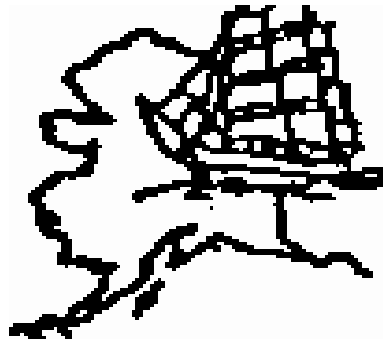


The Cook Inlet Kennel Club GAZETTE



Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete One Veterinarian's Opinion

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Those of us with responsibility for the health of canine athletes need to continually read and evaluate new scientific studies to ensure that we are taking the most appropriate care of our performance dogs. This article provides evidence through a number of recent studies to suggest that veterinarians and owners working with canine athletes should revisit the standard protocol in which all dogs that are not intended for breeding are spayed and neutered at or before 6 months of age.

Orthopedic Considerations

A study by Salmeri *et al* in 1991 found that bitches spayed at 7 weeks grew significantly taller than those spayed at 7 months, who were taller than those not spayed (or presumably spayed after the growth plates had closed).(1)

A study of 1444 Golden Retrievers performed in 1998 and 1999 also found bitches and dogs spayed and neutered at less than a year of age were signifi-

cantly taller than those spayed or neutered at more than a year of age.(2) The sex hormones, by communicating with a number of other growth-related hormones, promote the closure of the growth plates at puberty (3), so the bones of dogs or bitches neutered or spayed before puberty continue to grow. Dogs that have been spayed or neutered well before puberty can frequently be identified by their longer limbs, lighter bone structure, narrow chests and narrow skulls. This abnormal growth frequently results in significant alterations in body proportions and particularly the lengths (and therefore weights) of certain bones relative to others. For example, if the femur has achieved its genetically determined normal length at 8 months when a dog gets spayed or neutered, but the tibia, which normally stops growing at 12 to 14 months of age continues to grow, then an abnormal angle may develop at the

stifle. In addition, with the extra growth, the lower leg below the stifle likely becomes heavier (because it is longer), and may cause increased stresses on the cranial cruciate ligament. In addition, sex hormones are critical for achieving peak bone density.(4) These structural and physiological alterations may be the reason why at least one recent study showed that spayed and neutered dogs had a higher incidence of CCL rupture. (5) Another recent study showed that dogs spayed or neutered before 5 1/2 months had a significantly higher incidence of hip dysplasia than those spayed or neutered after 5 1/2 months of age, although it should be noted that in this study there were no standard criteria for the diagnosis of hip dysplasia.(6) Nonetheless, breeders of purebred dogs should be cognizant of these studies and should consider whether or not pups they bred were spayed or neutered when

2009 Board Members

- President— Carolyn Tolson (745-2322)
- V-President—Casey Hessinger
- Treasurer—Kristine Asay
- Corresponding Secretary— Rene Clayton
- Recording Secretary - Cheri Hagen
- Directors - Phyllis Justice, Gretchen Keim, Judi Rideout, Jon Zylstra

2009 Committee Chairs

- Judges Committee - Casey Hessinger
- Training Committee - Show Committee— Carolyn Tolson

COME AND JOIN US AT OUR NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

April 7th AT 7:00 P.M.

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Minutes

General Meeting

March 3, 2009

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.
Minutes read and approved.

Corresponding Secretary Report:

Letter from the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of US pertaining to Supported Entry in August 2009

Slate acceptance from Annella Cooper for August 2009

Contract and slate acceptance from Al Holabach and Earl Vaughan for August 2009

Contract from Joanne Johnson for August 2010

Wells Fargo updated standard price list for accounts effective April 1, 2009

Domain renewal group advertisement Enstar Bill

AKKC Newsletter

Seminar Flyers from Alyeska Canine Trainers

Treasurer's Report: Available in regular newsletter.

Show Committee Report: Everything is a go. Need some volunteers

still. Banquet, was usually at the Elks. Health Fair Coordinator, Cheri will take care of the doctors but someone else will need to do the actual set up, finding volunteers for the Health Fair etc. Trophy help is still needed. Closing date for trophy donations is March 15. Will put forms at the building. Discussion ensued regarding when the trophies are actually needed. Phyllis Justice will need help at the trophy table.

Training Committee Report: Had a meeting and classes are starting. Monday night there will be a Puppy class, Wednesday Beginning Obedience. Classes start at 7:00. The fee is \$80.00. There is a new policy which will be discussed later.

Legislative Committee: No report.

Judge's Committee: Next meeting is March 22 at Noon at Casey's house.

New Members:

First Reading – Paige Banghaf and Samantha Marlin

Second Reading – Sean Stevenson, voted on and approved. Welcome Sean.

Unfinished Business:

Denise Fenzi. It was a wonderful seminar. She did a great job.

New Business:

The club needs a copy machine to facilitate the instructors for training and to copy other items, i.e., agendas etc. Costco possibly does donations to non-profits. It was brought up that we have an account at the UPS Store but those who are instructing said that it was difficult to get there to make copies. Judi Rideout will research more information and bring information back to the club.

Agility Fun Runs: The Chesters have brought in their equipment for fun runs on Saturdays. Need to find time and get some volunteers to come in and help with that. There are people who are not members that are interested in the fun run. We can do small runs in the building and maybe bring in some money.

Training Policy Changes. Discussion ensued regarding the changes to the training policy. There was more discussion regarding the problem of Show N Go's and having people sign up for more than one slot per month.

Minutes Continued on Page 4

Minutes

Board Meeting

March 17, 2009

Attending: Carolyn Tolson, Christine Asay, Casey Hessinger, Rene'e Clayton and Judi Rideout.

The meeting was called to order 7:15 p.m.

Corresponding Secretary Report:

MEA Bill

MTA Bill

Wells Fargo Checking Account statement

Wells Fargo Money Market Account statement

Slate approvals from Nancy Craig and Alvin Eng for August 2009

Contracts from Mr. & Mrs. Mett for August 2010

Treasurer Report: Available in regular newsletter

President's Report:

Robert's Rules of Order will be enforced at the meetings. We will have a speaking order.

Show Committee:

August Show: Letters with contracts were sent out to Lynn Turner to be the Emergency Medical Technician and to Joe Bishop to be the Photographer by Rene'e Clayton. Kelly Benedict has volunteered to be the banquet chairman. The semen bank has confirmed that they will be here. The next show committee meeting will be May 6, 2009 at 6PM.

Training Committee:

Classes started March 9. Monday is puppy class and has 3-4 people in class. The beginning obedience class on Wednesday night has 7 people in class. There has not been any one signing up to do Friday night Show and Go. It will be brought up at the general meeting in April with hope to get more interest in doing the class. The next meeting will be announced at the April meeting.

Judges Committee:

There will be a meeting at Casey's house March 22, 2009 at 1PM.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Rene'e made a motion to purchase Forever stamps. Christine seconded the motion. Motion passed. The club will purchase 30 books of stamps and Christine will be the person holding the stamps.

Two members allowed their membership to lapse and have submitted their dues late. They were Annette Isachsen-Mullen and Kim Hollenbaugh. Christine Asay made a motion to accept their late dues and renew their membership. Rene'e Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed. Welcome back Annette and Kim.

Meeting adjourned at 8PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judi Rideout

Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete One Veterinarian's Opinion Cont. from Pg. 1

considering breeding decisions. **Cancer Considerations**

A retrospective study of cardiac tumors in dogs showed that there was a 5 times greater risk of hemangiosarcoma, one of the three most common cancers in dogs, in spayed bitches than intact bitches and a 2.4 times greater risk of hemangiosarcoma in neutered dogs as compared to intact males.(7) A study of 3218 dogs demonstrated that dogs that were neutered before a year of age had a significantly increased chance of developing bone cancer.(8) A separate study showed that neutered dogs had a two-fold higher risk of developing bone cancer.(9) Despite the common belief that neutering dogs helps prevent prostate cancer, at least one study suggests that neutering provides no benefit.(10) There certainly is evidence of a slightly increased risk of mammary cancer in female dogs after one heat cycle, and for increased risk with each subsequent heat. While about 30 % of mammary cancers are malignant, as in humans, when caught and surgically removed early the prognosis is very good.(12) Luckily, canine athletes are handled frequently and generally receive prompt veterinary care.

Behavioral Considerations

The study that identified a

higher incidence of cranial cruciate ligament rupture in spayed or neutered dogs also identified an increased incidence of sexual behaviors in males and females that were neutered early.(5) Further, the study that identified a higher incidence of hip dysplasia in dogs neutered or spayed before 5 1/2 months also showed that early age gonadectomy was associated with an increased incidence of noise phobias and undesirable sexual behaviors.(6) A recent report of the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation reported significantly more behavioral problems in spayed and neutered bitches and dogs.

Other Health Considerations

A number of studies have shown that there is an increase in the incidence of female urinary incontinence in dogs spayed early (13), although this finding has not been

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universal. Certainly there is evidence that ovarian hormones are critical for maintenance of genital tissue structure and contractility.(14, 15) Neutering also has been associated with an increased likelihood of urethral sphincter incontinence in males.(16) This problem is an inconvenience, and not usually life-threatening, but nonetheless one that requires the dog to be medicated for

life.

A health survey of several thousand Golden Retrievers showed that spayed or neutered dogs were more likely to develop hypothyroidism.(2) This study is consistent with the results of another study in which neutering and spaying was determined to be the most significant gender-associated risk factor for development of hypothyroidism.(17)

Cont. on Pg. 4

**NEXT TRAINING
COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 14, 7:00 P.M.
At TRAINING BUILDING**

Upcoming Events

MACH Agility Trial April 25 & 26 Saddle Up Arena, Butte

OTCC Obedience/Rally Trials-
May 9 & 10, CBA Fields

TVKC Shows/Trials May 23, 24,
25 Tanana Valley Fairgrounds,
Fairbanks

Rottweiler Club of Alaska All-
Breed Obedience/Rally Trials
May 30 & 31, CBA Fields

COOK INLET KENNEL CLUB, INC.

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slot per month. Judi Rideout made a motion to accept the new policy as written. Phyllis Justice seconded. Additional discussion continued regarding instructors. The committee will look at each instructor to approve them. Lots of people can teach but may not have titles. Some who have titles can't teach. Motion was called and voted on. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cheri Hagen

Cont. from Pg. 3

Infectious diseases were more common in dogs that were spayed or neutered at 24 weeks or less as opposed to those undergoing gonadectomy at more than 24 weeks.(18) Finally, the AKC-CHF report demonstrated a higher incidence of adverse reactions to vaccines in neutered dogs as compared to intact. (12)

I have gathered these studies to show that our practice of routinely spaying or neutering every dog at or before the age of 6 months is not a black-and-white issue. Clearly more studies need to be done to evaluate the effects of prepubertal spaying and neutering, particularly in canine athletes.

Currently, I have significant concerns with spaying or neutering canine athletes before puberty. But of course, there is the pet overpopulation problem. How can we prevent the production of unwanted dogs while still leaving the gonads to produce the hormones that are so important to canine growth and development? One answer would be to perform vasectomies in males and tubal ligation in females, to be followed after maturity by ovariectomy in females to prevent mammary cancer and pyometra. One possible disadvantage is that vasectomy does not prevent some unwanted behaviors associated with males such as marking and humping. On the other hand, females and

and neutered males frequently participate in these behaviors too. Really, training is the best solution for these issues. Another possible disadvantage is finding a veterinarian who is experienced in performing these procedures. Nonetheless, some do, and if the procedures were in greater demand, more veterinarians would learn them. I believe it is important that we assess each situation individually. For canine athletes, I currently recommend that dogs and bitches be spayed or neutered after 14 months of age.

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Tanzie—Submitted by Judi Rideout