

## HOUND Group

trails out behind them at 3 o'clock, as if to say, "Yawn, hohum. I'll do this but I won't act thrilled about it." After all, trotting around a ring could never compare to the absolute ecstasy and excitement of chasing hares!

Other Harriers, due to their general temperament, are what may be called "down-waggers." The structure and set of their tail is correct, but they show their happiness by furiously wagging their tail back and forth, parallel to the ground rather than straight up in the air.

Both of these tail positions are absolutely correct for Harriers, hence the wording in the standard. *Please do not fault either of these tails—they are perfectly acceptable in Harriers!*

The only time a judge should penalize for a nonstructural tail issue is if the hound is obviously frightened or upset, and clamping the tail between his legs. In this instance, please give the hound a moment to regroup if he can. Otherwise, do not reward him on that day. Hopefully, the next time he's in the ring he'll be happier and more confident.

Please keep this tail's tale in mind the next time you judge Harriers!

—Donna Smiley-Auborn, *Inyokern, Calif.*; [auborn@harriers.net](mailto:auborn@harriers.net) ♦



Irish Wolfhound

captured, and brought through the dog door in the basement, up the stairs to the living room, and handed proudly to the first person available.

One day I found my little bitch, Zorina, tucking a live hen's head under the couch cushion so that it looked like the old cartoons of the ostrich with its head in the ground. The hen, now in the dark, stood trance-like. Zorina stepped back to examine the effect. Satisfied, she ran back down to look for another.

One summer her brother, Anansi, came in the house with bulging cheeks. A peculiar muffled cheeping emitted from his muzzle. He lay down on the dog bed and opened his jaws like a Nile crocodile. Out marched six fluffy white Guinea chicks! I scooped them up and returned them to their hysterical mother, who attacked me for having stolen her children.

In his youth, Kit, who recently passed away at 15, came in through the dog yard with a box turtle in his mouth. He looked like a receiver running with the ball for a touchdown with all the other dogs trying to get his

prize. When he came in and I saw that he was preparing to chew on the poor turtle, I took it from him, with much praise for his unplanned generosity. He was so thrilled with the approval that ever after he brought me turtles—many times, the very same one!

Another time, while painting in my kitchen studio, I kept hearing scratching at the back door. It would scratch for a minute then stop, only to start up again in a few minutes. Cleaning my brush, I went to the door to see young Alphonso setting down a rabbit. Of course it took off down the stairs. Every time Alphonso had scratched at the door he had set down the rabbit. It would run downstairs and do laps around the walls of the dog room. The poor rabbit was finally cornered by all five Ibizans. Amazingly, they obeyed the command to *leave it*, and let me pick up the rabbit. I took poor old bunny upstairs and set him in the sink, dressed a minor flesh wound, and released the—hopefully wiser—rabbit out the front door.

Ibizans love to present prizes. It is an inbred talent. This does not mean that young dogs won't accidentally kill small wild animals. They must be guided to proper behavior. Mice are considered hors d'oeuvres and generally eaten or squished. So don't chastise your Ibizan for bringing you gifts. Just try to be there to release them to freedom. —Nan Kilgore-Little, *Gladstone, Va.*; [LWS4art@centralva.net](mailto:LWS4art@centralva.net) ♦



Ibizan Hounds

### Retrievers of Live Game

Ibizan Hounds in their native lands of Spain and the Balearic Islands hunt in packs, capturing and retrieving to hand live rabbits. Live retrieval allows the human to dispatch an unspoiled meal. Our life with these amazing dogs leads to many curious events in which a variety of wildlife has been brought into the house. We keep a few free-ranging ornamental chickens for bug control in our yard. Occasionally one of these foolish fowl will fly in among the dogs. It is riotously pursued,



Irish Wolfhounds

### Not a Mastiff

Using one breed to describe another is a common practice among dog fanciers. However, the danger in this is that we have no control over changes that other breeds might undergo over time that would render these comparisons inaccurate. This is why the Irish Wolfhound Club of

KRISTA DROOP

America removed references to the Scottish Deerhound and the Great Dane from the Wolfhound standard. Today these two breeds are rarely brought into the discussion, but in their place is emerging a breed that is totally alien to the Irish Wolfhound and is the antithesis of the sighthounds—the Mastiff.

Comparisons to the Mastiff are likely attributable to a 1991 book on the Irish Wolfhound by a breeder-judge who wrote, “Mastiff blood mixed with the Irish Wolfhound from the earliest times.” As a result of this incorrect statement, Mastiffs are now making appearances in Irish Wolfhound seminars and judges’ education programs, and it’s time to set the matter straight. *Neither the Mastiff nor his blood was ever used in the recovery of the modern Irish Wolfhound.* In all the documented history of the breed, from the letter written in Rome in 391 by Quintus Aurelius Symmachus thanking his brother for the gift of seven Irish wolf dogs, up until present day, there has never been a recorded breeding between Irish Wolfhound and Mastiff.

In *The Irish Wolfdog*, published in 1897, Father Edmund Hogan pointed out that Wolfhounds are not of the mastiff class. The “masistin” or “masty dog,” and the rare mention of the Mastiff in Irish Wolfhound history has been with regard to form or strength—never to having been introduced into the Irish Wolfhound gene pool.

When the book claiming a blood association with the Mastiff came out, several breed authorities strongly took issue. One of these was Anthony Killykeen Doyle. In *A Discussion of the Irish Wolfhound*, Doyle wrote, “While I believe that it is quite useful to discuss Danes and Deerhounds in relation to the Irish Wolfhound standard, I feel strongly that it is incorrect to do so with the Mastiff. I only raise this point because a recently-published and widely-distributed book on our breed belabors an alleged connection between the Mastiff and the Irish Wolfhound.”

The basis of the “Mastiff theory” is a letter written in 1797 by Lord Altamont, in which Altamont referred to having had two types of “wolfdogs,” one type he called his “Mastiff wolf-

dog,” and the other his “Greyhound wolfdog.” He never at any time indicated that a Mastiff had been used in breeding, but rather that the dogs resembled either the Greyhound or Mastiff in type.

Doyle noted that the current Marquis of Sligo wrote that the last two of the original breed were owned by the second Marquis of Sligo. He said that when the dog died, “The bitch was killed so that the breed should not be spoilt.”

Doyle concludes, “The flat ears, broad skulls, etc., which the author blames on the influence of the Mastiff are in fact the result of crosses with Great Danes. Danes were introduced several times during the last resuscitation of the Irish Wolfhound and as recently as the Second World War. No crosses with the English Mastiff were ever recorded. I hope that it is now clear that the Mastiff has no relevance in a discussion of the Irish Wolfhound standard. It is both historically inaccurate and misleading, particularly for those just beginning in our breed—the same people most likely to read the book that promotes this theory.”

The English Mastiff is an impressive animal with a long history, much like the Irish Wolfhound, but they share not a drop of blood between them.

—Lois J. Thomasson, Salinas, Calif.; Fleetwind@aol.com ♦



### Stud Dog du Jour

If you own a male dog who enjoys even moderate success in the show ring, you have probably been approached by owners of bitches seeking to arrange a breeding between their bitch and your dog.

For some reason, there seems to be an assumption by many bitch owners that a male dog who is shown, is somehow automatically “available at public stud.”

What’s wrong with this picture? First, just because a dog wins a few ribbons, does not ensure that he can contribute positive traits to the breed gene

pool. Genes are not improved by the accumulation of ribbons. Breeding decisions based on show records are not based on important genetic factors such as correct structure, temperament, and genetic health.

Stud dog owners bear just as much responsibility for protecting the breed as the owners of potential dams of planned litters. The stud owner is responsible for discussing with any bitch owner who seeks to breed to their male, “What do you want to accomplish with this breeding and how will these two dogs compliment each other genetically?” It is also their responsibility to objectively evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of both dog and bitch in any proposed breeding. No single male can work miracles with matings to mediocre bitches. This does not lead to breed improvement. “Breed the best to the best” is an axiom for all who undertake the responsibility of making puppies.

Responsible owners of superior quality male dogs need to consider several things before accepting any breeding on their dog.

First, do the dog and bitch physically complement each other and are they good-to-excellent representatives of the breed standard? Show wins may be a measure of this, but owners should be the most knowledgeable and severe critics of their own breed standard and their own dogs.

Second, do these individual dogs represent strong families of dogs? Are their parents, siblings, and offspring above average when measured by the breed standard? Mediocrity begets mediocrity and worse.

Third, is the owner of the bitch as concerned as you about the placement of puppies produced by your stud dog? Shouldn’t stud-dog owners be as responsible for the lives of pups fathered by their dogs as the owners of the puppies’ mothers? Do you want to see your dog’s name in the second generation of a pet-shop pedigree? Do you want to see one of the puppies you helped to produce turn up on a shelter “adopt me” list? In this time of troubles for dog breeders, we are all responsible for the welfare of puppies we help create.

Please look beyond the ribbons and the ads for the stud dog du jour and