

At the age of 1 year and 4 months Valdemar sustained an injury to his left hip. (See the letter from Dr. Troy Summers, DVM for a technical explanation of the injury.) When the recommended surgery was explained to me my first concern was for the long term health and well being of Valdemar. I was assured that the surgery would not result in a crippled arthritic joint that would cause him pain for the rest of his life. Dr. Summers also felt that he would be able to resume hunting the following year and provide many years of service as my hunting companion.

My second concern was the possibility of a genetic cause for his injury. In short; I wanted to know if he had bad hips and should be neutered. Given the accidental nature of the injury I was assured that there was no reason to believe that this injury was precipitated by bad hips. In 2007 Valdemar was given a PENNHip evaluation. That evaluation ranked Val's hip at the 70th percentile and supports the belief that he is not genetically predisposed to hip problems.

At the time of his injury I was afraid that he wouldn't be able to hunt again. As he healed he again showed the heart and talent that I had fallen in love with as a puppy. In time I realized that even with one hip Val was capable of holding his own with anyone and I began to enter him in field trials. At the 2009 CEB-US National Field Trial he displayed such drive and instinct that he was awarded a High Natural Quality award by Christian Gunther, president of the CEB-France.

I am very fortunate that this injury did not end Val's career as a hunting dog and, along with others, I am amazed that he can run competitively with the best Bretons in the nation. I don't often think about the fact that he competes with a major handicap because he doesn't seem to be at a disadvantage. Still, there are days when I can't help but imagine what he could do with four good legs.