

SPORTING GROUP

Kanatsche the black pointer and the solid black Arkwright Pointer bitch Beechgrove Bess.

In the early 1960s, yellow, gray, and tricolor Shorthair pups began to show up in litters of liver coated sires and dams and many a finger was pointed. Later genetic testing was available to determine the source. In some cases it was a single recessive carried by a parent and when paired with the other would result in an undesired color that led to the 1976 breed standard revision to add the disqualification, “a dog with any area of black, red, orange, lemon, or tan or a dog solid white.” Tan should address the tricolor but what about a dilute coat, gray? Can they be registered as Liver or Liver and White if the Liver area of the coat is gray simply because it is a dilute of the Liver color? Some use the argument that they should because the dogs are genetically “bb” Liver and there is no exception for the recessive gene “dd” which causes the Liver to dilute to gray.

Based on the history of coat color in our breed, it will be interesting to see how many breeders/owners take advantage of the color testing being offered during the 2019 NSS in York, Pennsylvania.

—Patte Titus,

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German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America

Curly-Coated Retrievers

Kathy Kail and her Curlies have had a lot of experience in both obedience and field training and thoughtfully shares the following with us.

OBEDIENCE

I have a magnet on my van that says “If Obedience was easy, they’d call it Conformation.” It is the only decoration (at least currently) that I have on my white cargo van, because it exactly sums up training and exhibiting and exhibiting in competitive obedience for me—it ain’t easy! Also, I make things harder for myself by owning a non-obedience breed. On the other hand, I am almost halfway through my sixth Curly Obedience Trail Champion, so maybe the breed really is not a non-obedience breed so much as underappreciated, as only two other people have earned an OTCH on a Curly, and they only did it once each.

I do believe that in Curlies, it is a matter of having training experience and starting the obedience prospect out right. Early introduction to training as fun, knowing when to use rewards and when to wean them off, when to use pressure and when to just help; all of these things go into bringing up an obedience prospect of any breed. However, it is usually much easier with a Golden or a Border Collie.



Curly-Coated Retriever

With Curlies, I firmly believe it is a matter of not following some set program, as I have found that it is much better to just listen to what the dog is saying and go from there. For example, my current dog has taken to hooking way out to the right on the directed jumping go backs, losing many points. This has to be

because we just came off two straight weekends of running Senior in hunt tests, where the turn and sit at the end of a blind does not need to be fast and tight, so he is just making an honest mistake. He is still young and somewhat green so doing two different, yet in some way similar, sports has temporarily messed

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with his head. I am sure that all I need to do is remind him what is right, correct what is wrong and he will realize that what works in the field does not always work in the obedience ring.

Speaking of fieldwork, this is another area where Curlies seem to be underappreciated. Of course, it is somewhat harder to find a good field prospect, but they are out there if one looks. The next step is to bring them along in a way that fits the dog. Most (all?) retriever field training methods are built around field-bred Labradors, which are a very different animal from Curlies (and Goldens and Flat Coated Retrievers). Field-bred Labradors do not seem to be concerned about *why* they got a correction; they just react to it; Curlies think about it. I shall be right upfront and say that I do use pressure in training all of my dogs in all of the sports they do, which is not fashionable these days. However, using just “positive” methods does not work in competitive events, so corrections must be applied when the dog is wrong. As long as the level of correction fits the level of error/dog temperament/etc., and the dog understands what he did wrong to bring on the correction, and what to do in order that it does not happen again, I have found that my dogs do not resent pressure, nor are they afraid to be wrong. They appreciate the clarity of training and

enjoy the process.

Flexible trainers can do well with Curlies! It is a versatile breed. I have had dogs that were champions and obedience trial champions with advanced field and agility titles; others do well in tracking and scent work; there really is not a sport that Curlies cannot do, and do well, given the right start and thoughtful training.—K.K.

Thanks so much for some very interesting and worthwhile training advice, Kathy.

—Ann Shinkle,

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

Golden Retrievers

A NEW HEALTH CRISIS

The Golden Retriever community currently is struggling with a rare and fatal, and hitherto unknown, neurological disease: neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis (NCL). This relatively new and complex disease has created a major dilemma and unprecedented heart-break for breeders as well as owners of Golden puppies and youngsters.

First identified in Golden Retriever DNA in 2015, NCL is a recessive inherited disease that is caused by a mutation in the CLN5, a gene found only in Golden Retrievers. Although there are many different types of NCLs that

affect different breeds of dogs and other species of animals, including humans, all NCLs cause pathological degenerative changes in the central nervous system of the affected individual.

The disease has shocked and devastated owners of affected dogs, who feel powerless to help their beloved pet. Symptoms become apparent at approximately 13 months of age. Initial signs may include subtle changes in coordination that occur during periods of excitement. Symptoms gradually increase, and by 15 to 18 months of age, other behavioral changes become apparent. The dog will experience high levels of agitation and may demonstrate aggressive biting toward the owner and canine housemates. As the disease progresses, affected dogs will circle and pace, tremble, and experience loss of control, seizures, and paralysis. As these deficiencies continue to increase, quality of life deteriorates, and the dogs often are euthanized by 2 years of age.

While there is no cure, a test is now available to identify the CLN5 mutation in Goldens, and, with good stewardship, prevent it from advancing further in Golden bloodlines. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) at the University of Missouri offers a kit using cheek-swab samples that will test the DNA of the dog in question. The test



will reveal whether the individual is normal/clear (does not have the CLN5 mutation), is a carrier (possesses the gene but is not affected), or is affected with the disease. That information is critical for owners seeking to breed their dog.

The Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) Health and Genetics Committee rec-

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