

A Word From Mr Koos Hassing, Tickerhook German Shepherd Kennel Holland - PART TWO

By Von Forell Australia

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In 1997 Kuran Van Tickerhook IPO 1 came to Von Forell Australia. A super high drive male that certainly made an impact in the working dog scene. Von Forell Vilco Sch 111 National Schutzhund Champion being is one example.

Another one of his favorite sayings was:

“During the hold and bark in the blind you can see and hear the soul of the dog!! But as a judge one has to be ABLE to see it.”

His two males Greif zum Lahntal and his son Sagus as well as many others gave the performance world definite boosts (read: working abilities). In reference to improvement or at least preservation, the results of an American study are also very interesting. It was stated that the traits that determine “beauty” appear to be on the same gene as the traits responsible for temperament and character. If that is in fact the case, then we certainly have an additional problem.

One has to talk about these lines and their existence very openly, but on a factual basis. Then their discussion has value. But at this time the leadership is still more show and beauty oriented and for the benefit of the breed things have to change, and soon.

Indecisive board members, maybe for selfish reasons, holding endless discussions driven by emotions and not fact are not helpful and should be eliminated. The times when trees grow to heaven and everybody is nice to one another are over. The time has come for serious changes, not only in regards to how things are structured but also in regards to decision making.

Included in those changes should be the sitting in important leadership positions for too long. In the long run that is bad not only for the organization, but also for the individual in the position (one becomes complacent, wants maintain the status quo, and after a while simply operates on auto-pilot).

In that case new ideas and developments are threatening (to one’s own office). New enthusiasm (read: new board members) should be given a chance to implement their ideas for the preservation of the breed. In order to accomplish a goal, decision making has to encompass everything when it comes to goal setting.

Many sports friends feel the sense of injustice from the people at the top when important decisions are passed just like during the judging of their dogs. This reminded me of a slogan of an equal rights group: “Mercy for the wolf means injustice for sheep!”

Breeders. As always, breeders who follow the regulations set the standard of the German Shepherd of today. Their creativity should not be limited. The breed suitability regulations are very clear about that.

A different Aspect.

In show line circles many breeders and owners send their females to Germany to be trained for SchH 1 and to get a Kör-rating (I am sure only because of circumstances). In principle there is nothing wrong with that if there are good reasons for it, such as knowledge, skill, or time. But at times there is something wrong with the way it happens.

For me it is unbelievable that dogs who have not mastered a single exercise can achieve SchH 1 and a Körung in the time span of 2-3 months. Considering the existing trial rules almost an impossibility. To achieve that in some cases there has to be a tight chain of accomplices starting with judges, helpers, clubs etc.

In that context I have seen examples of dogs who returned to their regular clubs. But that is how things are, it happens, it is accepted, it gets paid for and then on to breeding.

I am convinced that this sort of thing certainly contributes to the high failure rate of 40%. Please don't forget that females are the most important factors in the preservation of the breed. And to continue like that we are not doing the breed any favors.

The performance judges ad Körmeister

One expects from a judge that he is impartial due to his knowledge, that he exudes integrity, and that he judges a dog without looking at the person who is handling him. He is held to that standard by the trial rules which are in my opinion clear and unmistakable. Naturally the rules give him some discretion and that is how it should be. Günther Diegel, the training director of the SV, is very clear in his view of the SchH 1 category. IT is the cornerstone for the foundation and development of the breed. When judging dogs at large events one should set as a goal that at the top of the results list are dogs who are of such quality that they could be utilized to improve the breed. I am perfectly in agreement with that, but in reality it often looks a lot different.

For example:

The length of the tracks at the WUSV in Kefeld can't contribute to such a goal. But who speaks up about it?! But it can't be that a dog passes a trial, gets a certificate, or gets a Körung based solely on criteria that an individual judge makes up on his even own if he does not deserve it. A judge who does that does not only shame himself, but does not really do the sports friend a favor either, and he in no way helps the breed. But what the hell, he is popular and gets to judge a lot.

Another aspect the so called training lines have to live with is the fact that through much improved training techniques (in itself a very admirable accomplishment) dogs who do not have any social aggression or the necessary hardness of a working dog anymore can still be trained excellently by experts with any number of training aides.

If this practice is elevated to an art, AND is promoted by awarding high points to dogs who are the product of this, then we have a different serious problem, namely the reliance on the innate talent of the dog. At this year's BSP I save many examples of this.

In principle I do not think this kind of training is wrong. BUT, if a judge is not able to see through all of that and still places the dogs at the top, then we will quickly end up on a slippery slope which will have negative consequences in breeding and therefore for the future!

Because I am firmly convinced that the working abilities of the German Shepherd Dog should originate in his genetics. If dogs can only perform exercises to a large part because of the help they had through technical aides, then we are truly on the wrong path.

The German Shepherd is not a Malinois with different appearance. Aficionados know what I mean by that! The wrong path applies to all three phases. More and more dogs quit on tracks when the conditions become

too difficult. That has a lot to do with training too of course, but ALSO the genetic predisposition (the desire to find something). Therefore tracking is also of great importance and an important part of the whole program.

A Körmeister should be able to assess the genetic talent and judge the dog on that basis. Like I mentioned earlier: The length of the tracks in Krefeld did nothing to accomplish this goal. Here of course refer to the males and especially the females who are trained in such a manner AND who are also active in the breeding scene. Otherwise the value of working ability, or what is left of it, becomes nothing more than a big technical game. In other words:

The 100 points are not passed on to the offspring. Not in tracking, not in obedience, and certainly not in protection.

END OF PART TWO

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