

Patrick's Pet Peeves

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While I get to see a large number of dogs and people, there are a few behaviors in both species that really get me going. Here are a few of them. Sorry if I offend anyone, but I have my reasons for these pet peeves!

Teaching your dog to chase water at the end of a hose. This might seem innocent enough, but have you ever tried to wash out a kennel when your dog chases water. When you watch these obsessions, do you think you are constructing a sound mind? This is one obsessive compulsion that doesn't need to be encouraged.

Throwing a ball or stick while other dogs are near. This is not only stupid, but also very dangerous to those people and dogs nearby. It also stirs up the nearby dogs that aren't allowed to play. If you want to play fetch, do it at home.

Looking for a Border Collie that has a specific color. If you write me and ask for a specific colored dog, I might not be real kind in my correspondence back. Look for a dog with great working traits, not a pretty color.

Naming a dog with a demoralizing name. There are reasons that successful people name their dogs with respectful names, mainly because it sets up a respectful relationship. Calling a dog a "naughty" name even in fun sets you up to have a naughty dog.

Not having respect for the livestock. Our livestock makes this great venue happen. I never let my dog beat up on my livestock, and at the same time I never let my livestock beat up on my dog. What makes herding work is respect for all those involved.

Trying to find free transport for a dog because you don't want to fly it and upset it. If you actually think about it, flying and being to a new home in a matter of hours is much less stress than going through different people, riding in a car for days, having to deal with different schedules, dogs, etc., not to mention the inconvenience to the transporter.

Going to a trial and thinking your run is your "time" to train. Trials are set up to showcase your dog, not to train your pup. I see handlers expecting to use their full time because they paid for a run.

Complaining to the trial host about conditions that were known and on the entry. Putting on an event takes tremendous effort and involves stress. Having a participant complain because their trailer got dusty, or the ewes weren't cooperative in their run does not make a trial host look forward to putting on the event the following year.

Dumping your trash at the trial. This I see much too often. The final day of a trial, the campers get busy and clean their trailers and leave the trash for the host to dispose. If you bring it in, take it out. Most hosts don't have a garbage service that allows for a huge amount of trash one week.

Seeing a dog have problems at one trial and then constantly talk poorly about the dog. I try never to pass judgment on a dog until I have seen it a few times. Just like us, dogs can have good and bad days. Personally, it takes me a few times to decide if it is the dog that is poor, or possibly the handler.

Asking to switch runs because you have a long drive home. A running order is comprised so that all have an equal chance for the best conditions. Asking the host to change the order changes the possibilities of who runs in the optimal conditions. Only enter if you are planning to stay for your last run. Or if you decided your last run is too late in the day, graciously scratch that run and tell your host.

Making the final day of a double lift, and pulling out at the last possible moment. If you discover you have other commitments at home, let the host know as soon as possible, so he may fill your spot with the next deserving team. If you wait until the morning of the final, the next team may have already gone home.

Thinking that if a person buys or acquires a trained dog, that they have not worked hard for the success. Buying or acquiring a trained dog, sometimes, is actually more work. It is difficult to figure out a dog that you haven't trained. Many times, you find some surprises in those dogs that are purchased. Personally, I like to train my own dogs, but I would never discount anyone who finds a nice dog and purchases it.

I am sure there are quite a few more things that will "peeve" me, and I will continue to list those as time goes on. We have a great sport, and really do appreciate the good people and dogs that contribute. I do look for the best; so hopefully will see fewer of these problems.