



Double Handling: Very Important Job

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Many of the Rottweiler handlers, owners, and breeders who show their dogs train only their dogs and the person who will go into the ring to show the dog. They train in how to stack the dog, how to move the dog, how to show bite, and so on. This is perfect because a well-trained dog and handler can increase the possibility of getting a good placement in the class.



However, who thinks about training the person who will be doing the double handling outside the ring?

Yes, the person who will be calling the dog while the judge is doing the critique, the person who has the view of the entire class, the person who is looking at how our dog and the rest are moving, the person that is really watching what the handler in the ring is doing. In a few words: the person that is watching exactly what the judge is watching.

Nowadays when we show our dogs, we ask some person outside the ring to call the attention of the dog with a toy, ball, or training device. What they do is only jump, call out loud to the dog, and throw the toy, no matter if the dog is also jumping, is well stacked, is showing drive, or is barking. The entire hard job really is left to the handler in the ring. This has to change. The second handler should help the handler in the ring with the double handling for successful dog handling. The person that will do the second handling needs to be perfectly trained prior to the show. He or she needs to have the same level of training as the handler that goes into the ring. The second handler should know the breed standard very well. He or she needs to know what the differences between their dog and the standard are.

Let me provide you with some examples about what the second handler should do while showing a dog.

During critique: First, always try to understand what the judge is evaluating. Think like this—if I were the judge, how would I like to have stacked this dog. Do not allow the dog to move; allow the judge to have the time to look at the dog and recognize his attributes. Decide in a second if the dog should have the head up or down. This should be based on where the judge is standing, in front or on the side. It is also important to have communication with the other handler as needed, asking to fix the front, fix the rear, etc. as needed. Also very important is by doing the double handling, the dog should show the driving.

During movement: We all know that dogs show the real conformation they have when they are in movement, so the second handler should concentrate on how our dog is doing and comparing his movement with the other dogs. The judge could ask for trotting or walking, so the second handler should be very attentive to notice if the change of the speed affected our dog to advise the handler in the ring. Also evaluate how much the dog is pushing, reaching, and how the top line is doing. Not all the dogs look the same at the same speed, so ask the handler in the ring to increase or reduce speed as needed.

In the lineup: When all dogs are in the lineup, the double handling should help the handler in the ring to better administrate the dog's performance. We should not call the attention of our dog all the time. Many times, I have seen that even when the judge is not watching our dog, we continue calling for his attention. The dogs get tired, so the second handler should be very attentive and do his or her job only when it is necessary to administrate the physical condition of the dog.

So, in my opinion, the second handler should train at the same level as the handler who will work in the ring, should know the standard very well, should learn how to coach the handler that works in the ring, and very importantly should learn how to be an outside the ring judge for our dog.

This job gets more important when the handler in the ring also starts getting tired. This handler starts facing difficulties, and it is the moment to help him or her with good comments.

This topic is very extensive and deserves a big talk in a room and in the field. I hope this article helps all of you to start thinking about training someone to be a better double handler in a specialized show.

Thanks. *Alfredo Estrada Santiago*



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