



BREED COLUMNS

SPORTING GROUP

a different “version” be offered?

The premier event was chaired and orchestrated by Sonia Cunningham, NSS Chair 2023, with an outstanding committee who worked with her. Congratulations on a successful event!

The next national is August 28–31, in Wilmington, Ohio, at the Roberts Center.

Comments are always welcome.

—Betsy Horn Humer,
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American Chesapeake Club

Curly Coated Retrievers

THOSE SLOPING REARS

I have been giving quite a bit of thought lately to the appearance of the rear end of Curly Coated Retrievers. A friend of mine who has attended quite a few dog shows recently mentioned to me that she has noticed some rears that, conformation-wise, are not of good quality.



Curly Coated
Retriever

Some of the rears displayed tails that were curved up. Some tails came off the rear with a distinct dip, rather than coming off the rear end in almost a straight line, as they should. Our standard states that tails should be carried straight

or fairly straight, and never curled over the back, kinked, or crooked.

At some of the shows I attended a few years ago, I observed Curlies with tails that were curled, and other tails that were coming off the rear with a distinct dip.

COURTESY LYNDR A BEAM

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I have also observed a few tails that definitely curled up almost over the back as dogs trotted around the ring. When we hard-stack the dogs we can hold the tail out, but in movement the flaw is obvious.

A curled tail is not pleasant to see! I hope that in the near future, our breeders will pay closer attention to the rear and tail-set of both sire and dam as they select pairings for future litters.

Ours is a silhouette breed. We don't have elements in appearance that could distract the eye from the outline. From our beautiful heads in profile, we need to be conscious of the silhouette all the way to the tip of the tail!

—Ann Shinkle, 649

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

Golden Retrievers

GOLDEN RETRIEVER LIFE SPAN

You bring home your Golden Retriever

puppy, an adorable, wiggly ball of yellow fluff. You are determined to give your puppy the best life possible, although you understand that his life, though sweet, will be relatively short—10 to 12 years, which is the average lifespan of today's Golden Retriever.

Many veterinarians today posit that was not always the case, that Goldens of past generations lived longer than those of today. They also agree that Goldens today have some of the highest rates of cancer of any dog breed—possibly *the* highest. Several large-scale studies currently underway are examining both of those issues. Could they possibly be connected?

Stepping back in time, those issues were nonexistent when Golden Retrievers first graced this planet. History recounts how, in 1868, Scottish nobleman Sir Dudley Marjoriebanks bred his yellow retriever, a dog named Nous, to a Tweed Water Spaniel named Belle. He gave the resulting

four yellow pups to friends, with the intent of developing a superior line of yellow dogs. Success followed, with the results recorded in our Golden Retriever history books (as well as in past AKC columns on the breed).

Marjoriebanks was a vanguard of his time, a pioneer of what today is called line-breeding. Line-breeding is a common practice in the dog world, and while such breedings may produce the desired features—such as a perfectly square head or long, silky coat—it also carries risks. All dogs carry good genes as well as not-so-good genes that carry harmful mutations, which they pass along to their offspring. When two closely related dogs are bred together, their offspring are more likely to inherit any harmful mutation(s) carried by both parents.

That scenario is further complicated by what's known as the “popular sire effect.” Statistically, the average breeding purebred male