

variety of ways that judges react to various mouth conditions.

The following represents a variety of mouth conditions that can occur. I will share my opinion and ideas regarding each situation and what to do when faced with one of these situations as a judge.

Scissors bite. If the dog has a scissors bite, there is no fault.

Even bite. If the dog has an even bite, this is acceptable. I personally doubt that I would ever make a decision between two dogs regarding placements solely based upon one dog having an even bite and the other a scissors bite.

Overshot. An overshot dog must be disqualified.

Undershot. An undershot dog must be disqualified.

Missing teeth. This is not addressed in the standard; full dentition is not required. I do not look to see if the sides of the mouth have missing teeth.

The mouth won't close and the teeth won't come together. This is an issue I would fault, because it's a structural problem regarding the jaw. How much I would fault it would depend on the competition, other qualities, and how severe the jaw condition is. It would be a factor to consider. As stated in the standard, *The jaws should be of sufficient length and strength to carry large game birds with an easy, tender hold.* A condition like this could interfere with the dog's ability to carry a bird properly.

A wry mouth. Malocclusion is the deformation of a dog's jaw structure, leaving either the mandible (lower jaw) or the maxilla (upper jaw) out of line, or causing increased growth of a single side of a jaw, causing twisting of the jaws (wry mouth). I would regard this as an issue with the jaw. Thus the fault would have to be considered, and the seriousness would depend on how bad the condition is.

Misaligned ("dropped") teeth. This is a condition I personally don't like; it is not addressed in the standard but will be seen while looking at the bite. In most cases I probably would not fault it heavily, unless the severity is substantial.

Condition. I am talking about dirty

teeth. This is a turn-off for a judge, and it behooves the owner to maintain the condition of her dog's teeth as well as possible—not only for presentation in the ring, but for good health. As a judge, I typically don't fault it.

Missing teeth caused by an injury. This can happen. If a Chesapeake exhibited to me had missing teeth due to a probable injury, I would continue to judge the dog and assess the bite, if there were enough teeth present. If I felt the bite could not be assessed due to the missing teeth, I would not consider the dog for a high placement.

The standard is clear regarding the bite and the disqualifications relative to bite, saying: *Bite—Scissors is preferred, but a level bite is acceptable. Disqualifications: Either undershot or overshot bites are to be disqualified.*

When faced with other conditions, please use common sense and judge accordingly. —Nathaniel Horn, Columbia, Md.; kcb0y0@yahoo.com ♦



Curly-Coated Retrievers

Mary Kay Morel and her Curly-Coated Retrievers have participated in many "Meet the Breeds" events, and this month she shares some thoughts on making the experience a positive one.

"Meet the Breeds" Events With Your Curly

Many people have never seen a Curly-Coated Retriever in person, so "Meet the Breeds" events provide a forum where people can learn about these rare and beautiful dogs.

Ideally, a Curly ambassador should be a good representative of the breed in terms of physical characteristics as well as temperament. Any dogs participating in the event should be well socialized and able to handle the stress of contact with a multitude of strangers. The breed standard says that Curlies may be aloof. As long as your Curly will stand, sit, or lie quietly, people will appreciate the chance to see

one up close and talk to you about the breed.

Having the dog up on a grooming table rather than on the floor gives you more control over the situation, and this arrangement makes it easier to have face-to-face conversations with people. Unless you have helpers, only have one Curly out at a time and keep any others crated.

People will want to touch your dog and feel the tight, crisp curls that are the hallmark of the breed. Politely but firmly set some ground rules for interaction. Don't allow people to feed anything to your dog at a show or event. Treat your dog from your own pocket, as needed. Put yourself between your dog and the people, if necessary, to keep your dog from being overwhelmed by too many strangers at one time.

Even if you have the friendliest Curly in the world, don't allow him to stick his nose in the face of a strange child or baby to give kisses. Position your Curly so that small children can feel the coat on his back or sides instead of the head.

You might engage well-behaved older children by asking if they know the best way to meet a new dog. First remind kids to always ask permission before approaching a strange dog. Show them each how to touch their tongue to the back of their hand before quietly extending it (palm down) for the dog to sniff. To a dog, this is like "touching noses," only without the need to jump up in your face.

Be aware that unpredictable things might happen that could startle or frighten a dog. People might accidentally drop something on or near your Curly, or they might even step on your dog's foot or tail if he is on the floor. Curlies don't forget when scary or bad things happen to them, so do your best to make the experience pleasant for all involved. If you sense that your dog is uncomfortable, tired, or stressed, excuse



yourself and leave immediately.

Know the history of the breed, the breed standard, and other characteristics of Curlies, and be prepared to answer the same basic questions over and over again—and always do it with a smile. While Curlies are wonderful, versatile pets and multipurpose retrievers, they are wickedly smart and not always the right dog for everyone.

Be sure to refer interested parties to the parent-club website (coca.org) or the AKC for more information. —M.K.M.

Thank you, Mary Kay, for sharing this with us. —Ann Shinkle, *Grand Island, Fla.*; Annshinkle@aol.com ♦

Flat-Coated Retrievers

Our guest columnist this issue is Wayne Wilkinson.

You Can Teach an Old Dog New Tricks

In March 2008 I attended a daylong workshop called “Fetch Fever,” offered by the field committee of the Flat-Coated Retriever Club of Illinois to newcomers who’d never earned a field title.



I didn’t know what to expect, but the five field-committee members provided hands-on coaching to introduce dogs to retrieving and handlers to training techniques, bumper-throwing, field vocabulary, and how to participate in a training group. Dogs were worked in brief sessions, each time extending distances, and by the end of the day participants were amazed at what their dogs could do.

At the time, it seemed that our 3-year-old Cammii (Oakwoods Black Pearl) had more potential for field-work, but I brought 8-year-old Bobby (Mars Lights at Night, CD, MX, MXJ, AJP, OAP) along for the exercise.

When I told Doris Ehret that Bobby didn’t swim, she just smiled and asked if I knew what modeling was. I had no idea what she was talking about, but she showed me that once Bobby saw Cammii retrieving from water, he

couldn’t stand by idly. Much to my amazement, he jumped right in after a bumper.

Karen Peterson became my mentor, and many other club members also included me in their training sessions and taught me about field, even though it seemed unlikely that either of my dogs would ever earn any titles. Bobby looked like he was smiling when running agility, but that was nothing compared to his excitement when he knew we were going out field training.

In the fall of 2008, I attended the club’s October Fetch event, a field workshop given by Bunny Millikin. Bobby received a Reserve Jam the next day—and the next spring he placed second!

In April 2010, Bobby and I attended Mitch White’s Field Training Concepts seminar, sponsored by FCRCI. I expected the material to be way over my head, as well as Bobby’s. But I

learned a lot—and as for Bobby, every time I looked at a setup and said, “Bobby can’t do this,” Bobby would go and do it.

Next, the WC test! This was at the Indiana specialty.

At the test, Bobby, now 10 years old, lined the land-double and completed the water marks to earn his WC. Two days later, he finished second in Unsteady A singles. He delivered to hand seven of the eight marks run in the two stakes; the eighth was dropped on my feet, after a long swim. Of all the titles and ribbons Bobby has earned in agility, none was more satisfying than these two.

On to the Junior Hunter title! We continued to train through the summer, as neither of us wanted to quit. Bobby’s delivery to hand improved enough for us to start running in Junior—and qualifying. At the Midwest Field Trial Club’s test in September, Bobby finished his Junior title!

It just proves that it’s never too late to get your Flat-Coats involved in the very thing they were bred to do. However, I would recommend starting somewhat earlier than I did.

Bobby is now 11 and still competing in both field events and agility.

Thanks to Karen Peterson, Doris Ehret, Cindy Chaffee, Liz Farwell, Sandra Muer, Joyce Ann Krueger, Shirley Short, Bunny Millikin, Lori Nevins, and everyone else who’s helped me. —W.W.

Thank you, Wayne. —Sally Terroux, *Arvada, Colo.*; sjterroux@aol.com ♦

Golden Retrievers



Influence

Recently I had the opportunity to judge at championship level shows in four different countries inside of a four-week timeframe. This included all-breed shows in three of the four countries, and the Golden national specialties in Korea and Brazil.

As you may know, Goldens (and many other breeds as well) are primarily of American style and primarily from American bloodlines. Very few Americans, however, have actually visited the countries where “our” style of dog dominates in the show ring. As a result, few of us realize the great influence we have on the way our breed is perceived and presented overseas. Some of the presentation might well surprise you.

While some of the more serious overseas breeders have been to American shows, especially the national specialty, most have not, often because of the significant costs involved or, in some cases, the difficulty obtaining a visa. Yet they emulate American handling styles, and even more our grooming techniques—or what they perceive as our grooming techniques.

Many of you know that I dislike the “fluffing and puffing” of Golden coats too often seen in the ring today because it is totally contrary to the requirements of the breed standard, which specifically faults a *soft, open coat*. You might be surprised that this look is copied and exaggerated overseas. In judging, particularly in South America and Asia, but to a lesser

