

NON-SPORTING GROUP

Tibetan Terriers

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

“The moving image is the most powerful medium of communication. At some conscious or unconscious level, people simply believe their

Over 20 years ago, attending a George Alston handling clinic, a statement Mr. Alston made has remained one of the most valuable nuggets of wisdom imparted on the art of handling. He simply said, “Most judges are eyes.” (Inventor Tim Jenison)

movement judges.” On its face, this seems straightforward in its truth. But there is an ocean of knowledge hiding beneath it, as with all maxims that have been condensed to their essence.

A handler aims for perfection in both the standing and moving picture of their exhibit, but one need only to observe ringside judging to confirm the validity of Alston’s viewpoint. The standing picture a handler creates for a judge, while impressive (or not), can often be superseded by a perfectly executed moving picture. An asterisk could be added to his statement, however, noting that the movement must be correct for the dog breed. Every judge, breeder, and handler must not only know the correct movement for their breed, but also for the individual dog they are presenting.

Being a versatile dog in general it is easy to manipulate TT movement in myriad ways—and not always to an advantage. This is a breed with a naturally engaging, distinct movement because of its proportion, balance, unique foot construction, and overall agile and athletic strengths. Why attempt to mistakenly improve something already extraordinary by copying the mundane stride popularly seen as correct in the show ring? The standard describes “free, effortless stride with good reach in front and flexibility in the rear allowing full

extension.” It goes on: “The dog with the correct foot and leg construction moves with elasticity and drive indicating that the dog is capable of great agility as well as endurance.” This perceived capacity for turbo boost, a reserve of power that is sensed by the onlooker in watching a TT move, is a distinguishing element in true, effortless TT movement.

Lest one be deceived by the words “effortless movement,” it is necessary to recognize that movement is also dynamic and impacted by more than the structural, physical components of the standard. It is one thing to see effortless movement of TTs playing and trotting around their yard, but it requires practice and skillful training to bring that to the show ring. Movement is influenced by countless ever-changing variables. Anticipating how a particular TT will relate to novel conditions in a show ring ironically may mean that effortless movement can take some real work.

Tibetan Terrier
“Most judges are movement judges.”—George Alston



There are at least four variables that shape *effortless* movement, most of which fortunately can be managed by preparation:

pivoting, playing, as well as proper weight and strength maintenance.

Temperament has significant effect on how a dog moves. Some are naturally confident, some more cautious, some are overly exuberant, some more placid and not inclined to blaze a trail out in front. Lots of time training and performing in different locations will help determine what animates and energizes a dog.

the breed standard. Every aspect described in the standard (head, neck and body, fore and hindquarters, coat, size, and temperament) all comes together in compelling synergy when observing impeccable TT movement presented at a dog show.

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