

HERDING GROUP

Pembroke club has a designated rescue coordinator. Dogs go into foster homes to be evaluated, get updated on their medical needs, and, too frequently, to lose weight. They are kept long enough to be evaluated for personality, training, and temperament. The normal lifespan seems to be 13 to 14 years. A Pembroke generally adapts to a new home very quickly—just feed him!

Make plans to attend the national specialty on October 8–15, in and around Mesquite, Texas. Details can be found at <http://pwccanational.com/>.

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Pulik

I asked Ms. Julie Schuh to collaborate with me on this column, due to her experiences in Barn Hunt with her Puli “Parker,” who is the first Puli in the world to earn titles in this relatively new dog sport that is quickly gaining momentum.

PULIK IN BARN HUNT

All dogs have an innate desire to hunt, regardless of what they were bred to do (in the case of the Puli, that was herding). Barn Hunt

was created to allow any canine to participate in a fun dog sport that tests hunting skills and has placements, titles (RATI, RATN, RATO, RATS, and RATM), and championships. Events are held inside or outside in a barn-like setting in a fenced area. Events are open to dogs who are at least 6 months old and can fit through a tunnel that is 18 inches wide and the height of a hay bale.

Dogs are placed into one of three height groups and can compete in five levels of increasing difficulty (Instinct, Novice, Open, Senior, and Master) and earn awards in each.

The challenge for the dog and his handler is to find the live rat(s) in a specific time period. Dogs must also complete one climb and one tunnel. Dogs are tested on speed, agility, and ability to keep their footing. This is a team sport, and the handler must signal when their dog has found the correct PVC tube(s) containing the rat (the rat is safely enclosed in an aerated tube) hidden in a straw- or hay-bale maze (straw or hay bales are stacked to create climbing and tunneling obstacles through which dogs navigate).

In Barn Hunt, the handler needs to know their dog well enough to recognize signs that indicate a rat has been found, including subtle signals that can be harder to pick up. Handlers have no idea where the tubes are hidden or which ones contain a rat and must

wait for their dog to find the correct tube.

While Barn Hunt is an independent sport organized by the Barn Hunt Association, since April 2013 the AKC has recognized titles above the RATI. Owners may apply to have the titles recorded on their dog’s AKC records (<http://www.akc.org/events/title-recognition-program/barn-hunt/>).

Currently there are seven Pulik registered with BHA, and three have BHA titles. Two Pulik have earned a level needed to qualify for an AKC title (in this case, RATN):

Ch. Mezik Ramanok, CD, BN, RE, NAJ, NAP, OJP, NFP, RATN, IT, CGCA, owned by Julie Schuh and Ian T. Schuh. “Parker” earned both his RATI and RATN on September 28, 2014, in Menasha, Wisconsin.

Ch./MACH2 Moonshadow Martuska Piroška, RA, MXC, MJS2, NF, IT, CGC, RATN, owned by Jane Exum. “Piri” earned her RATN title on May 10, 2015, in Canton, Georgia.

Marga, OAP, OJP, RATI, owned by Lori Nunery. Marga earned her RATI title on October 25, 2015, in Frenchtown, New Jersey.

Puli owners are generally very concerned with their Puli’s coat. Although it is against the rules to run your Puli in Barn Hunt in any type of coverall, there are some pointers that can help keep your Puli clean. First of

all, double-check the premium list to see if the bales will be made of hay or straw. Straw is relatively simple to remove from the coat; hay is next to impossible to remove. If your Puli will allow it, a leaf-blower works wonders for blowing the straw out of the coat. A light coating of silicone-type coat conditioner on the dog beforehand will also help prevent straw from sticking in the coat. Finally, for the fun you and your Puli will have, it is well worth the time it takes to pick out the last pieces of straw stuck in their coat (which is also a great bonding experience).

If you are unsure whether you and your Puli will like Barn Hunt, many clubs offer Barn Hunt seminars where you will learn the rules and regulations. Your Puli will be introduced to finding live rats, climbing bales of hay, and running through tunnels.

Barn Hunt is a great sport for all ages of dogs and handlers, young and old. Barn Hunt does not require a lot of running on your part, nor extensive training for your dog, making this a great new activity to pursue with your Puli.

For more information on Barn Hunt, go to <http://www.barnhunt.com/>.

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