



The NLRC was organized in 1996 with the idea of creating a national club that would preserve and promote the Labrador Retriever. Everyone in the Labrador community is welcome...from pet owners to old timers.

We are a National Lab Club formed by the members, for the members, working together for the preservation and service to the Labrador Retriever.

How do I make my Labrador more Competitive in the Show Ring?

by Becky Gorton

At the dog show this weekend I was once once again struck by the number of really nice dogs out there who continually struggle to win. In speaking with their owners, they voiced their frustration, "Everyone tells us what a nice dog he is, why can't he win?" I was at a loss to explain.

So I started thinking about it, and began to think of what separates those who win consistently, or even often, from those who struggle. I came up with a number of things that anyone can do, given enough determination and/or motivation. Those things involve grooming, conditioning, training, and presentation. Let me also note that we all can be fully aware of all the things we SHOULD do, but the reality is most of the time they don't get done. Whether we are tired or busy at the show, stressed or whatever, I often watch people who know better choose not to go that extra step. The consistent winners typically always do everything they possibly can to make their dog look its best.

First, let me state the obvious: Nothing takes the place of great bloodlines. A well-bred dog with top notch conformation, beautiful breed type and a rock-solid temperament often walks in the ring and presents himself so well there is no way to deny him. Few outside the very top breeders are lucky enough to own that dog. And those that do have come by it after a ton of study. They have worked hard and finally bred a really good one. Kudos to them. For those with good dogs who aren't as competitive as they would like on a regular basis, here are a few things that I think can help you to become more competitive.

Conditioning: I cannot state how important this is. We all know there are breeders who either because of time or physical issues cannot do much more with their dogs than leave them in a pen. We also all know it is very difficult to win a dog like this.

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Now, because many of our returning warfighters are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), K2's commitment to them has become even more deeply ingrained. K2 has joined forces with the Armed Forces Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and advocating for active-duty military personnel, National Guardsmen, Reservists, military families, and veterans, to determine how service and therapy dogs can help mitigate the debilitating effects of PTSD. By leveraging AFF's advocacy on behalf of veterans and K2's practical application of canine capabilities in addressing the varied manifestations of PTSD, they will search out the best methodologies to help veterans in their fight to recover from this disorder.

As a result of their partnership, the AFF/K2 team has been awarded a contract with the Veteran's Administration in which they will assist the Veteran's Administration in studying the use of service and therapy dogs in augmenting established PTSD therapies and protocols. The AFF/K2 Team will form a dynamic team in the fight to bring health and well-being back to every American military member who has rendered honorable and faithful service to our grateful nation.

How you can help:

K2 is looking to procure environmentally sound Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and German Shepherds between the ages of 12 and 22 months. We are reaching out to the kennel clubs in an attempt to find quality bred, emotionally and environmentally sound dogs that possess the qualities needed to make the best possible service dogs and emotional support dogs for our veterans. That is where you fit in. If you have, or know someone who may have a Lab, Golden, or German Shepherd that would make a good service dog or emotional support dog, we would love to hear from you.

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Barrel races. YIKES you are all saying in unison. Try having a tantrum while tied up, It doesn't get you very far. Horse trainers know this well, and tie their youngsters up regularly. My horse show companions tend to be very patient dogs, and well socialized. Being calm and confident is one of the most important features of a Labrador show dog. And it is very difficult to have a calm, confident dog if he isn't well-travelled. It is possible, some are born that way and I work hard to create that in my breeding program. But most need some help developing that confidence. Training and socialization are key.

While there will constantly be a debate on the proper weight of a Labrador, I do know it makes it harder to win if your dog is either too fat or too thin. And it makes it hard to know how much weight they are carrying without checking. Put your hands on your dogs. Every day during show season, if you are unsure. If you wait two or three weeks and your dog gets fat or thin, it is much harder to correct. Pretty basic, I know, but again it is surprising how many people neglect this important aspect of conditioning their show dog.

Grooming: What, groom a Labrador? Yes, I think our dogs all look better groomed. I for one would never walk in the ring with an ungroomed dog. To me grooming is at some points during the year an every day thing. The second mine start to shed, if I have any desire to attend a dog show within the next couple months, I use an undercoat rake daily. What I have found is not only does it make the dog look much better as it is shedding, it makes the new coat grow in faster.

So if I really work on it, I can have a shedding dog only out of the show ring for about six weeks, and looking good again in two months. It is worth the extra effort. Some breeders won't show their dogs unless they are imperfect coat. That is, of course, the smart thing to do. You don't want people seeing your dog unless he is looking his best.

However, I know for many of us in the Northwest, we don't have countless specialties to attend. And we like going to certain shows just because they are fun. So really that is even more reason to work on



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on your dog daily. Then even if they are somewhat out of coat you can enter up and they won't look horrible.

My barrel horse has a great breeder and great trainers. She received the very best of care before I bought her, spent lots of time being tied and groomed and worked on, and I like to dote on her, too. She loves being handled and pampered, and will stand quietly for hours even for the vet because it is comfortable for her. Make being touched and poked and prodded comfortable for your show dog. Regular grooming is the best way to accomplish this.



Nails need trimming regularly or they get too long to look good with one trim before the show. If you have to take too much off at once, you'll make him lame. Or should I say nails on yellow dogs. My blacks and chocolates never seem to need their nails done. Strange, but true. I also bathe my dogs before every show. If you worry about the coat going soft or getting too fluffy, do it a number of days before the show. But my dogs all play outside, climb hills and stumps and swim and splash in puddles, so they are all a completely different color after a bath. I won't skip it, and will go to the heated dog wash in the winter if I need to. But I am not going to show a dirty dog.

At the show, I spritz each dog lightly with a little water that might have some Listerine or bodifier in it. I then brush any spots that need it and dab a little Vaseline or oil on their nose. Most need a quick wipe down with a towel as well. It's nothing like the grooming we used to do to halter horses, but every dog looks better with a little TLC. There isn't a dog I show that I don't do something to before I walk in the ring.

Training: This is a tough one, because most people are not good dog trainers. Sorry, but it is true. Years and years of going to classes is invaluable for any exhibitor/breeder for one simple reason: You must understand the proper timing of reinforcements, both positive and negative. People struggle with dogs giving ears, standing still, not sniffing, etc., etc., yet constantly reward the wrong behavior. The only way to

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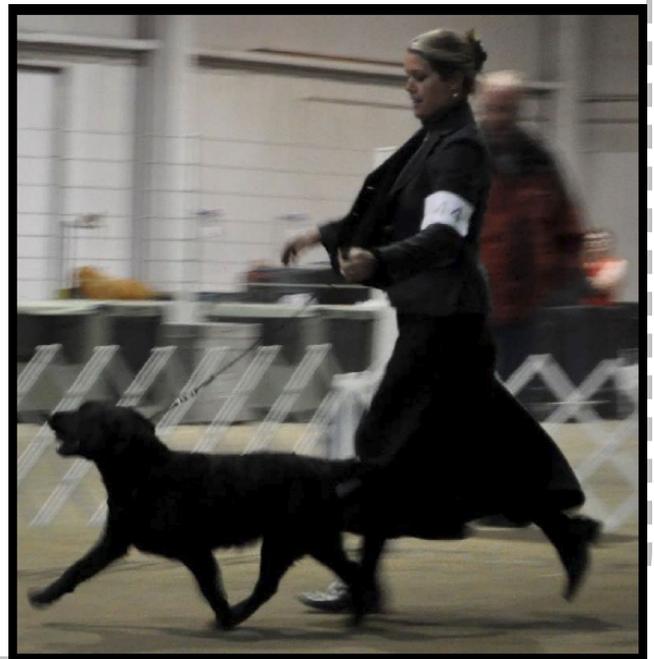
Learn this is to go to class on a regular basis and have a good trainer teach you. I showed competitively in obedience for many many years., put Utility titles on dogs and won multiple High in Trials. That training is one of the most important things I've learned in my years in dogs. A well trained dog is typically a confident dog.

Now, do I do much formal training with my dogs now? Heck no. I do hardly anything, but am good with my timing and can teach most of them pretty quickly, as long as they are sound of mind and body and have been haled a bit. Tee hee, horse expression, but it applies. However, recently Scott has invited friends over to do "puppy class" whenever we have a four or five month old puppy and a show coming up. It is great! They learn a ton, we learn a ton, and anyone can do it. So get together with friends and train. Or go to handling class, a good instructor is invaluable.

Here is a simple training tip: Don't let your dog bark. Most know this is a pet peeve of mine, but I believe it has a negative impact not just on all the other dogs and people at the show, but also on the dog doing the barking. Confident dogs need to learn self control. A dog who is barking is not displaying self control. Not only that, but often a barking dog will escalate and end up working himself into a worried tizzy.

If he knows he is not supposed to bark, he instead focuses on maintaining self control and that in turn makes him more confident. And if your dog is barking aggressively at other dogs? Sell him. Just my personal opinion, but I feel pretty strongly about it. Most dogs who are barkers are either anxious or aggressive. Neither are proper traits for a Labrador. Of course dogs bark sometimes just because they want to, especially if there are a bunch of them together, but that is different. Train your dog not to bark and you will see.

Presentation: Ever wonder how those really beautiful handlers do it? I mean, some people can pick up a lead and make any dog look good. It is a talent, that is for sure, but I guarantee you those really talented handlers work very hard at it. And you know what else they do? They groom, they train, and they condition, then the presentation seems to take care of itself. I'll never forget meeting with a handler once years ago while they groomed my dog, and another handler joined us, and they spent the whole time talking about what terrible handlers Labrador people were. How we basically just stood around and talked and threw food at our dogs. And they would come in and beat the pants off us, and



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Rolled out of bed. It isn't as true at specialties, (I'll wear jeans there) but at an all breed show my philosophy is this: Don't dress in such a way that it gives the judge an excuse NOT to give you Best of Breed. He realizes if he does you will be going into the Group with all the professional handlers in their suits. If you are wearing sweatpants he knows you won't be a good representative for that breed and will probably move on to his second choice. To me that is a silly reason to lose.

You also must know your dog. Show horse people would never consider yanking a horse out of its stall and going directly in the ring, but dog show people do it all the time. I have a number of dogs who are very happy and social. Those dogs need to stand ringside for a good ten minutes and get over their desire to visit before they will focus on me. I have a few who are big athletes, they need to go for a walk and warm up their muscles before they can show off their pretty side gait. Still others need a little discipline before they will behave. Others are so quiet or dull they only have a moment or two of showiness, they need to be totally ignored before it is their time to show. Asking for them to show for you outside the ring just wastes the little attitude they have. Know your dog and learn what pre-show ritual works for them.

So what does all this mean? In today's super competitive Labrador ring, it takes more to win than just having a nice dog. But if you have a nice dog, and he is in great shape physically and relaxed and happy mentally, and you have him groomed and trained and can present him beautifully, there is no reason you can't compete with the best of them. Good luck to you. by: Becky Gorton and the Nipntuck Labradors



CAER? ERC? OFA EYE?

Eye Exams performed by a board certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist (ACVO) is still your first step when certifying your Labrador Retriever's eyes annually.

The form from your Veterinary Ophthalmologist looks nearly the same as the old style forms, but now blazoned across the top of your Veterinary eye exam form is "Companion Animal Eye Registry (CAER)" and when you send in that veterinary's examination form you are paying to be included in the OFA Eye Certification Registry (ERC).

Sounds a bit like alphabet soup, but it's been long enough now that all of us should be adjusting to the new terminology.

The fees that the OFA Eye Certification Registry charges have risen slightly to \$12 for an initial submission of a single dog. Litters and Kennels rates are still available.

Please feel free to forward our newsletter to interested family and friends

NLRC Membership -- Open Enrollment

Membership in the National Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. is open to all Labrador enthusiasts; however, to join you must be in good standing with the American Kennel Club, Inc. and should consider the guidelines set forth in the [NLRC Code of Ethics](#) when engaged in any activities involving the breeding, exhibiting and selling of Labrador Retrievers.

Two types of annual individual memberships are offered:

Full (voting member)	\$30
Associate (non-voting)	\$20

Click the below links for NLRC Membership forms:

[NLRC Membership Application Form \(that can be printed and mailed in with your membership fee\)](#)

Or to both apply and pay online

[NLRC Membership Application](#)

Are you listed in our [NLRC Breeders Directory](#)?

NLRC Members with full membership rights can apply to participate on the NLRC website Breeder Directory by completing the applicable section on the PDF membership application and submitting a \$10 fee.

Any questions? Contact our Membership Chair:

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Support TVD Research!

Visit the [National Labrador Retriever Club Website](#) for more info!



Dangerously Excessive Uterine Fluid ...

Uterine Fluid During Pregnancy and what it has done to my breeding program by Jane Jensen, Dalane Golden Retrievers

This article does not concentrate on difficult technical facts, nor does it provide statistics suitable for publication in a scientific journal. I want to share my experience for the benefit of fellow Golden breeders and their veterinarians, in the hope that those who have not dealt with this terrifying experience will pay attention and lives will be saved. I am not being dramatic here. Very recently, a bitch and her puppies died because a board-certified theriogenologist missed the signs. It is my fervent hope that by sharing this information openly, you will know the symptoms and be prepared if it happens to one of your bitches.

If we start at the very beginning, the first problem we encounter is what to call this condition. Golden Retriever breeders usually just call it "hydrops," (or more formally "maternal hydrops amnion"). Unfortunately, there appears to be some disagreement among veterinarians as to whether maternal hydrops amnion actually exists in dogs, because the syndrome that we observe in Goldens may not match the precise veterinary definition of the disease by this name. So, rather than getting bogged down in that controversy, let's drop that name and focus on describing a condition that is being seen in Goldens all over the country. This condition consists of polyhydramnios (excess amniotic fluid) and can, in some cases, also include excess fluid outside of the amniotic sac. Hopefully dropping the name "hydrops amnion" will reduce the confusion or conflict between breeders and veterinarians, and allow everyone to acknowledge that a syndrome of dangerously excessive uterine fluid does exist in our breed. And perhaps eventually acknowledgement of this "syndrome" will lead to diagnostic criteria that everyone can agree upon. And, even more crucially, it will hopefully lead to more rapid recognition and treatment of affected bitches.

My story begins with a grand dam that had what was described as "a lot of fluid" during two of her full-term pregnancies with C-section deliveries. She had no problems during either of those pregnancies, and the puppies were all healthy, so we were not concerned. Did this bitch have an ideal free-whelping history? Probably not. But, when comparing what happened to her to what I, as an RN, knew about human fertility, there was nothing to tell us that she shouldn't be bred. Only two of her offspring from earlier litters were ever bred. One of them had difficulty carrying a full litter to term, but working with a well-known theriogenologist she did carry and deliver her puppies successfully. It is significant to note that this daughter did not exhibit symptoms of excess fluid because three of her half siblings certainly have.

A daughter that I kept from her last litter was bred for the first time in 2010, and was when we experienced our first generation with excessive uterine fluid. We were new to the Pacific North-

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west area, and I had been referred to Cindy Smith, DVM (aka Dr. Cindy), a fertility specialist, to do the breeding. Unbeknownst to me at that time, Dr. Cindy had already treated multiple similar cases in Golden Retrievers and (thank goodness) recognized the warning signs quickly. Here is what happened.

Working with Dr. Cindy, my bitch was bred with fresh chilled semen. At 28 days after breeding, the initial ultrasound was done to confirm pregnancy, and no excess fluid was seen. At around eight weeks just a couple days before her scheduled routine appointment, my bitch began vomiting and was huge. So I took her in. The pregnancy x-ray was immediately done and Dr. Cindy was gravely concerned. There were 13 puppies and there was a tremendous amount of amniotic fluid as well as fluid in the uterus. This bitch had no extremity edema nor swelling in her vulva.

She was sectioned early for 13 healthy puppies. Six of them were raised by a surrogate because the bitch was still so ill. I want to emphasize that I witnessed the c-section surgery and have no doubts about this diagnosis. I saw the amount of fluid for myself. We did breed this bitch one more time because we were optimistically depending on the experience of others who have had this occur with one pregnancy and not the next. After all, we had never had this before in nearly 25 years of breeding Golden Retrievers. The second breeding produced only two puppies so none of the devastating symptoms were exhibited. But, again there was excess fluid in the sacs. I would also like to note that only one of this bitch's siblings was ever bred and that sibling had three litters without any problems. Two of that sibling's daughters are in show homes and we are optimistic that they will have normal pregnancies, as their dam did.

We kept a female from the litter of 13 and she was bred under the supervision of the same veterinarian. Following is Dr. Cindy's protocol that we followed (days are numbered with ovulation being Day #0). We have found that when Dr. Cindy's protocol has been adhered to, it has never resulted in the loss of a bitch or her puppies.

1. Day #30: ultrasound indicated no excess fluid.

Rx: dandelion root, 500 mg., 1 cap 2x/day

2. Day #44: Pendulous belly and a weight gain of 7 lbs/wk for two straight weeks. A second ultrasound indicated excess fluid. Some bitches will have extremity pitting edema, however neither of ours did.

Rx: Spironolactone 25 mg. 2x/day; Switched to a low-sodium diet;

Single injection of Lasix was given to jump-start diuresis. (Spironolactone is a safer drug to use routinely)

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3. Day #56: X-ray identifying nine puppies and excess fluid. Her heart was showing some mild stress.

Spironolactone was increased to 25 mg. 3x/day.

Dandelion Root was increased to 2 caps 2x/day

A second low subcutaneous dose of Lasix was given (only used if the bitch is pretty compromised)

4. Day #58: She vomited once after a pill was administered and never vomited again. Often, if the bitch starts vomiting, she is already toxic and will die without treatment

5. Day #59: Vet check, heart sounding much better and no weight gain since day #56. Still too much fluid; given a low dose Lasix injection. Also given dexamethasone injection to help ripen puppies' lungs and to help the bitch.. Spironolactone 25 mg 3x/day, and dandelion root 2 caps 2x/day continued.

6. Day #62: Recheck with Dr. Cindy - Based on examination and progesterone level, C-section was done and we came home with nine healthy puppies and a mom free of problems. From all indications, this was a full-term litter.

This bitch was bred back-to-back to a different line with the same outcome. It appears that the excess fluid in our bitches is manageable although frightening. She will not be bred again.

Dr. Cindy said early on it appeared that this bitch was further along in her pregnancy than the numbers were telling us. When equipment is calibrated with Idexx (as it is in Dr. Cindy's office) a bitch can be safely sectioned once their miniVIDAS progesterone level drops below 5 ng. Idexx would be more like 2.5 ng. Our breeding progesterone levels had been done at an office closer to home and sent to a lab. Apparently, one of the results was not correct ... an important example of having in-house test results. We could have safely done the C-section earlier. With this kind of pregnancy, it is important to deliver the puppies before the bitch becomes toxic or, as in this case, to prevent toxicity with aggressive care. Sadly, in some cases a bitch may need a C-section to save her life, even though the puppies are too premature to survive.

Finally, it is even more important to note that none of the above should be attempted outside the care of a knowledgeable veterinarian. All medications, procedures and decisions are based on a multitude of factors.

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A sibling of the above bitch was also bred. The breeder was fully aware of what to look for. This bitch also had no pitting edema or vulva swelling. Two weeks prior to her due date she began to vomit and was taken immediately to an emergency clinic on Sunday and treated. The following day her regular vet took over and contacted Dr. Cindy.

The above protocol was followed; the pregnancy was maintained under constant veterinary care and a successful C-section resulted in nine healthy puppies. It is important to mention here of another risk when doing a C-section when excess fluid is present. I personally know of a bitch in another state that had excessive uterine fluid that died on the table immediately after being turned on her back for surgery. The weight of the excess fluid puts pressure on the aorta and can cause death in an untreated bitch. A bitch in this condition should be well oxygenated and never placed on her back until the surgeon is standing over her and ready to open. I know another veterinarian, who is a personal friend, has successfully opened a bitch for a C-section while lying her on her side and not her back.

Recently the death of another sibling, treated in another state, has prompted me to tell my story. She was under the care of a board certified theriogenologist who had been provided with the written protocol used for her litter sisters. Two weeks prior to due date, an ultrasound was done (with the bitch on her back!) and the veterinarian did not identify excess fluid although she commented that the bitch was too large for the number of puppies and the time left in her pregnancy. The owner was asked to return in a week for an x-ray. The bitch vomited on the long trip home and died less than four hours later. A necropsy confirmed two gallons of excess fluid in her uterus! A bitch with this condition that is vomiting will die if not treated. My heart aches for her owner. This veterinarian, although very respected in her field, had never treated a Golden Retriever with such massive excess uterine fluid. What do we need to do to get professionals to listen to their clients? I have spoken with this veterinarian at length about what happened.

In summary:

1. If your bitch looks very large during pregnancy, do not assume that she is just carrying a large litter. Have an ultrasound done by someone you know will be able to diagnose excess fluid if it is there.
2. If your veterinarian has never treated a Golden Retriever bitch with dangerously excessive uterine fluid and you are suspicious the symptoms are present for this "syndrome," encourage your veterinarian to consult with another professional who has.
3. The symptoms are varied and as I have written, not all bitches have the obvious extremity edema. (And, most bitches with edema in their extremities do not have

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excessive uterine fluid.)

4. A very large abdomen and vomiting during pregnancy = toxicity = possible death sans treatment.

5. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TREAT THIS CONDITION ON YOUR OWN! Many veterinarians who are experienced in successfully managing affected bitches recommend that the bitch stay at a 24-hour practice in case emergency treatment (usually the C-section) is necessary, because these bitches can become extremely ill very rapidly.

Many of us have heard about excessive fluid in bulldogs and cattle. This past weekend I sat next to a well-known Doberman breeder who has treated one of her bitches with spironolactone for excess fluid during pregnancy, so it is becoming clear that this condition certainly isn't limited to just our breed. The lengthy discussions by Golden breeders on the Facebook page Canine Maternal Hydrops indicate the vast number of Golden Retriever cases across this country. And in these discussions, many can personally attest that excessive fluid during pregnancy does exist in the Golden Retriever and it can be fatal.

Our 30-year breeding program is now challenged. The experience with this "syndrome" has been heartbreaking, frightening and devastating. At this point, nobody knows if this condition is genetic or, if it is, how it is transmitted. At Dalane, we do have a plan for future breedings, which could change as new information surfaces. If everything goes well (i.e., the bitches are truly breeding quality and have their clearances), the three bitches whose dam was affected will be bred and managed with Dr. Cindy. If any one or more of them has normal pregnancies, those bitches will continue our line. Those who may develop this potentially devastating condition will not be bred again and none of the puppies will be placed in breeding homes. At this point, it appears that it might run in families, but this is based on anecdotal evidence.

Hopefully this article will serve to benefit our breed and the professionals we depend upon. If veterinarians or researchers publish findings about this condition in scientific journals, we might have a better path to follow. In the meantime, breeders might want to share this article with their veterinarians before a problem arises, so that they will at least be aware of the condition.

I would like to thank those breeders and friends who have assisted with this article:

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article submitted with permission of the author by Margo Carter



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The National Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. exists for the protection and preservation of the breed, to encourage education of the general public who may want to add a Labrador to their family and to meet a social responsibility to its members, the general public, and the Labrador world in particular. To this end, we adopted a [Code of Ethics](#) to serve as a guide.

Our Newsletter, The Labrador Connection, is published by the club periodically when sufficient material is received. The Labrador Connection's newest electronic issue is published to the website and all issues may be viewed online at any time.

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