

CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER RING PRESENTATION Coat and Weight

The Chesapeake was developed as a no-nonsense rugged retriever that works in harsh conditions. The Chesapeake today is still functioning in this capacity and should be presented in the show ring as such.

The Chesapeake is an athletic breed and should be shown in working condition, not overweight. There does not need to be a distinction between working and show weight. This is becoming a problem in the breed. A Chesapeake in proper weight will have a light to moderate amount of flesh covering its ribcage. The ribs should be able to be felt without too much pressure, but they should not be seen. A slightly trimmer dog would be preferred instead of an overweight dog that may be hindered as a working retriever due to the excess weight.

When it comes to coat, the Chesapeake does not require nor should it be, excessively groomed for the show ring. They are a breed that can walk from the field to the ring. Too much grooming can strip out the undercoat and natural oils that are described in the breed standard. Back brushing the coat is becoming more popular but should not be considered proper presentation. Some dogs are presented with their entire coats back-brushed to fluff them up. The backs and fronts of legs are being back-brushed completely down to the feet to give the illusion of larger bone. Some are blowing the dog's coat dry. Blow drying opens up the coat and exposes the dog to the elements, defeating the purpose of their protective double coat. Again, the Chesapeake should be able to walk from the field to the ring. The opposite is also true: they should be able to go from the ring to the field or marsh and the owner should not have to worry about ruining grooming.

As far as these areas of weight and coat are concerned, it is up to you as the judge to set the standard for what is acceptable in your ring. That will help control what is brought into your ring. Exhibitors have said that some judges expect more grooming because it is a dog show. Yes, but a dog show is not necessarily a beauty contest. Exhibitors say that they know it is not correct presentation, but if that is what the judges want, that is what they will present in the ring. Evidently this is a vicious cycle. Please keep in mind the breed standard of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever as an athletic, rugged working retriever, not a coddled, pampered show dog fresh from the salon.

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