



BREED COLUMNS

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breed champion, a gorgeous example of his breed with a lovely temperament.)

So much for the Novice A class—and a point of reference here: Chapter 2, Section 3 of the AKC obedience regulations reads, “Handlers who carry or offer food in the ring ... must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.”

Onto Preferred Novice with another “giant” breed. She worked quickly and did all the principal parts of each exercise, qualifying and finishing her PCD title. Kudos to this team! In the meantime, the other judge grabbed my raincoat and boots and took them to the car.

By now it is 2 P.M.—and 2 P.M. is my hypothetical time to finish judging and leave for the airport. There is one single Beginner Novice B dog to judge. During heeling the dog pulled and tugged to go where he wanted. He paid no attention to his handler. It became obvious that three days of obedience and breed competition was too much for him. When

he refused to “set-up” for the Figure 8 exercise, both the handler and I agree that she should self-excuse. It is now 2:03—I gathered all my score sheets and other judging paraphernalia, hastily putting them into my judging bag, thanked all the stewards and workers for their assistance, and raced to the rental car to head to the airport.

Yes, we made it to the airport (driving very quickly, I might add), returned the car, checked our luggage, and trekked our way to the gate, which of course, was at the very end of the terminal.

I hope my adventures in the obedience ring caused some smiles.

—Betsy Horn Humer,
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Curly-Coated Retrievers

CURLY-COAT CARE

First-time puppy owners sometimes ask, “Where are the curls? When do they

come in? Will they be soft or crisp? Open or tight?”

Every Curly becomes curly at its own pace and in its own way. Many factors such as genetics, nutrition, and allergies can affect the coat. You can even see variations in the same litter. A puppy may have a “teddy bear” coat—soft, fluffy, and straight with no wave. Or he might have a wavy coat—curls mixed with waves. Or he might have a straight coat. But the puppy coat does not necessarily indicate what the adult coat will be.

I’ve seen good, wavy coats become patterned, and I’ve seen lovely curls appear in a straight, fluffy coat when the dog reached 9 months of age. My 4-month-old puppy had lovely, crisp little curls. A previous pup had tighter waves for a few months, and then her coat developed into a mass of tight, swirled little curls. I’ve seen 2- and even 3-year-old curl-less dogs suddenly grow a beautiful curly coat. I’ve seen a liver with a ridge of darker, coarser hair down the

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center of his back (some of us say that's the "big dog coat" starting in).

Only time and maturity will tell what kind of coat your Curly finally has. There is variation, and several types of coats win in the ring.

When a Curly blows coat, you probably shouldn't show the dog. Wait until the coat grows back in. Some breeders say good coats grow back in faster than poor coats. Bitches will often lose their coats two or three months after their season. Some lose only a little coat, with the most obvious places being shoulders and back. Some go bald after having a litter of puppies.

You can usually rely on a bitch to lose some coat about twice a year. Males usually shed once a year, after the winter. I know of one male here in Florida who never sheds and is always in full coat.

I asked several breeders how they care for their Curlies' coats. One longtime breeder uses a #4 blade to routinely clip her 9-year-old



Curly-Coated
Retriever

bitch's coat. After a bitch has puppies, and starts to blow coat, she uses a #7 blade to clip the bitch. Using clippers reduces the amount of excess hair all over the house when your Curly blows coat. Within a few weeks, sparse patches fill in, and the full coat comes back in six or eight weeks.

A slicker brush helps to remove dead hair when a Curly is shedding. Another breeder cautions us to never

use a brush, but instead use a metal comb with widely spaced teeth when your Curly is shedding. *A Curly in full coat should never be brushed.*

Unless the dog is shedding, I rarely need to bathe a Curly. I can hose him down, and only use a towel to remove excess moisture. On the whole, a healthy Curly has a wash-and-wear coat!

—Ann Shinkle, 649
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[Curly-Coated Retriever
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Golden Retrievers

HOPE AND HEALING

Their mission is always the same. Their message always welcome. Comfort, compassion, and love.

Following the horrific mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine, on October 25, 2023, a network of

LCC (Lutheran Church Charities) K-9 Comfort dog teams responded as they always do, ready to serve, and offer their prayerful presence to the people of Lewiston as a source of hope and healing.

Eight teams of Comfort Goldens from across the Midwest assembled to deploy to Lewiston. They brought with them LCC K-9 Ministries coloring book for the children, and mini stuffed K-9 Comfort Goldens as a reminder that

they are loved and supported by people across the nation.

Upon arrival in Lewiston, the teams joined Lewiston residents at the Basilica of St. Peter and Paul, where the grieving community had gathered for a “One Lewiston” community vigil.

City officials, faith leaders, first responders, and hundreds of community members had come together to pay tribute to the 18 victims who lost their lives, and to share words of



Golden Retrievers

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