

GRCI Code of Ethics

The Golden Retriever Club of Illinois Constitution and By-Laws, Article 1, Section 2, paragraphs (A), (B), and (C) state:

The objectives of the club shall be:

(A) To encourage those GRCI members who breed Golden Retrievers to perfect, by selective breeding, sound Golden Retrievers and to do all possible to develop and promote their natural abilities and qualities while still maintaining their exceptionally good dispositions; (B) To urge members to accept the standard of the breed as approved by the American Kennel Club as the only standard of excellence by which the Golden Retriever shall be judged; (C) To do all in its power to protect and advance the interests of the breed by encouraging sportsmanlike competition at dog shows, field trials, obedience trials, and tracking tests.

To elaborate on these Constitutional statements, this Code of Ethics is drawn up and subscribed to in the section and paragraphs that follow. The GRCI is hereby setting forth acceptable standards of practice for its membership.

I. Objectives

Breeding Golden Retrievers should be done discriminately with emphasis placed on producing good health, sound temperament, correct conformation, working ability, and other outstanding characteristics of the breed.

Consistent with the aforementioned, if I breed, I will agree to breed selectively. I understand and agree that to breed indiscriminately may add to overpopulation and contribute to the deterioration of the Golden Retriever breed.

II. Sportsmanship

I shall endeavor to conduct myself at all times in a manner which will reflect credit upon Golden Retrievers, regardless of the location or circumstances, but especially when attending dog shows, obedience, field, or tracking events. I will refuse to malign others by making libelous, slanderous, or malicious criticism regarding another person, their dog(s), or their kennel name.

III. Health

I agree to maintain good standards of health and care of my dogs including proper veterinary care. I further agree that proper mental health includes regular contact with people and exposure to the outside world.

IV. Records

I agree that if I breed my bitch or use my stud in service, to keep accurate and thorough records in accordance with AKC requirements.

V. Breeding

I understand that responsible breeding requires the ability to distinguish between the correct and incorrect. Such ability presupposes a careful study of the breed standard, the basic principles of genetics and the pedigrees of prospective stud and matron. I agree not to attempt breeding until I have attained this level of education.

As a breeder, I agree to breed only stock which is temperamentally and physically sound and in good health. I agree that any dog or bitch I use for breeding shall meet the following minimum health requirements:

1. Hips must be clear of canine hip dysplasia as evidenced by obtaining an OFA rating of excellent, good, or fair. Preliminary evaluations of dogs which are over 30 months of age at breeding are not acceptable.
2. Eyes must be free of serious eye abnormalities as determined by a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology. Eye examinations shall be obtained prior to breeding, and updated every 12-18 months until the dog is five years old.

I understand that Golden Retrievers may have a number of health problems in addition to those related to hips and eyes. I will take reasonable precautions to avoid breeding or producing dogs with significant health problems. It is strongly recommended that all breeding stock be screened for serious heart disease and affected dogs excluded from breeding programs. Screened dogs would have a written report of an exam performed by one of the following: a) a Board Certified Veterinary Cardiologist, b) an internist with cardiovascular training, or, c) a veterinarian with certified training in clinical cardiology. Other health considerations may include allergies, bleeding disorders, epilepsy and other seizure disorders, orthopedic conditions other than hip dysplasia, and thyroid dysfunction.

I understand that to make breeding decisions outside of currently accepted standards of practice may positively or negatively impact on the future of the Golden Retriever breed. I acknowledge that to make such decisions responsibly with the best interests of the breed in mind requires years of experience and data based on generations of breeding stock. I will at all times consider the breed standard as approved by AKC, and the relative worth of the dog(s) to be bred, in undertaking any particular breeding.

I understand and agree that the sound temperament of the Golden Retriever is a hallmark of the breed and will do all that I can to avoid reproducing temperament problems.

As the owner of the bitch:

I agree that the physical and mental well-being of the bitch are the prime consideration at any time. I will only breed normal, healthy, mature bitches. (It is generally advisable not to breed a bitch prior to two years of age.) No bitch will be bred and whelp puppies more than twice in any three consecutive seasons. All bitches should be given a pre-breeding screen to include Brucellosis check.

I will only breed when I am in a position to properly care for the bitch and litter, providing adequate food, shelter, veterinary care and socialization. I understand that it could take as long as six months or more to properly place a litter.

As the owner of the stud:

I will only allow my dog to be bred selectively. I will discourage the individual who wants to breed a poor representative of the breed or one unsuitable for my stud and will explain why I do so. I will make a reasonable effort to ensure that the bitch owner has the proper time and facilities to care for the bitch and litter for as long as it takes to place the litter. I will refuse stud service to any bitch who lacks documented OFA and eye clearances, and will recommend a heart exam as described above.

As bitch or stud dog owner:

I acknowledge responsibility for any puppy I produce. I will take back or assist in placing any dog that I have produced whose owners are unable to keep him. Should any dog of my breeding find its way to any rescue service, I will make every effort to care for and/or place that animal, or will support that rescue service with a monetary donation. I will be available for the life of the dog as a resource to answer questions on basic health, nutrition, training, and grooming to anyone who acquires a dog from my breeding stock.

VI. Sales

I will refuse to recommend or to buy from or sell to dog wholesalers and retailers, laboratories, or auctions, or to donate a Golden Retriever for raffle purposes.

I will use a sales agreement with any sales involving a dog. Any such agreement shall reflect my adherence to the GRCI Code of Ethics. If I accept monetary deposits on puppies I will clearly explain the terms of the deposits. I will not accept deposits for more puppies than I can reasonably expect to place and understand buyers can reasonably expect a puppy from a litter on which they have placed a deposit.

I will pass on to buyers of puppies or adult dogs accurate health, breeding, and registration records and a pedigree.

I will recommend that any puppy I sell as a pet be neutered. I may sell any puppy to be evaluated at a future date with a limited registration with the recommendation that should this dog not be of show/breeding quality, it is to be neutered by a specified age.

I will generally not release puppies before they are seven weeks of age, and then only with the reasonable belief that they are healthy and have the required medical inoculations and care.

As a breeder, I will make a reasonable effort to see that every dog will have an adequate home and be properly cared for. I will urge my puppy buyers to provide obedience training and socialization of their puppies, and to keep them within a fenced yard or on leash and not allow them to run at large.

VII. Enforcement

I understand and agree that upon receipt by the Board of Directors of GRCI of written allegations of violations of this Code of Ethics, the Board of Directors will proceed according to the Constitution of the Golden Retriever Club of Illinois, Article VII.