

Appendix 31

Dogfighting Terminology

Break stick (breaking stick, bite stick): a wedge-shaped stick used to “break” the hold of a pit bull

Catchweight: a heavyweight, any dog over 52 pounds pit weight

Catmill (Jenny): a conditioning device consisting of one or more spokes projecting from a rotating central shaft in the ground. A dog is harnessed to one spoke or other fixture in front of the dog so that the dog will run in circles, attempting to catch the lure. Weights are frequently attached to ancillary spokes or a drag may be added to increase resistance

Chain weight: the regular weight of a dog kept on the yard

Champion: rank conferred by various pit dog publications on dogs that have won three contract matches

Cur: any dog that is not game; that shows signs and/or gives up or stops; cries, tail between the legs; may initially rear up and soon curr out

Curr out: to quit or give up

Down-dog: the dog receiving the most punishment during a match, usually down on the carpet

Fanged: when a dog inadvertently pierces his or her own lip with a canine tooth while attempting a bite hold on an opponent

Fast-mouthed: in combat, a dog that makes numerous bite holds in rapid succession

Flirtpole: an exercise device consisting of a pole, often bamboo, with a lure (often animal hide) attached; the dog chases the lure, which is guided by the trainer holding the pole

Game (Gameness): 1. The sport of dog-fighting; 2. The combined qualities of courage, aggression, and tenacity in the face of utter exhaustion and possible death.

Game test: to determine a dog’s gameness by rolling until completely exhausted, then having the dog prove gameness by scratching to a fresh dog

Grand Champion: rank that can be conferred on a dog who has won five contract matches without any losses

Handle: the act of handling a dog and lifting him or her away from the opponent

Keep: A rigorous diet and exercise program designed to prepare and condition a dog for a contract match, usually four to six weeks prior to the fight; except for exercise periods, a dog in keep is usually isolated from other dogs

Match: a contracted dogfight

Match dog: a dog that is used or intended for use in a contracted match

Pick-up: occurs when a handler concedes a match by picking up his dog

Pit: arena where fights are conducted; a typical pit is constructed of plywood walls measuring 24 to 36 inches high and approximately 14 to 20 feet square, although concrete, sheets of metal, and bales of hay have been used to construct a pit; the floor of the pit is usually covered with carpet or canvas to allow increased traction; many pits are designed to be disassembled so as to be portable

Pit weight (match weight): when a dog is brought down from his usual weight and is ready to match

Producer of Record (POR): a list of dogs established and maintained in the dog fighting journals; a sire and dam are given one point for each win of their immediate offspring; a male must have fifteen points and a female must have ten points to make the list; champion offspring will net the sire and dam of such one extra point; Grand Champion offspring will net two extra points for the sire and dam

Register of Merit (ROM): a list of dogs established and maintained by the Sporting Dog Journal; each dog is credited with one point for each champion produced and one additional point for each one of these champions who goes on to win a grand championship; a male dog must be the sire of at least four champions to get on the list and a female must be the dam of at least three champions

Roll/bump (schooling): a practice or training match

Scratch: a method by which a dog must demonstrate gameness in a pit contest; the act of rushing across the pit

and taking hold of an opponent within a specified count, which can vary according to the rules of the fight; scratches are made from behind diagonal lines in opposite corners of the pit; the first scratch is a simultaneous release; subsequent scratches are alternating

Scratch lines: lines drawn diagonally across opposite corners of the pit from behind which the dogs are set down and released and the dog has to cross, or scratch, after being released

Spring pole: a device used for exercising a pit bull

Treadmill: a device for running a dog in place

Turn: a pit term that refers to a dog turning his head and shoulders away from his opponent; various rules are set for this because it can be mistaken for a maneuver or tactic of the dog

Turn-table: a device used to run a dog in place