

Tails

Sue wrote and asked for some input regarding keeping the tail on a pup. Corby is going to be 12 weeks old on Friday 21 April. We made the decision to keep his tail and we would like to advance some of our thinking regarding this matter.

We are out of the show dog business. When you are competing you must abide by club rules once you are no longer showing the rules go away. Why mutilate a pup if you don't have to? The only reason the OES originally had their tails bobbed was to avoid a tax back in olden days. I have watched Corby grow over the past four weeks and the tail is useful to him. When he runs it is something of a counter balance and a rudder. I have heard that OES's tend to be clumsy and a bit ungainly. Corby is a big boy who will probably top out in the upper range of the OES's. If paw size is an indication he is going to be huge. That should translate into a very ungainly and awkward dog, Corby is anything but. He flies around the yard and over low obstacles like a demon and keeps his balance and cuts turns on a dime.

The appearance issue. The OES tail is not rat like but full and proportionate to the dog. It is a good accent to his appearance.

The house problem. So far no problems and our house is loaded with stuff that could suffer tail damage. Our previous dog was a Briard who went 190lbs and had a very active tail but he learned to control it in tight spaces and once he was trained all we had to say was watch your tail and he stopped wagging and moved clear of the obstacle when he was clear he would resume wagging.

Grooming problems. If you keep the dog clean the dog will stay clean. Again Corby is young but the Briard only had one incident of tail poop in nine years, that was because of an attack of diarrhea and trust me it was more trouble to clean off the back of his legs than his tail area.

Tail uses. Corby's tail talks to us. Once you get to know your dog you can tell if he is asking out to poop, tail straight out with end curled down, or to whiz tail straight out end curled up. This has helped tremendously in house training. It has also helped in behavior training wagging is good frantic wagging is a sign of a need for additional exercise.

Dog safety. Dogs live in the moment they don't foresee the consequences of their actions. So far we have been extremely fortunate with Corby but I can give you several instances where our Briard and before him our Akita got themselves into situations where the tail being grabbed by daddy as a last resort saved big vet bills. It may sound cruel but that extra handle helped steer them from real danger. I would rather cause the dog momentary discomfort than have to hold him on a vets table to have a leg put in a cast or have stitches administered. I would point out both of the dogs were big and incredibly well trained, they both however were dogs and they just don't think like we do. You are buying a gentle giant but a giant all the same don't toss away a tool of control that could save your dogs life.

Right now Corby is a puppy but his tail only adds to his appearance and his appeal. No offense to anyone else but I just couldn't imagine him without it.

Tom Mohr

Corby's Dad