

DOG OF THE MONTH : SMOKEY!

Smokey is a sweet dog with a gentle heart, but the hyper active urges of a bully puppy! As our next dog of the month, he is a perfect candidate for our workshop training in practice, and for experiencing the trials of a new intake pooch!

Gate entry! Smokey has learned sit, both verbal and hand commands. "Smokey, sit." This is a must do command, and the stay for him is implied until the next command.

Once you are at his gate, get him to sit before you reach for the latch, his compliance is a sign that you will have his attention upon entering. If he is hyper, you may get him to sit close to the fence, away from the gate, and offer 1 treat through the fence so long as he remains in a seated position. He knows "back up," so use this as you enter, along with plenty of praise for him giving you the space.

He must sit once again before he gets any treats. Ideally, he should sit, you back up one or two steps, he sits again. Then he can have another treat.

Smokey is small in stature, so you want him to sit and be calm before you get on his level to love on him. Reaching down and towering over him gets him excited, and like many small bully dogs, he will jump to greet you at the face.

Kneel down and keep him calm while petting him. If he gets excited, say "oops" like you would if he tripped over a wire, and stand. Step back and get him to sit before trying again.

Leash training. He is okay on a leash, but he is learning correct proximity. He sits compliantly, but his attention is short while walking. Start in his pen without a leash (he will get excited sometimes, but don't let this discourage you) and walk a couple laps before leashing him. You can take him to the field behind his enclosure, and let him burn some energy beforehand as well (recommended).

Smokey should sit and watch you as you leash him. When walking him, get him to sit and wait at your side every 20-25 steps. If he begins to pull away from you, slow down and say his name gently, if he trails behind you, speed up and say his name gently. If he remains at your side, you may offer a treat for every 15-20 steps he remains in position.

Recall. Smokey is pretty good when it comes to, well, coming on command. He has a lot of puppy energy, but if you let him loose to explore behind his enclosure, try calling him to you every other time he gets interested in a smell or a dog, or trails off across the space. When he comes, he must sit. He doesn't get a treat for coming, instead he gets a good boy and a nice pet or rub. If you feel that he must get a treat, after you pet him, you may gently take his collar, give a treat, and then after a really enthusiastic good boy, tell him to "go play" (This is classical conditioning to prevent collar sensitivity, I will leave it to you to decide if you are comfortable with this step, this should not be done by volunteers with dogs that may be sensitive to their collar, or with dogs they are only first meeting)

Leaving the enclosure. After you have prepared to leave, Smokey should sit for at least 3 seconds while you have your hand on the gate latch. He may have 1 or 2 treats for compliance, and then must remain seated while you leave the enclosure. If he moves, a stern (huh uh) and a return to a sit should follow. Once you have latched the gate behind you, he can have another two treats for staying put, or 1 treat to come and sit at the gate before you go.