non-negotiable." Good competition obedience should reflect your relationship. Context is the key, and when we are on the training floor we ask for greater precision, but the relationship must always be paramount.

I wish more people were familiar with our breed. I am always frustrated by commentary about Curlies on televised shows. I now have my eighth Curly, and not one of mine has been "aloof." This is a loving companion, a devoted and versatile friend. I encourage everyone to get to know our breed. You may decide to have one of your own! —J.D.

Thank you so much, Jenny, for a very worthwhile and well-timed column, as we now have to pay attention to the new obedience rules that recently came to pass.

—Ann Shinkle,

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[Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America](#)

Golden Retrievers

A GOLDEN BIRTHDAY PARTY

It's only appropriate that when you turn 150 years old, you throw the biggest birthday

party in your history. So it was that 361 Golden Retrievers gathered at the breed's ancestral home in Tomich, Scotland, to celebrate the 1868 birth of the first litter of Golden Retriever puppies.

The "pawty," hosted by the Golden Retriever Club of Scotland, was held July 16 to 20 at Guisachan House, the former estate of Sir Dudley Marjoriebanks, the first Lord Tweedmouth at Inverness Scotland, and creator of our Golden sporting breed.

Club chair Doreen McGugan told BBC News that this year's event was a roaring success. "We've gone from 188 Goldens 10 years ago at the 2006 gathering, to 222 in 2016, and now, today, we have 316." Breeders and owners traveled from around the world to commemorate the origin of their beloved Goldens. "A lot of pet owners came to just enjoy the fun. People didn't realize that it all went back to this and that there is a place to go to commemorate their Golden Retrievers," she said.

Ashleigh Baird, one of the attendees, said she was surprised that people had traveled from all over the world to be there. "We tried to pet and cuddle all 361 Goldens, and it was heaven," she said.

The celebration concluded with a breed championship show, a formal dinner, and "plenty of puppy loving."

This year's golden gathering is testimony to

the enormous popularity of the Golden Retriever worldwide. It also recognizes the pioneering efforts of Lord Tweedmouth and his dedication to developing a superior yellow retriever that would fetch his ducks from the icy waters off the coast of Scotland.

His breeding adventure is a tale often told. Pursuing his dream, Tweedmouth, in 1865, purchased a yellow Wavy-Coated Retriever male out of a litter of otherwise all-black pups. Named Nous (the Greek word for wisdom), the dog was bred two years later to a liver-colored Tweed Water Spaniel named Belle. The breeding produced the now-famed litter of four yellow pups, the first ancestors of the Golden Retriever.

Tweedmouth kept one pup, a bitch named Cowslip, and gave the other three to friends and relatives who shared his dream of producing superior yellow dogs.

The breedings of these four pups was diligently recorded and led, years later, to the registration of the first Golden Retrievers recognized by the Kennel Club in the U.K.: Culham Brass in 1903, and Culham Copper in 1905.

The breed will be further honored in the U.S. in October at the annual Golden Retriever national specialty. Hosted by the Golden Retriever Club of Greater Saint Louis, this year's theme is "A Golden Legacy." The club's website says, "A legacy is by definition some-