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Split Personality

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"In repose the expression is mild and gentle, not shy or nervous. Aroused, the dog is particularly alert and full of immense energy and courage".

This statement is cited from the General Appearance of the Bedlington Terrier Standard. The word 'repose' literally means 'sleepy',

but it is used to describe the natural expression of the Bedlington as calm and tranquil. Breed characteristics such as a small deep set eye, low set ears held flat to the cheek, and a graceful scimitar curved



tail that is set low from their top line, are in keeping with the Bedlington's soft expression. But behind this 'sleepy' outward appearance lies a dog with a tremendous amount of terrier spirit, fearlessness, and vivacity.

In the show ring, Bedlingtons may be perceived as more laid back than other terrier breeds due to their serene disposition. This breed may seem calm and composed, but in fact, Bedlingtons are known to give very little visual warning before they attack something. This is one reason why our dogs are not sparred with each other or other terriers in the ring. Unfortunately, the mild general appearance of the Bedlington can work against him in other ways as well. In comparison to other terrier breeds, who are expected to be "on their toes" or "full of gameness" and posturing, our dogs may be overlooked for group placements by AKC Judges due to a perceived lack of liveliness or pluck. In actuality, the Bedlington's tranquil disposition is being true to his character. The Bedlington just handles his business with natural aplomb and without much fanfare.

To compensate for the Bedlington's mild and gentle expression in the show ring, the dog is aroused and encouraged to show the more energetic side of his personality. Handlers will use toys, bait, or key trigger phrases to bring out a Bedlington's lively spirit. Eyes become more open and focused, ears are pulled forward and upward, the head is made to tilt with curiosity, the neck more erect, and the tail held properly but wagging with enthusiasm.



Stacking the hind legs slightly further back or making the dog stretch forward will make him look more *"alert and full of immense energy and courage"*.

Certain breed characteristics should not be compromised no matter how the Bedlington is presented in the show ring. Whether the dog is shown with a calm expression or excitable poise, the general appearance of the Bedlington should never interfere with other aspects of the breed such as type or movement. The eyes should be bright and attentive, not dull and lifeless. The tail should never be arched over the back or held tightly under the dog. A tail that is held between the hind legs and tight to the underbody might indicate a more shy or nervous dog. Bedlingtons are a dignified breed whose temperament should not be shy or nervous. Movement should always be light, graceful, and springy - never heavy and slow, over exaggerated, or flat. When moving at a slower pace, the head should always be carried relatively high on a long tapering neck and not droopy or sagging.

Showing a Bedlington with either a mild and gentle expression or aroused and alert, are both correct for the breed. Hopefully AKC Judges will recognize both aspects of the Bedlington's general appearance and reward them accordingly.



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