

Professionals

Pro Field Trainers
Finding Mr. or Ms. Right

By Glenda Brown

There often is much discussion about choosing just the right professional handler for a conformation dog. Many of the same factors are involved in sending a young Golden to a field trainer. It is important to do your homework, especially if you have not been involved with field work in the past.

Anyone can call themselves a “pro.” It simply means that they charge for what they do. It doesn’t necessarily mean they know anything, or that what they know is correct. It does not mean that they will take good care of your dog, that they respect all breeds of retrievers, or that they even have a clue. Some are very good at self-promotion; others let their dogs and the work done by the dogs they train do the speaking for them.

If you plan to send your dog with a pro, do as much research as you can to find out which pros are good; which work well with a variety of retriever breeds and have had experience working with Golden retrievers; which pros do not try to put a square peg into a round hole; and which pros really like dogs. You want a pro that is aware of the more current training methods, who has an open mind, and who can communicate. You want a pro who does not think that “pushing the button” on an electric collar is the only answer to any problem that may occur. You want the

kennel to be immaculate and the living conditions for your dog to be excellent.

How do you find a good pro? Check with your local clubs and see if there are members that belong who are currently working with field pros—on a day basis or through sending their young



dogs off for basics. Talk to them. Remember that if you have an obedience question, you would not want the opinion from someone that has trouble putting a CD on a dog. It is the same with field work. If you are interested in hunt tests, attend some. Watch the different pros and how they relate to their dogs. How do their dogs run? Do their tails wag? Or do the dogs cringe or flinch from a hand raised quickly? Do the dogs look focused, happy, and eager to work? If you can, watch how the pros interact with

their clients. How do they handle the stress of competition? Even if you are not interested in competitive field trials, if there is a well-known field trial pro in your area, give him or her a call and ask if they have any suggestions. Many times they will know of a very good, young, upcoming pro who has worked as an assistant and who is just going out on his or her own

Interview various pros. Ask for a list of their previous clients as well as some of their current clients. Ask where they learned their methods. Did they do an apprenticeship? What is their philosophy regarding dog training? Go and spend a few days watch-

ing them train. Ask them to demonstrate their basic program to you. Check into what they have accomplished with dogs they have trained. Don’t let them patronize you, nor should you come on like gangbusters. Be friendly, but keep your eyes open as well as your mind.

Remember, you are there to learn about them, not to tell them what you know. Any good pro should more than welcome you to check into his or her program and be willing to spend time with you. The pro should be proud of

his program and what he or she has accomplished. Ask around. Check with persons who have had a great deal of experience in the field as to what their opinion is of this trainer. Go with your gut. Is this someone you would want to train your dog?

The top pros have a waiting list. Also, previous clients or persons who have a track record with their dogs will get preference. The sooner you can get your name on the waiting list the better. Don’t wait until your pup is six months old to start looking around for a trainer. Tell the pro your goals and aspirations. Be realistic. My first goal was to attain a WC on my OTCH bitch.

Once you have decided on a pro and have sent your dog off, drop by and check how your dog is doing once the dog has started learning. Often a pro wants the dog for a few weeks without you on the scene so the dog can adapt to the new environment. Ask the pro to keep you informed on the dog’s progress. Remember to use courtesy and common sense while doing this. Pros have a life too. You can e-mail/text the pro and list any questions you have. If they prefer to talk on the phone, ask when would be a good time for you to call, or let them know when you are available if they want to make the call.

You should spend training days there working with your dog and having the trainer work with you. If a problem arises, ask how the pro hopes to resolve it. This should be done in a pleasant manner and not in an accusatory fashion. Do some further homework. Read training manuals, research what your dog should be doing at different stages, etc., so that you can ask intelligent questions. Be an active member of the team, i.e., your dog, your trainer, and you. Always keep in mind that while you may have one dog with this trainer, the pro has quite a few dogs that he or she is training, and other clients with whom you need to share their time and attention.

It is extremely important that you pick a trainer who is the right one for your dog, not for someone else’s dog, but for yours. It is very easy to ruin a potentially good dog through improper training.

The best way to keep your kids out of hot water is to put some dishes in it.

AKC News

How to Spot a Puppy Scam Online

By Miranda Carney

Puppy buying is at an all-time high — so it’s no surprise that you may be on the search for a new dog right now. But the truth is, as puppy buying rises, so do puppy scams.

In today’s digital world, almost everyone uses the internet for shopping, including finding a new puppy! Don’t worry — it’s easy to spot puppy scams online if you’re aware of the red flags to look for. And it’s even easier to find a good breeder when you know what questions to ask. Here’s everything you need to know before starting your online puppy search.

What is a Puppy Scam?

Puppy scammers post fake litters online or pretend to be someone they’re not (usually an existing breeder) to take advantage of puppy sales (sans the puppies.) This means that if you aren’t careful, you could find the perfect puppy, send the ‘breeder’ your money, and never receive a puppy or any follow-up communication in return.

While many times these fake listings appear on websites like Craigslist, some scammers find ways to position themselves as reputable breeders by stealing personal info from them.

Luckily, it’s easy to know what to look for to ensure your puppy buying experience is both safe and enjoyable.

What are the Red Flags?

No phone calls. The seller prefers to handle communication by email and not the phone. A reputable breeder will always communicate with you via phone or video chat (if not in person) before selling you a puppy. Fraudulent sellers are oftentimes outside of the U.S. and may

be hiding their phone number by only communicating by email.

Copycat or stock photos. Photos of the dog or ad text can be found on multiple websites. Search for the text in the listing to see if the seller copied and pasted it from another site.



Sketchy payment. The seller asks for wiring of money or payment by gift cards. Be aware that if you choose a non-secure method of payment, it is highly unlikely that you will get your money back. Avoid paying a stranger using apps such as Venmo, as it is harder to get your money back if you don’t get what you paid for. Paying by credit card or PayPal are typically the safest options.

Price is too good to be true. Research the prices for the breed you are considering ahead of time. Purebred dogs sold at deeply discounted prices are typically frauds. If the seller says they register their dogs with a specific organization, you can call the organization to confirm.

Breeder “badges.” AKC does not distribute badges to breeders.

Never get into fights with ugly people, they have nothing to lose.

How Many People Have Been Affected by Puppy Scams?

According to BBB data, nearly 10,000 scam reports and complaints have come in during the last three years about “businesses” selling puppies and dogs. The FTC estimates that only about 10 percent of victims report these crimes, so this number could be much higher.

Sixty percent of these reports indicated the consumers never received the pets they purchased, and others received pets that had health or genetic problems and did

not receive documentation for their pet.

“Scammers love to try to take advantage of people when they are in high emotion situations,” said Steve Bernas, president and CEO of BBB serving Chicago and Northern Illinois. “The excitement of buying a new pet can cloud good judgement, and victims can be hurt financially and emotionally when they realize they have lost their money, and hopes for a new pet.”

How Can I Safely Find a Breeder or Puppy Seller Online?

While scammers are likely to start talking money immediately, legitimate sources will always take time and diligence to make sure the dog you are choosing is a good fit for your family.

Analyze reviews and referrals. The best sources for purebred puppies will have ample positive reviews or referrals

from satisfied puppy owners proving they are legitimate and reputable.

Meet your breeder or puppy seller. Always ask to talk on the phone or video chat. Meeting in person is great whenever possible.

Ask questions. Responsible breeders and puppy sellers love to chat and educate about dogs. Ask anything and everything that you might want to know about the breed, the breeder, and the available puppies. Ask about the breed and how your pup’s parents compare to the official breed standard and other breed traits. How big are the parents? What do they look like? What kind of temperament do they have? Have the parents achieved any AKC titles or awards?

Ask for proof. Don’t be shy — responsible breeders will be happy to share information about your puppy’s parents, and proof of health records and screenings. You should be sure that the puppy has been seen by a licensed veterinarian and know where the puppy is on

their shot-schedule. This will also help you so that you have the proper medical information when you bring your puppy home and you will know what shots are needed next.

Get documentation. Ensure that before leaving with your puppy, you will receive documentation of your dog’s papers. The words “American Kennel Club” as well as the AKC logo should be clearly visible. If the breeder or puppy seller hesitates to give you papers, this is usually a warning sign.

Be patient. If they seem anxious to complete the sale or get your deposit as soon as possible, or if you feel like they are pushing you to make a quick decision regarding a puppy, be careful. Such behavior is often a warning sign that the person you are dealing with is actually a scammer, and there is no puppy.

My Mother Is A Travel Agent For Guilt Trips