



BREED COLUMNS

HERDING GROUP

to personally accept their award.

Getting Pembrokes off the couches and into the fields, arenas, and rings has been wildly successful, with over 80 VCX and over 250 VC awardees thus far.

With the addition of more AKC events open to the breed, the VC/VCX scales have been revised through the years. The most recent revision was approved in the fall of 2022. Advanced rally and scent work titles were added in response to many requests from the fancy, along with a polling of more than a dozen exhibitors who have earned multiple VCX awards on their dogs.

A dog still must have a top title in one of the four performance categories: UDX or OTCH from obedience/rally; TDX, VST, or CT from tracking or SWM or SWM/SWD in the tracking/scentwork category; a HX or HC from herding; or a PACH from the 8-inch Preferred height, or a MACH.

Additionally, a VCX

awardee needs to have points in at least three of the four performance categories. There is an optional track for a VCX for those exhibitors who are not able to compete in herding. One VCX point scale is based on having a herding title (after all, we are a herding breed!) and the other is without.

In addition, exhibitors will be offered a one-time update to their deceased dogs titles on their VC and/or VCX awards. Often the dogs went on to additional titles after receiving their award, but the list of awardees at www.pwcca.org does not reflect that.

For more details about the versatility awards, see the section About Pembrokes/Activities for Pembrokes/Versatile Corgi Awards on the [PWCCA website](http://www.pwcca.org).

PWCCA Scholarship

The PWCCA will award up to \$2000 scholarship to a qualified college student. The deadline to apply is August 1. See Events & Awards/Junior Scholarship

on the PWCCA website for details.

Come join us September 23–30 at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, to see the best our versatile breed has to offer in herding, obedience, rally, agility, and conformation. Details can be found at www.pwccanational.com.

—Lynda McKee,
TifflynLDM@aol.com
Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Club of America

Pulik

DEWCLAWS

All dogs have four weightbearing toes on each foot. Most dogs also are born with a fifth toe—the dewclaw (or dew claw), located higher on each front leg and in some breeds, also on the rear legs. All Pulik are born with front dewclaws, and more rarely, also with rear ones.

The dog's dewclaw is anatomically equivalent to the human thumb. The dewclaw is typically a fully formed toe (that is, it has bones and

BREED COLUMNS

HERDING GROUP



Mojo the Puli speeds through the weave poles. Dogs who compete in agility or other sports can benefit from having front dewclaws.

ligaments firmly attaching it to the limb, although the dewclaw can be wiggled a little bit). The dewclaw has its own nerve and blood supply, muscles, and tendons, just like the four toes that touch the ground. Rear dewclaws (if present) or sometimes even front dewclaws are only attached by skin or a small tendon, making them “floppy.”

Many dogs have their front dewclaws removed at 3 to 5 days of age in the belief that dewclaws are nonfunctional and out of concern that they might become injured in active dogs. If not removed properly (with removal of all the cartilage containing the nailbed, beyond skin level), dewclaws can grow back as your puppy gets older.

Additionally, a regrown dewclaw is often not the same as the original; it can end up being a twisted or deformed nail, making it hard to trim.

Dewclaws are most likely to be a liability if left to become overgrown. The best way to prevent dewclaws from snagging on things (and possibly being torn off) is to keep

COURTESY STEVEN DONAHUE



BREED COLUMNS

HERDING GROUP

them short.

For some Puli owners, the dewclaw can be troublesome. A Puli owner may complain about needing to locate and trim the extra nail in a corded coat, which is especially challenging with a black Puli having black toenails.

As noted by longtime Puli breeder Stephanie Horan in her grooming manual *Striking the Right Cord*, quite often the dewclaws can end up in the center of a cord and easily forgotten for clipping. Likewise, the dewclaw can become snagged in general in a corded Puli coat and could possibly be torn.

When a dog is just standing, it may be tempting to think that since the front dewclaw does not come into contact with the ground, it is no importance. Dr. Chris Zink, who is a canine sports medicine and rehabilitation consultant, provides a well-explained analysis of the function of the dewclaw for athletic and working dogs on her [website](#).

In short, when the dog

is galloping, the dewclaw, which then is in contact with the ground, will dig into the ground, which make it easier for the dog to change the direction. In this situation, the muscles attached to the dewclaw will reduce the risk of twisting the forelegs. For this reason, dogs who compete in agility or other dog sports can benefit from having front dewclaws.

If a dog does not have dewclaws, there is a higher potential for the carpal (wrist) ligaments to stretch and tear which could result in laxity and arthritis over time. This can then result in more stress being generated through the dog's wrist, elbow, shoulder, and spine as it tries to compensate for the lack of digit.

So, for a working/athletic dog, leaving the dewclaw in place likely prevents arthritis in the carpal joint as they age. Additionally, in a study of agility dog injuries by Sellon et al. (2018, J Amer Vet Med Assoc), removal of dewclaws was associated with increased

risk of digit injury.

The AKC says: "Active dogs are prone to getting them caught and torn, causing extreme pain and significant injury. For these cases, it is better for them to be proactively removed shortly after birth when little or no pain is experienced, rather than to risk serious injury and infection later in an injured mature dog." (*"Dispelling the Myths of Cropped Ears, Docked Tails, Dewclaws, and 'Debarking'"*)

There are no specifications in the Puli Club of America's breed standard as to removal. Some Puli breeders choose to have dewclaws removed, while others do not. It should be noted that during the past 10–20 years, removing dewclaws has fallen out of favor with many veterinarians.

To learn more about the functional use of dewclaws in dogs, the following YouTube videos are recommended: "[How the Dew Claw Is Used by the Dog](#)," and "[Dew Claws Do Have a Purpose](#)."

BREED COLUMNS

HERDING GROUP

—Dagmar Fertl,
dfertl@gmail.com
 Puli Club of America

Shetland Sheepdogs

WE NEED TO TALK

Disqualifications are like speed-limit signs: They are not merely to be regarded as suggestions.

For Shelties, we have three disqualifications in our written standard: over 16 inches, under 13 inches, and brindle color.

As for the brindle color, if you see it you can be assured there is some degree of mix from another breed in the individual. While serving as a member of the American Shetland Sheepdog Association (ASSA) board, I saw several pictures of Shelties with breed type that were brindle in color. All came from reliable sources and concerned members who saw them and took pictures. I believe they came through puppy mills where breeding security was lacking. However, since seeing those pictures, I believe



*Shetland
 Sheepdog*

our forefathers were concerned enough to insist this disqualification needed to be in the standard.

The DQ for size over 16 inches is finite. Any measurement by an AKC official wicket that doesn't allow both wicket legs to contact the measuring surface at the same time means that

animal is over 16 inches and shall be disqualified. Three DQs renders the dog permanently disqualified. You can complain that a measurement was inaccurate, but the dog can only be measured once on that day. There are no redos.

When I first began judging, I had an AKC rep tell

COURTESY LYNDY BEAM