

This Dog's Life  
"On the Virtues of Dirt Show Rings"

Now that Summer is officially over and the Fall season sets in, my attention is more focused on shows and seeing all my friends from around the country.

To kick off the busy fall season I competed twice last month, once in Fort Worth and the same weekend in Big D. Rather disappointing, they were in total, mainly cause I was the only dog in my class and there was only one other English Bull Terrier in the entire White Bull Terrier class. She was a fine little thing all groomed up and sweet looking with a soft brown eye patch, but I never got close enough to get friendly and give her a proper howdy. In fact, maybe you were in Dallas and saw me rear up after her when the ribbons was being given out, maybe you heard me bark real loud when she was leaving me alone in the ring? I know she heard me, but that handler lady took her out of the ring quick-like and left me high and dry.

Not to be deterred tho' I started pulling and tugging on that choker and looking for her as we cleared the ring and out in the hallway, but she was no where to be found. Pulling and tugging and pretty much getting no where fast I made my way through the crowd and all sorts of strangers, dogs and people alike. There was one dog caught me by surprise by his God-awful sorry looks, seemed to me to be a runt Staffordshire Terrier with a mouth better suited to Chicauha than whatever it was supposed to be. Well, when I caught site of that monstrosity, I swung my head around full and gave him one of those deep, hard Bull Terrier looks and that liked-to shook the life out of him and the man of his story clutching the lead.

"Jesus," the man said at that instant as both jumped like crickets ... just because I looked their way. Funny thing, if memory serves me right that same dog was actin' like it was fixing to devour some other poor creature near the coffee and donut stand before things got really going that morning. And the man on the other end of the leash, why he was having a conversation with someone, apparently unaware that a blood bath was in the making 36 inches down the other end of that lead. Yep, that runt showing those puny teeth and making some kind of noise I suppose a cat might take notice of, but me, I ain't afraid of no loud-mouth, all-bark and no bite. And that's what I think about that.

Elsewise, there were some familiar faces at the show from dog show training down in RedOak. Walking through the crowd, I spotted Poofy's human companion, grooming a white dog just like Poofy, who was all black. I wanted to meet this new dog, but I couldn't get free to make my way. I heard the Brian and Rachael of my story talking about how they needed me to go with them to more training, so maybe I'll get to meet this new item. That's what I love about the show, lots of action!

But, it's not all fun and games and let me tell you up front, not all shows is made equal in my eyes. Nosir. For example, these two shows in Forth Worth and Dallas were flops in my book, particularly due to the lack of social opportunities to network with other Bull Terriers and paw the little girls, but even more important these two shows was held on concrete, indoor rings, the worse kind of set up for Bull Terriers.



Here is a picture of me competing in one of my first shows on the dirt in Fort Worth. There I am in the back there with Rachael telling me something, probably be a good boy and stop fidgeting. You can see how much space there is for us two dogs there, while the other one is trotting around for the judges to see.

Up in the grandstands there you can see various members of the Bull Terrier Club of Dallas. There's Papa James Davis talking to club members Amber Gibson and Lynn Cash from Houston.

Now, you may disagree with me on these following points, and I will allow for that, but before you turn away and go off mad, hear me out on this dirt ring vs. concrete ring issue.

Naturally, my experience in the show ring ain't to be compared to some of my kin and I allow for being new to this whole conformation business, but I been around long enough to have definite opinions about what parts of shows I like and what parts I do not like. And I don't like showing on inside, concrete floors. I like the dirt rings in the big barns at the Fort Worth shows. Here's why:

- For one if you have to whiz in the ring, it's a lot more dignified to muddy up some dirt than puddle up some concrete. It's just a natural fact.
- And then there's the overcrowded nature of these indoor shows. Your ring is right next to all these others and there's all this extra noise and loudspeakers, not to mention all these strange dogs and people loitering and getting all upset if you look hard at 'em.
- In the Sheep Barn we get our own private ring. And with that we get our own grandstand, which is far superior seating for spectators, especially when we entertain our audience with complimentary dinner on the big Friday night.
- And for grooming particulars, there ain't no comparison to being in the barn. In the barn I get my own pen to keep my legs stretched out and I feel secure when the gate is locked.
- And besides all that, when I am in that big ring there's a lot of space to move around and let those judges see my handsome features. Those small rings are probably perfect for runts, like I scared the daylights out of that day, but full size Bull Terriers need a big space.

Naturally, I could go on and on touting the virtues of the Fort Worth Big Barn show site and how it's far superior to anything I have seen on the inside of any other place, but it ain't no big thing. All I know for sure is the dirt rings in Fort Worth are fun and I feel at ease when I'm there. There ain't nothing that compares to the big show in Fort Worth and I don't expect there ever will be.