

## HERDING GROUP

the breed to earn a BCAT title. Kallista Brown-Eyed Girl, BN, RN, OA, AXJ, NF, DCAT, was the first DCAT awardee, and she continued to chase her way to be the first awardee of the FCAT and FCAT2 titles as well. Brynlea Fascinatin' Rhythm, RN, OA, OAJ, CAA, FCAT3, CGCA, is the first FCAT3 Pembroke.

The AKC keeps records of the fastest times for each breed. Ages aren't recorded, but a Pembroke owner recently reported that her 13-year-old Pembroke completed his FCAT title.

There are people who run their dog with the goal to be the fastest in its breed. One man proudly told me that he conditioned his dog and decreased her time by two seconds. There is a lifetime ranking, as well as breed rankings each year. This man has also attended a tremendous number of events in the Southeast, as he and his dog just enjoy the event.

Dogs enjoy the chase—or rather most of them do. Some dogs are slow, but they can achieve the titles by simply attending more events. Other dogs are just superfast and driven. Pembrokes seem to be driven and quite fast for their short legs! A friend's Pembroke finished his BCAT in just four runs. Two trials a day are generally offered, so if they are held in conjunction with a four-day

cluster of shows, that is eight runs.

A person to release the dog and a person to catch the dog are needed for each run. The releaser must be able to control the dog, and the catcher needs to be able to leash the dog quickly at the end of the run. Generally, the owner is the catcher, and a willing exhibitor or club member is often the releaser.

You will see all ages of handlers at the events, from children to senior citizens. For seniors, it keeps them involved with dog events; for children, it gives them an introduction to dog events through a fun activity that needs no training classes. To participate, dogs cannot be lame, and bitches cannot be in heat. Otherwise, it is an event open to all ages and breeds. A lady stopped me at one trial to tell me that Pembrokes were her favorite breed to watch at these events.

All you need is two leashes and someone to release your Pembroke. Tally ho!

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## Pulik

### COURSING WITH A PULI? OF COURSE!

Does your Puli seem to feel the need...the need for speed? Coursing tests are based on the sport of lure coursing, and might just

be that fun activity for you and your Puli(k) to check out. The AKC officially approved the Coursing Ability Test (CAT) in 2013 and Fast CAT in 2016. Dogs must be at least 1 year old to compete, and no special training or equipment is required. During both the CAT and Fast CAT, dogs run by themselves.

The CAT is a noncompetitive, pass/fail event that harnesses a dog's natural instinct to chase. A Puli chases after an artificial lure (usually a white plastic bag) on a 600-yard long course (that is run in one direction with turns no more than 90 degrees), and the course needs to be finished in less than two minutes. Dogs are required to complete their course with enthusiasm and without interruption. Dogs that pass the CAT three times will earn a Coursing Ability (CA) title. Ten passes, and your dog earns a Coursing Ability Advanced (CAA) title, while 25 passes result in a Coursing Ability Excellent (CAX) title.

The only Puli to have competed in CAT is Bubbleton Levitating Bubble, CAA, DCAT. "Slate" is owned by Sheri Grossman and bred by Jesper Ravn and Klaus Andersen.

Fast CAT is a timed 100-yard dash, where your dog chases a lure (again, usually a white plastic bag) in a straight line on a flat surface. There is a 10-foot release area before the starting line. There is a 30-yard run-out at the end to allow your dog to de-accelerate before

retrieval. In a typical course, the dog is released by a handler in the starting area, and then retrieved after crossing the finish line by a different handler. Your dog's recorded time is converted to miles per hour (mph) to determine its speed. Points earned are based on the equation of mph multiplied by the dog's "handicap" (which for a Puli measuring between 12 and 18 inches at the shoulders would be 1.5). Your dog can earn titles after these point levels: BCAT= 150 points; DCAT = 500 points; FCAT = 1,000 points; and FCAT# = every additional 500 points. There are only two Pulik who have been competing in Fast CAT: Bubbleton Levitating Bubble, CAA, DCAT (Slate); and Mezok Oltes-Pafranyt, DCAT (Zsofia), owned by Elizabeth Davis and bred by Diane Fields.

The fastest dog in Fast CAT in 2019 was a Greyhound who ran an average of 37 mph; this is definitely a breed built for speed. Slate holds the fastest time for a Puli, at an average of 21.23 mph, while Zsofia was 20.14 mph.

So, you think you might be interested in participating in this high-energy sport? Following are some things you can do in advance of entering a trial:

- Make sure that your dog is physically healthy and in good shape to run a course. This might include a trip to your veterinarian.
- A good recall is important for you to be

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able to collect your dog in the CAT and helpful in Fast CAT.

- Take your dog to a practice to introduce him or her to the lure, or make your own lure for practice. Attaching a white plastic bag to a “flirt pole” (that is, a springing pole) is especially helpful.

For further details including regulations, check the AKC website for [more information](#). If you are looking for local events to watch or participate in, check the [AKC Events Search](#) page () and click on “Performance” to find Coursing Ability Tests and Fast CAT.

Thank you to Sheri Grossman for her assistance with this column.

—Dagmar Fertl,

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[Puli Club of America](#)

### Spanish Water Dogs

#### PASSION AND PERSPECTIVE

Several months ago I was contacted about some quality Spanish Water Dog puppies being shown in another part of the country. With some sleuthing, I determined that they were imports from a successful European breeder with whom I am acquainted. I was pleased to think that our breed community would benefit from the addition of what are likely to be quality dogs to our gene pool.

Given the still relative rarity of the breed in North America, I decided to reach out to this person via Facebook Messenger to establish communication in hopes of developing a collegial relationship. Unfortunately after initial niceties, we disagreed on some points of breed standard semantics, and the conversation rapidly deteriorated. Further attempts to establish a “fresh start” have been ignored.

I cannot claim to be without fault in creating acrimony within our breed. I have been firm and vocal in criticism of dog presentation and judging that does not (in my opinion) correctly interpret and follow our breed standard. My passion for Spanish Water Dogs includes the “rustic appearance” that to me is an essential breed characteristic. This has led to downright hostility between myself and some other breed fanciers.

It is indeed unfortunate that what should be points of discussion, or even heated debate, become such adversarial issues. Clearly the competitive forum that is the conformation ring has created high stakes for many. Showing and particularly campaigning a dog is costly in money, time, and effort, and also it seems, personal investment.

I feel very fortunate to have many “dog mentors.” Close friends, as well as acquaintances, are longtime breeders who will help me assess pedigrees and consider the pros and

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