

IWAGS CRITIQUE

I don't think the opportunity comes around very often to judge BOTH veterans and puppies in sweepstakes on the same day. I feel very lucky to have had that opportunity, and I would like to sincerely thank The Irish Wolfhound Association of the Garden State for allowing me this privilege. And it really was just that. A privilege – to not only to go over some quality wolfhounds but also to be treated so well by IWAGS members. I felt welcomed, valued, and included in all aspects of the specialty. The members did everything they could to make my experience a positive one. Unfortunately, they could not control the weather. I am certain the wind and rain impacted the hounds. I could tell those who were not happy and those whom it did not seem to affect. However, with only one exception did I find a hound, veteran or puppy, who was not rock solid in temperament and allowed me to go over them, in less than ideal circumstances, when one could easily understand that the hound (and handlers) would likely rather be somewhere dry and warm.

The veterans belied their age, both in condition and movement. I was pleasantly surprised to see well developed muscles on wolfhounds of this age, especially hindquarters. It served them all well when they moved, without showing any signs of approaching age-related deterioration. Additionally, none of the veterans seemed to care about the weather. They went out and showed us all how it is to be done. Kudos to the owners for helping to keep these seniors in such good condition. My choices for Best in Veteran Sweepstakes and Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Veteran Sweepstakes were both outstanding examples of well-bred, well-trained, and well-loved wolfhounds who did all that was asked of them, with the calm dignity of experience and confidence.

The puppies were also uniformly in excellent condition, appropriate to their ages. I found the same solid muscling in the hindquarters, as in the veterans. Typically, they had pleasing outlines, with tuck ups and toplines one would hope to see. There were a few straight front assemblies, but it was not consistent throughout the entry, and it did not seem to have a significant effect on movement. Bites were generally good, with only one or two even bites. Thank you to the handlers for persevering in showing bites to me in babies, who might not be accustomed to it. Ear and tail carriage suffered a bit, but I would attribute that to weather conditions more than anything else. Overall, I found it to be a pleasing entry, with no outstanding issues of great concern. Choosing a hound for Best in Sweepstakes and Best

of Opposite Sex to Best in Sweepstakes was a daunting task. My two finalists challenged each other for Best. As only one could be selected, the lovely 9-12 Bitch carried the day, but not by much.

Thank you to all the exhibitors who braved the elements to bring their hounds for me to examine. I appreciated your perseverance and consistent outstanding sportsmanship.

VETERAN BRONZE DOGS

1. Impressive male of great presence in the lineup, well-muscled and shapely, with an appealing head. Moved well, coming, going, and side. Best of Opposite Sex in Veteran Sweepstakes.
2. Another well presented male who looked me straight in the eye with confidence. Movement improved as he went along.
3. Another well-muscled male with a pleasing head and expression. Not as good movement going away as others in the class.

VETERAN SILVER DOGS

1. Happy Boy who had surprising energy for his age. Appealing outline without coarseness. He moved well.
2. Substantial boy with a wonderful expression who also moved unexpectedly well for his age.

VETERAN BRONZE BITCHES

1. Impressive and confident girl, who acquitted herself well on examination. Excellent type, with pleasing outline. Moved well and easily. Not quite as good going, but had flawless side gait, which won her the class.
Best in Veteran Sweepstakes
2. A well-balanced typey girl with beautiful head and expression. Moved well. Challenged #1 in the class.
3. Another excellent example of wolfhound type. Happy and moved well, especially in the rear.
4. Yet another girl of commendable type, with a pleasing head. She, too, moved well.

The depth of this class made the placements difficult to determine. With the same bitches on a different day, the placements could well be different and any one of them could take the class.

VETERAN SILVER BITCHES

1. A lovely girl with the softest of expressions. Her movement was easy, despite her age. Could have been a bit better coming but covered the ring well.

PUPPY SWEEPSTAKES

6-9 Months Puppy Dogs

1. Appealing outline with nice head and expression. Perhaps a little straight in front assembly, but still moved credibly, especially from the side.
2. Surprisingly assured for his age, with a promising head and desired expression. Front movement not quite as good as rear.

9-12 Months Puppy Dogs

1. Tall boy with lots of leg, but not unusual for this age. Proportions will adjust with maturity. Despite all the leg, he moved well coming and going.

12-15 MONTHS DOGS

1. Another tall boy. Would like to see more breadth of chest, which likely affected his movement. Paddled in front but moved acceptably in the rear.

15-18 MONTHS DOGS

1. Impressive black boy with appealing shape. Masculine head, with dark expressive eyes. Well-muscled, with well-set arched neck and shoulder lay back. Correct rear assembly. Moved well and freely at all times, despite conditions.
Best of Opposite Sex to Best in Sweepstakes
2. Dark boy, similar in shape to #1. Another appealing head and expression. Slightly straight front assembly, but movement not significantly impacted.

6-9 MONTHS PUPPY BITCHES

1. Young girl with a pleasing outline. Good head with soft expression. Happy in the ring, typical for her age. Good front assembly. Moved well, especially from the side.
2. A very happy girl who finally settled for examination. Similar in type to #1, but slightly straighter in the front and did not move quite as well.
3. A third girl, similar in type to her predecessors in the class. Moved similarly as well.
4. And a fourth of similar type. All the girls in this class had very similar structure and movement, but on the day, this is the placement.

9-12 MONTHS PUPPY BITCHES

1. A brindle bitch with excellent shape and a beautiful head with great expression. An arched neck flowing into correct front assembly. This, coupled with an equally correct rear structure, resulted in near flawless movement from every angle. Not a foot out of place, even in the mud. Best in Sweepstakes
2. A bitch of a type I see often, but which I think could be better served by a slightly longer body. This might serve to make her already good movement even better. Otherwise, a bitch of quality and substance.
3. Initially, it was clear to me that this bitch was not happy to be in the ring. However, she settled and did well, in spite of herself. She ultimately moved well, especially on the go around. Practice will make perfect.

12-15 MONTHS PUPPY BITCHES

1. Another bitch who took a little settling. Once accomplished, she showed herself to be a bitch of type and substance without coarseness. She moved well, especially on the down and back, which had not always been the case with other entries, dog or bitch.

15-18MONTHS BITCHES

1. This is a bitch of great type combined with soundness. Her front and rear moved in tandem to deliver excellent movement coming, going, and around.
2. A sound, dark, eye catching bitch who moved well on the down and back. Challenged #1 for first place.
3. This bitch showed herself to be sound and of great type. Standing still or moving, she was a contender in this class.

4. Yet another dark bitch of similar type to others in this class. She moved in a similar manner as well, with excellent side gait.

The depth of this class was a challenge. With such similarities and quality throughout, these placements came down to fine points. Any of these bitches could have won this class, and on another day the placements could well be different.