

Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete

By Chris Zink DVM, PhD

www.caninesports.com

There are a number of studies that suggest that those of us with canine athletes should be carefully considering our current recommendations to spay or neuter all dogs at 6 months of age or earlier. A study by Salmeri et al in 1991 (Salmeri et al JAVMA 1991;198:1193-1203) found that bitches spayed at 7 weeks were significantly taller than those spayed at 7 months, who were significantly taller than those not spayed (or presumably spayed after the growth plates had closed). The sex hormones close the growth plates, so the bones of dogs or bitches neutered or spayed before puberty continue to grow. This growth frequently results in a dog that does not have the same body proportions as he/she was genetically meant to. For example, if the femur is normal length at 8 months when a dog gets spayed or neutered, but the tibia, which nor-

mally stops growing at 12 to 14 months of age, continues to grow, then an abnormal angle may develop at the stifle. In addition, with the extra growth, the lower leg below the stifle becomes heavier (because it is longer), causing increased stresses on the cranial cruciate ligament. This is confirmed by a recent study showing that spayed and neutered dogs have a higher incidence of CCL rupture (Slauterbeck JR, Pankratz K, Xu KT, Bozeman SC, Hardy DM. Canine ovariectomy and orchietomy increases the prevalence of ACL injury. Clin Orthop Relat Res. 2004 Dec;(429):301-5).

In addition, a study in 2004 in JAVMA (Spain et al. JAVMA 2004;224:380-387) showed that dogs spayed or neutered before 5 1/2 months had a significantly higher incidence of hip dysplasia than dogs spayed or neutered after 5 1/2 months of age. If I were a breeder, I would be

very concerned about this, because it would mean that I might be



making incorrect breeding decisions if I were considering the hip status of pups I sold that were spayed or neutered early. Interestingly, this same author also identified an increased incidence of sexual behaviors in males and females that were neutered early.

A number of studies, including the one by Spain referenced above, have shown that there is an increase in the incidence of female urinary incontinence in dogs spayed early. This problem is an inconvenience, and not usually life-threatening, but nonetheless one that requires the dog to be medicated for life.

Yes, there is the concern that there is an increased risk of mammary cancer if a dog has a heat cycle. But it is my observation that fewer canine athletes develop mammary cancer as compared to the number that damage their cranial cruciate ligaments. In addition, only about 50 % of mammary cancers are malignant, and those that are malignant don't metastasize very often, particularly in these days when there is early identification and removal of lumps found on our dogs.

In addition, when considering cancer,

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Classified

Black Pups Expected

Moody's Fast Willie Jet, MH/QAA will be bred with FC/AFC Fordland's Bored out Ford. All black pups expected (some yellow factored) approximately mid-February.

FC/AFC Ford [2XNAFC/FC/2XCNAFC Ebonstar Lean Mac x HRCH Dust Devil's Desert Duk, MH/QAA]. Ford has 186 All Age Points, was FC/AFC at 2 years old, and has qualified for 10 Nationals. All amateur owned, trained and handled. His 7 titled siblings include AFC/NFC Patton, FC/AFC Cruise, FC/AFC Tequila Sunrise & FC/AFC Pleasant River Kate.

*1999 Derby List

*2001 #5 Amateur Dog

*2002 Top Amateur Dog with 43 points

*2002 National Amateur Finalist

*2004 #4 Amateur Dog

<http://www.fordland.info/> <<http://www.fordland.info/>>



Moody's Fast Willie Jet, MH/QAA [NFC/AFC Lucyana's Fast Willie x MH bitch by FC/AFC Sourdough's Slick Nick]. Jet completed her MH title at 23 months. She currently has 22 consecutive Master passes. She qualified to run the Master National in 2003, 2004 and 2005. She passed the Master National in 2003, which was the only year she entered the event. She also JAM'ed the only derby she ever ran. She has Qualifying placements and back to back Qualifying wins. She competed in the 2005 World Retriever Championship where she successfully completed 9 of 10 series and finished as the 8th place dog in the event. She was also the grand prize winner of the 2005 North Carolina Ducks Unlimited Duck Dog Classic. Jet is extremely tractable, consistent, and very watery. Jet's OFA: LR-115585E24F-PI (Excellent) and CERF: LR-29728 (2005).

This is a repeat breeding. Pups from the first litter have derby points and JAMs, MH titled as early as 19 months, and are QAA. References available. Visit <http://www.magnoliarunkennels.com> <<http://www.magnoliarunkennels.com/>> or call 912.526.6757.

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- 2 Tibbits / Paul Lance or Raney or Julie Oven
- 3 Doc / Beckey Malphus
- 4 Newt / Kristie Wilder
- 5 Salty / E. Rob Leatherbury or Brian Shaffer
- 7 Shine / Bill Landau, Z. Lassiter or G. Manucy
- 9 Pepper / Sue McDonald
- 11 Pirogue / Keith Farmer
- 16 Mac / Brian Ortman
- 20 Molly / Greg Oyer or Jack Miller
- 21 Shaker / Paul Lance or Raney or Julie Oven
- 23 Midge / Sallie P. Sullivan
- 28 Joe / Brian Schaffer
- 30 Lucy II / Keith Farmer
- 34 Sug / Paula Odom
- 35 Miles / Alice Weatherly
- 38 Vosh / Kristie Wilder
- 44 Jake / Don Harkins
- 45 Cheer / MaryAnn Sauer
- 46 Roxy / Kathy Folsom
- 47 Hoss / Becky Mills
- 48 Jet / Keith Farmer
- 50 Harley / Jill Volsch
- 60 Rooster / Joe Migliore
- 61 Nettie / Glenda Manucy or Bill Landau
- 62 Chief / Davis Arthur or Colby Eason
- 63 Thika / Cheryl Richardson
- 66 Slim / Keith Farmer
- 67 Buddy / Greg Oyer or Laurie Williams
- 68 Flint / Davis Arthur
- 74 Tuff / Mike Pierce

New Members

Brian Cavell
1808 Ox Bottom Ln
Tallahassee, FL 32312



George Anne and John Daly
345 West Main St.
Rochester, IL 692563

Carol Reed
1513 Country Rd 2800E
El Paso, IL 61738