



FIGHTING DOGS

PITBULL ADVOCATES FOR COMPASSION & KINDNESS

With all the media hype about Pit Bulls and dog fighting it may appear as though the only breed that has ever engaged in dog fighting is the American Pit Bull Terrier. On the contrary, many common household breeds have a fighting lineage, or had a fighting breed crossed into their lines at one point in their breed's history - we just don't hear about it much in newspapers and TV news programs. Misidentification and misunderstanding of this breed has caused a tainted view of the Pit Bull.

Ex-fighting Pit Bulls:

Because a Pit Bull has been fought in the past does not mean that he is necessarily more dog-to-dog aggressive than any other Pit Bull companion. The trait is already bred into them. They aren't "trained" to fight in the first place. They are *conditioned* for fighting. Therefore a Pit Bull that has never been fought could engage in a fight just like any fighting dog. An ex-fighter may not be any more dog-to-dog aggressive than a dog that has never been fought. Therefore the management of either of these dogs would be pretty much the same. This would also depend how much the dog has been fought and reinforced for it.

Ironically, their intense love and affection for humans is in part due to their breeding for dog fighting. Humans often stood in the pits with their dogs during fights, and would routinely reach into the fray to pull their dogs away. They would then handle their dogs, treat wounds, etc. so dogs that redirected their arousal onto their human handlers or were aggressive to humans in any way were not tolerated and would not be used in future breedings. The pit fighting process necessitated a very human-responsive, human-friendly breed.

It is true that some dogs that have had an extremely abusive fighting past can be damaged beyond repair, and will never be suitable for adoption. However it is important to note that this can also occur in dogs that have never been fought.

The point here is to assess the extent to which a dog has been damaged first – regardless of past history - before deeming the dog irreparable and unadoptable. Some trainers say that dogs confiscated from fighting rings can never lead normal lives again. This is not true. Each dog should be viewed in regard to his or her own individual temperament. Pit Bulls are amazingly resilient, and many dogs confiscated from these situations have gone on to live peaceably in homes with other animals and children. Being that dog aggression and human aggression are entirely unrelated, these dogs can be a very safe and loving companion with socialization, training, and responsible ownership. Pit Bulls respond extremely well to behavior modification.

Of course, the usual precautions of dog management still apply: all play sessions with other dogs should be supervised, and, when unattended, your Pit Bull should always be separated from other animals and in the home (in a crate or different room). But these are wise precautions for any multi-dog household, regardless of breed.

Again, we must look at Pit Bulls individually, and for what they are first and foremost - dogs!

Please see "The Truth About Pit Bulls" on our website for more information about the common myths surrounding Pit Bulls today.

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