

## SPORTING GROUP

Shorthairs, in addition to the breeders who have provided dogs for specialized training such as drug detection, military working dogs, search-and-rescue, service dogs, and therapy dogs in nursing homes, veterans' hospitals, pediatric units, elementary-children reading programs, and on and on.

And it was at this point in the conversation that I suggested to put the caller in touch with an individual with the experience of training and using their GSP as a therapy dog in multiple situations who could provide detailed information about the breed's performance as a "therapy/service dog."

Only time will tell if the caller's final decision will be to get a GSP and train it to be a therapy/service dog. We can only hope it is *biddable*, *trainable*, and *versatile*, as the breed's original developers/breeders intended.

—Patte Titus,  
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German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America,  
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## Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

### TALLY HO! LURE COURSING—A SPORT FOR CHESSIES TO RUN

Actually, lure coursing is a sport that was originally reserved for sighthounds, with

tests and titles exclusively for these breeds. However, since all breeds, of all sizes, love to chase down that "rabbit" in the field, the AKC has now opened the game to all breeds and mixed-breeds.

This lively and healthy activity promotes the dog's basic instinct to hunt by sight, chasing an artificial lure. The pass/fail Coursing Ability Test (CAI) runs one dog at time, to pursue a lure with enthusiasm and without interruption within a given time. For the test dogs must be over 1 year old, and entrants are examined for lameness and fitness before they are permitted to run. Safety is of critical importance.

The course distance for dogs over 12 inches tall is 600 yards, with no acute turns, and maximum time to complete the run is two minutes—more than enough time for a fast Chessie.

When a dog passes three tests, he earns the CA (Coursing Ability) title. Ten passes earns the CAA (Coursing Ability Advanced), and 25 passes gives the dog the CAX title (Coursing Ability Excellent). With every additional 25 passes, a number is added after the CAX title (CAX2).

The best part of this game is for the owner-handler. Success relies on the dog's prey drive—mostly, he is going to do it or not. There is some training available to encourage

prey drive for an unenthused dog, to wake up that sleeping instinct.

For the dogs who see that lure and go for it, the owner does very little except to have a good recall. Just get the dog to the start, and hang on until "Tally ho!" resounds. Let go and watch, and catch the dog at the end. What a great way to exercise your Chesapeake!

My Chesapeakes so love this sport that I had to hide them behind cars or buildings while we awaited our turn. They saw the set-up and were ready to go, without me—and they are strong.

One time at an agility trial, a lure-coursing event was running in the next field, with only fencing between the two sports. Not a good idea. As I was getting ready to go into the agility ring, the lure started. My boy saw it and forgot about agility or me. He took off, running next to the fencing outside the lure-coursing field. He leaped the fencing to the agility trial, jumped the jumps in his way, and stopped at the end of field when the lure disappeared. He trotted back, jumping the jumps and the fence for the recall. Thankfully, no dogs were running agility at that moment. Also thankfully, everyone understood and laughed.

When you find a lure-coursing group or sighthound club nearby that holds lure-coursing tests, sign up, and watch your Chessie have a chasing good time!

—Audrey Austin,  
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American Chesapeake Club,  
<http://www.amchessiedclub.org>

## Curly-Coated Retrievers

### THROUGH THE YEARS

Recently Victor Hewer, one of our newer Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America members, posted three questions for us to think about. I believe they are excellent, and I decided to respond to Victor in this month's column. Following are the questions and my answers.

1. *Did you know the exact type that you wanted when you got your first Curly?*

My answer to your first question, Victor, is that yes, I saw a picture in a library book of two Australian Curlics who were stunning, and the description of the breed was just what I hoped for. My wish was to acquire a Curly similar to those two in that picture, and in 1977 Star arrived in Miami and joined our family. However, she was very small, very vocal, and extremely active; not at all what I expected. She was just starting a happy obedience career when she had an automobile accident, and we lost her at 17 months of age.

2. *As your knowledge grew, did your ideal of type change?*

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I still remembered that photo, but at that time there were only a handful of Curly breeders in the U.S., and I had a challenge ahead of me in my quest for another Curly. My second Curly, Charm, joined our family and was more of the type in the picture of those first two whom I saw. I was learning type all the time by flying off to the yearly national specialties, and while on active reserve Army duty I would look up any Curlies who lived in the area.

As my knowledge grew, yes, my picture of the ideal type did change, but it was still much like that original picture in that library book.

Another Curly joined our household, and with her I briefly experienced showing in the ring, as she was more the type worthy of being shown. At a young age she acquired pyometra and was spayed, but she did live a very active life, performing in agility, obedience, tracking, and field activities.

*3. Do your Curlies today resemble your first Curly in type?*

My two Curlies today are quite different from Star of yesterday. Both have more bone and substance and weigh 70 pounds, versus the 47 pounds that Star weighed at 17 months of age. I am very pleased with them both, and I am still always learning more about our wonderful breed.

Thanks, Victor, for asking those very

thought-provoking questions. I wish you many wonderful years of Curly enjoyment.

—Ann Shinkle,  
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Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America,  
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### Flat-Coated Retrievers EFFECT OF AGE OF NEUTERING (OR NOT) ON BEHAVIOR

As a full-time dog trainer for over 45 years and an all-breed handler for 25, I've had ample opportunity to observe the effects of neutering on all breeds of dogs, including Flat-Coated Retrievers. I have owned and observed Flat-coats since 1957 and started breeding in 1960. I feel that too little attention is paid, in all breeds and especially in ours, to the effect of the neutering of the male dog on behavior. The effect is definitely influenced by not only the age but also the degree of development of the animal at the time of the surgery.

We understand that there are serious health advantages to delaying neutering to at least one year of age. In the family companion dog we usually want to prevent the development of masculine characteristics both before and after the neutering.

Many of us in this breed are involved with competition, performance, and hunting dogs.

When working with male dogs we usually prefer to work with them unneutered, or neutered as late as possible, so that we have as high a level of activity as possible.

As the male dog becomes adolescent, near six months of age, he gradually develops male characteristics. As he begins to lift his leg to urinate to mark his territory, he develops a higher level of activity, a greater sense of independence, and sometimes a less social attitude toward other male dogs and a growing watchdog instinct. When we want the higher level of activity but the dog is becoming too independent in the field or other work, or becomes too antisocial with other dogs (unusual in Flat-Coats), we might compromise and neuter, as those problems develop and do not respond adequately to training. Usually, by that time the dog is near or over a year of age.

It used to be standard to neuter the family companion dog between 6 and 9 months of age to prevent these masculine characteristics that make the family dog more difficult to control. Now, if we wish to wait to a year or more of age to neuter, we need to delay the development of the male's leg-lifting, or marking, to urinate. Marking is the "barometer" of masculine characteristics. When the dog is walked in public, smelling trees, posts, and bushes where other males have "marked their territory," the young adolescent dog is stimu-

lated to become a competitive male and begin marking. Playing with other dogs can have the same effect. These activities can also cause an adult neutered male who had never marked his territory to begin marking, which is also accompanied by a change to unwanted masculine behavior.

A dog has to be allowed to only "sniff" during the elimination part of a walk, usually less than five minutes no more than once or twice on a walk. Keeping the sniffing and elimination part of the walk on flat ground or grass instead of near trees, posts, and bushes keeps marking to a minimum and delays the development of male characteristics or gradually decreases male characteristics already developed.

The beginning of the walk is usually a few minutes of heeling to keep the dog's attention on the owner, and the remainder of the walk, which is for exercise for the dog and owner, is usually done at a brisk walk, jog, or run, with no sniffing or stopping allowed. The dog will sometimes continue to lift his leg to urinate once or twice on a walk on flat grass but will discontinue (or never develop) the frequent "every tree and post" marking of the more masculine dog. This will keep him more calm and easier to control. In his own backyard, a male dog seldom marks his territory as frequently as he does away from home unless he