

Dog Fights at Shows

by Tammy Samples for American Canine Exhibitor
Editor: Don Mikeman

While attending recent dog shows other exhibitors and myself have noticed an increase in dogfights occurring, which is a great concern. Because of my own personal growing concerns I have felt compelled to write this article.

Most recently I witnessed a bulldog that had to be placed on oxygen after a fight. Then yet again a Siberian Husky that had to be taken with leg injuries to the show site vet due to an attack, not to mention the injured exhibitor who fell on the dogs during the fight to break it up. Exhibitors are becoming way too relaxed with their pets while on show grounds and on leads. Simply because your dog "Fluffy" has a great attitude while at the shows does not mean another exhibitor's dog has a good attitude towards "Fluffy". Exhibitors need to be reminded of the safety and care of their animals while at the dog shows. Here are some simple steps to make a show experience safer for all.

- 1. Hold your show dog on a tight lead and close to your body for ultimate control while moving among others.*
- 2. Do not let your dog sniff other dog's rear ends or faces. This can result in an attack, particularly from a bitch that does not want a nose in her rear end while she is in season.*
- 3. Do not hold more dogs than you can handle. Holding multiple dogs on long leads can result in an attack. Common sense is you cannot handle 5 dogs with only two arms and attempt to control a possible attack.*
- 4. Dogs can fight over bait found on the floor grounds. Please teach your dogs not to take or eat bait unless you, a friend or your handler gives it from a hand instead of the ground. Virus' can also be obtained from bait found on the floor.*
- 5. Please make sure you have your Rabies certificate current and with you at all times (Texas remains under rabies quarantine and you must have your certificate with you if asked.) If a dogfight has taken place an exhibitor has the right to demand proof of a Rabies certificate.*
- 6. Teach your crated dog to not be a barking nuisance. A barking dog that is lunging at dogs walking or passing by can easily provoke a defense mechanism in a nervous dog causing an attack with both parties. The excessive noise by a constant unattended barker is also not welcome by exhibitors and judges alike.*
- 7. Please use proper verbal language/tones in the event of dealing with a fight, remember children are present and have already been frightened when witness to a dog fight. Your yelling is not helping the dog that has been attacked. Remember you are supposed to be calming the situation, not escalating it.*
- 8. If your dog does happen to attack another dog, please provide assistance to the owner or handlers of the dog and please accompany them to the show site vet. Use courtesy, as you would expect them to do for you.*
- 9. Dogs that hold or stare with continual eye contact should be discouraged ASAP, as this promotes challenging and fighting and or sudden attacks.*
- 10. While walking through heavy crowded aisles with dogs and humans, please keep total control of your dog's head, holding the nose/head if necessary to prevent any sudden attacks.*

Should a dog fight ensue exhibitors please take absolute care and caution when breaking up a dog fight. Human injuries can and do occur. Let's keep the dog shows safe for our animals as well as spectators and other exhibitors.

*Tammy Samples is an exhibitor & breeder of Great Danes using the kennel prefix "Taro".
Don Mikeman is the chief copy editor for American Canine Exhibitor and the other half of Dagmar Great Danes.*