

## SPORTING GROUP

unknown Colorado neighborhood we managed to avoid two Malamutes, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, and another large dog—all on loose leads.

It was the owner of a small mixed-breed dog that surprised me. I had observed as they approached the hair on his dog's back was raised from its withers to the base of its tail. By the time they were closer, I had moved my girl to the opposite side and stepped off the side-walk so they could pass. He stopped and asked if my dog was friendly. I replied, "Yes, but the hair raised along your dog's back is a warning sign that it may not be friendly toward my dog," and we continued on our way.

I never cease to be amazed by an owner's lack understanding their dog's body language.

—Patte Titus,

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### Curly-Coated Retrievers

Guest contributor Jenny Dickinson continues with her tracking ideas, which follow.

#### TRACKING FOR FUN

Curlies are so good at tracking that more of us should do it! The pandemic time fouled up everybody's plans for competitive events with

our dogs. I want to share with you what I am currently doing for fun, with the understanding that you may later decide to try for tracking titles. I will not have you do something sloppy that you might have to fix later.

As in obedience, we want to break down each component of the exercise into as simple a unit as possible. I learned tracking with Rottweiler people who used the German style, so I use a tremendous amount of food. You do not have to, but why would you not? In the event that you decide you want to work toward titles, your dog must clearly indicate to the judge that he has found an article, such as a glove. You will be 30 feet behind your dog and the judges will be behind you, so the indication needs to be unmistakable. I like my dog to lie down at the article. I am not taking the cart before the horse here and shall explain why.

From the very beginning, I teach pup to lie down with the article between his front feet. I use an old leather glass case which I can run to and open up to disclose yummy meat or cheese. This keeps the dog in place. You might also use a leather glove with meat on or in or under it. The dog needs a clear terminus—a goal to be reached. So I teach pup to indicate from the very beginning. I want to be able to have that be the end of *every* track, even the beginner's 20-foot track.

Tracking is not a race! We want the dog to



be slow and methodical so he does not overshoot a turn. Turns are introduced after the pup can follow long, straight lines in different wind conditions with confidence.

In the beginning, I use lots of food when I lay a track. I might open a can of sardines when I begin. I drip the oil at the start pad, scuff it in, and then continue to drip in front of each step, so that my footsteps, which the dog will ultimately track with no food, are imbued with something that has a compelling and enticing smell. The sardines themselves end up in a glass case or glove that pup discovers at the end of the track.

Laying the first track: Let pup watch you from behind a fence or let a friend hold his leash as he watches you lay the track. Face into the wind. Let him see you place a flag. Rub a piece of hot dog on the bottoms of your shoes and stamp your feet, making a scent-pad just to the right of the flag. Let him see you carefully step with one foot right in front of the other, dropping bits of hotdog in your footprints. Go 20 feet or so. Let the dog see you drop the article, put food on it and step on it, and then turn 90 degrees and run away.

Some people like to triple-lay the first track, stepping back and forth up and down the line,

COURTESY: LONDA BEAM

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so it is *loaded* with scent. However, you must make sure that you always end at the article, because dogs know the direction the track. Some people like to scuff the track for this same reason.

We want pup to understand the game from the very beginning. This is not the time to have him struggle. The track needs to be as distinct as we can make it, and we want it to be easy and gratifying for him to discover the idea of this game.

There are a certain type of trackers who use hotdog scent in each footstep because their dogs are required to have a “deep nose.” AKC tracking makes no requirement in terms of style, and tracking is pass-fail. I think it makes sense to encourage pup to keep his head down so that he does not lose the track, even though his posture is not graded in AKC. Air-scenting is not penalized in AKC. However, it can lead the dog to confusion, so we do not promote it. In the beginning, when you work closely to the dog, you can easily point him back down to the ground if you need to

There is much more to say about the mechanics of setting up yourself and your dog for tracking, and I will have more to say in a later column.—J.D.

Thank you, Jenny, for sharing this very worthwhile column. Also, since I live in Florida and have only tracked in Florida, I

have not used food as you have described and would be very interested to hear from any Floridians who track as just how they utilize food with our challenge of ants and food on the ground.

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## Golden Retrievers

### CBD OIL A POSSIBLE HELP FOR ARTHRITIS?

Canine osteoarthritis (OA) has bedeviled Golden Retrievers and other large breeds for decades. Pain-management remedies have included pharmaceutical products, physical therapy, massage, other hands-on therapies, and in many cases, surgery.

Hopefully we now can add another “weapon” to our arsenal of pain management solutions: cannabidiol.

The use of cannabidiol (CBD oil) in treating canine osteoarthritis (OA) is a groundbreaking partnership between veterinary science and hemp extracts to help relieve a dog’s pain from the inflammation caused by OA.

To clarify, we’re not talking about marijuana (or “pot” or “weed”). Although marijuana and hemp are the same species of the cannabis plant, legal marijuana contains more than .03 percent THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the



Golden Retriever Ch. High Farms Sutter's Gold, 1967

chemical that is primarily responsible for the “high” associated with cannabis.

But not for our Goldens! Hemp contains less than .03 or less THC, which poses no danger to our precious dogs.

Although not yet part of standard veterinary care for dogs with OA, several clinical trials

currently underway are evaluating the potential benefits of CBD oil in treating dogs with chronic OA.

Dr. Joseph Waskshlag, DVM, Ph.D., DACVN, DACVSMR, professor of clinical nutrition and veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation at Cornell University, in a 2018 clinical trial