

2016 IWAGS VETERAN AND PUPPY SWEEPSTAKES CRITIQUE

By Michael K. Hussey

It was an honor and privilege to judge Veteran and Puppy Sweepstakes at the 2016 Irish Wolfhound Association of the Garden State "Veteran Specialty." For over 40 years the Irish Wolfhound has been "my" breed. Be it standing, trotting, running or lying in majestic spender (on the couch in a few privileged cases), the Irish Wolfhound is a very special animal and always a close friend. As some of you know, this was my first foray into judging – after declining a number of invitations to judge sweeps. I must say I thoroughly enjoyed the experience due to the show committee – particularly the ring stewards who kept me in line, the exhibitors, and especially the hounds. Thank you all for your hospitality, and the exhibitors for showing their wonderful veterans and promising puppies to me. It truly was a "special" experience, including the "Pennsylvania Hurricane" on Sunday.

The three main qualities I was looking for were type – as defined quite well in the opening paragraph of our standard; balance – proper physical construction without extremes; and correct movement – after years of observing coursing that is a prime area of importance for me. I am happy to say that I found all three in many of the hounds I saw.

VETERAN SWEEPSTAKES

VETERAN DOGS

Bronze (6 years & under 8 years)

1. (57) Can. Ch. Blackwing's Starkeeper Teegann – Overall a very nice, well balanced hound. Nice movement - side, going and coming. Nice neck, topline, rear and front, good tuck. Nice head, proper rosed ears.
2. (59) GCh. Carrickaneena Tryconnell, CGC. – VERY close decision between first place and second place dogs. #59 also moved nicely, a really nice rear assembly. Nit picking – a little softer topline than #1 and a bit close in front. Nice, well balanced, typical head.
3. (53) GCh. DC Glenamadda Starkeeper Connery, RN, SC. – Also a nice dog. Did not move as well as 57 and 59 – a little wide in the rear movement and I would have liked to have seen a little more front reach.
4. (55) GCh. Carrickaneena Antaine Dubh, CGC. – Nice head and rear angulation. However, did not move as well as the top two in this class. Topline was not as good as the others.

Silver (8 years & under 9 years)

No entries in this class.

Gold (9 years & over)

Entry was absent.

VETERAN BITCHES

Bronze (6 years & under 8 years)

1. (92) DCh. Gladstone's Maeve JOR. – A beautiful bitch! Nice head, neck, topline, tuck, and movement. Hard to find any issues with her. Really well balanced and wonderful type. Just a joy to see and go over.
2. (98) Ch. Carrickaneena Greenore, CGC. – Another really nice bitch. Really nice head. Not quite the neck that # 92 had. Movement was good.
3. (96) Can. Am. Ch. Glenamadda Starkeeper Clodagh – Nice head, nice rear angulation, well let down hocks. Movement was not as smooth as the first two in this class. Could use a little more length of back.

Silver (8 years & under 9 years)

1. (108) DC Carrickaneena Winds of Morning, SC. – Nice head with beautiful ears. Looked nice stacked. Moved a little close front and rear.

Gold (9 years & over)

1. (114) Ch. Mise Eire Niamh – Good movement. Nice head. Good balance. A little soft in the topline.
2. (112) Carrickaneena Abbeylara – A very sweet girl. Good topline. She was very weak in the rear and did not move well on the day.

Best in Veteran Sweepstakes & Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Veterans Sweepstakes

#92 was my Best in Veteran Sweepstakes – As I said previously, she was beautiful – hard to fault. She went on the next day to take BOB.

#57 was my Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Veteran Sweepstakes - A really well balanced boy. His chest and bend of stifle were not quite as spot-on as the girl's. When I went back over my photos of all the veterans I was struck by how similar in type and conformation these two hounds were.

PUPPY SWEEPSTAKES

PUPPY DOGS

6 – 9 Months

None entered.

9 – 12 Months

Entry was absent.

12 – 15 Months

1. (11) Starkeeper Hadyn Highest Honor – A really nice puppy dog. Good head, neck, topline, front and rear. Generally held ears a little flat. Side movement was good, but crabbed a bit going and coming.

2. (9) Sovngarde Dire Wolf – Also a nice dog. Good substance. A bit straight in the stifle. Fairly good movement, but didn't move out as much as I would have liked to have seen.
3. (15) Dahmrak's Jurgen at Elkhorn – A tall, lanky dog – pushed the second place dog. A bit straight and narrow in front and narrow in the stifle. Nice head, neck and topline. Promising – a little more development should help this boy.
4. (13) Jadis Charlie Chaplin – A nice looking dog, but very shy. I had a difficult time going over him. Good head. Nice deep chest and good tuck.

15 – 18 Months

1. (19) Starkeeper Calorien Ambr Declan – Nice head and ears, good topline. I'd like to see a little more length of neck. A little straight in the stifle. Satisfactory movement.

PUPPY BITCHES

6 – 9 Months

1. (16) Carnasserie Carrickaneena Diamonds and Pearls. A very pretty black bitch. If she holds, she is really going to be something special when she grows up. I have a predisposed preference for black IWs, so I tend to be especially analytical in an attempt to balance my judgement. I found it hard to deny this little girl. She was very typey, had good curves throughout, moved nicely. Really nice head, neck, and rose ears. And the absolute best, happy personality. My "take home puppy."
2. (12) Gladstone's Call Me Kelt – Also a very nice girl – really pushed #16. She had good movement. Good type, nice throughout. The stifles were not as well let down and ears were not as nice as #16's.
3. (6) Gladstone's Kiss Me Kate – Nice head and topline. Many of the same attributes as # 12. A little narrower in the front.
4. (14) Redtops Bryleigh – Also very nice – this was a REALLY nice class. Moved okay – may have been 3rd if she had moved out a bit stronger. Nice head and ears. Nice curves – very typey.

9 – 12 Months

1. (26) Gilda of Aerie – Really nice and balanced all around – from nose to tail. Hard to fault. Nice head with very nice rosed ears. A beautiful, long graceful neck that transitioned nicely into her proper topline. Angles and curves front and rear were nice (I've got to find another word for "nice"). With all this you'd expect her to move well – and she did.
2. (22) Starkeeper Granuaile's Galleon – As good as # 22 was, this girl pushed her. She was also very typey and quite nice all around – although not as substance as # 22.
3. (30) Starkeeper Gra Mo Chroi Gemma – Nice, but could use a little more length of back. A little straight in the rear. Pretty expression.
4. (28) Riversong Reagan – Nice head and neck. Ears a bit flat. Could use a little more angulation front and rear – a little high in the rear at this point in time.

12 – 15 Months

1. (34) Jadis Khaleesi Moon of My Life – This class was very close; but #34 was a little better in the rear. Moved stronger from the side, but not as well coming and going.

2. (32) Hops-N-Hounds Stormageddon Oonagh – Nice head, ears and neck. The topline was a little soft.

15 – 18 Months

1. (36) Starkeeper Calorien A Diamond - Good bone/substance. Good movement. Could use more arch over the loin. Good length of neck.
2. (38) Dun Myrica R Noble Nuala of Eagle – a nice tall houndy bitch. Nice head, neck and ears. A bit straight front and rear, and not as much substance as # 36. A bit of a dip in the topline, behind the shoulder.

Best in Puppy Sweepstakes & Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Puppy in Sweepstakes

#26 was my Best Puppy in Sweepstakes. I can't think of anything else to add to what I said in my critique above. Quite simply – she was outstanding. She flowed – standing and moving.

11 was my Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Sweepstakes. Also an outstanding puppy, just didn't move quite as well as the girl on the day.

In closing. I was, and still am, very impressed with the overall quality of my entry. When I look back at my two top veteran and two top puppy picks I am filled with pride in the choices – and envy of the owners. I would be thrilled to own any of these hounds. The one regret I have is that we can't award reserves in the sweepstakes. There were other hounds that were very deserving of higher recognition.

Again, "thank you" to IWAGS for inviting me to judge your Specialty. It is a weekend I will always fondly remember.