Being the Last Pick of the Males or Females

One of the most common concerns we hear from families is: **"We're the last pick. Should we be worried?"**

The short answer is: **absolutely not.**

As breeders, we completely understand why this feels concerning at first. It's natural to assume that if other families chose before you, they somehow selected all of the "best" puppies. Fortunately, that simply isn't how puppy selection works.

Our Personal Experience

Over the years, we have personally chosen eight Golden Retrievers to add to our family. Some were first pick. Some were middle picks. Some were among the last puppies available. In fact, the Golden Retriever that made us fall in love with the breed was the very last puppy to leave her litter. If we had judged her based solely on pick order, we would have missed out on one of the most special dogs we've ever owned.

What We've Seen as Breeders

Over the past decade, we have raised more than **20 litters of Golden Retrievers.**

In every litter, there is always:

- A last pick male
- A last pick female

That's simply how math works.

Some puppy has to be selected first, and some puppy has to be selected last. That does not make one puppy better than another. In all of our years breeding Golden Retrievers, we have never had a family decide a puppy wasn't the right fit after meeting them during puppy picks because they were the last available puppy.

In fact, many of our families who were initially nervous about being last pick later tell us they cannot imagine having gone home with any other puppy.

Why Puppies Get Chosen

Some families want:

- The calmest puppy
- The most outgoing puppy
- The largest puppy
- The smallest puppy
- The darkest coat
- The lightest coat
- A puppy that reminds them of a previous dog
- The puppy that came up to them first
- The puppy that fell asleep in their lap
- Even something as simple as their favorite collar color

We've had families choose puppies because of temperament, coat color, size, birth order, which puppy reminded them of a childhood dog, and yes, even because they liked a particular collar color. Because everyone is looking for something different, puppies are not being selected in order from "best" to "worst."

The puppy that is still available when your turn arrives is simply the puppy that wasn't the perfect match for the families before you. In many cases, it has very little to do with the puppy itself and much more to do with what individual families were looking for that day.

Puppy Picks Are Just a Snapshot

It is also important to remember that the one hour puppy visit is only a very small snapshot of who your puppy is becoming. Puppies are babies. Their personalities are still developing and changing every day. Even we cannot fully predict exactly who a puppy will become as an adult.

A puppy may be sleepy because they just finished playing. Another may be energetic because they just woke up from a nap. What you see during puppy picks is only a brief moment in time.

What often has a much greater impact on your puppy's future behavior is:

- Training
- Socialization

- Consistency
- Exposure to new environments
- Experiences during the first year of life

The puppy you bring home at eight weeks is only the beginning of the story.

A Note About Expectations

While we firmly believe that being the last pick does not mean you are getting a lesser puppy, we also never want to send a puppy home with a family who is not excited and confident about their decision.

If pick position is a significant concern for you, we would encourage you to consider waiting for a future litter where you may have a greater likelihood of receiving an earlier pick.

However, it is important to understand that nature does not always cooperate with our plans. Even families with early reservations can find themselves lower on the list than anticipated if a litter produces fewer puppies of their desired sex than expected. We have had litters with only one or two males or females, and occasionally no puppies of a particular sex at all.

Unfortunately, there are never guarantees when it comes to litter size, sex ratios, or pick order.

For that reason, we encourage families to join a litter because they are excited about the parents, our breeding program, and the prospect of adding a well-bred Golden Retriever to their family—not solely because of a particular pick number.

Our Goal

Our goal has never been to produce one "perfect" puppy in each litter. Our goal is to raise a litter full of healthy, well-socialized puppies that can thrive in a variety of homes and lifestyles.

Whether you have first pick, middle pick, or the final pick of the litter, our hope is the same: That you go home with a puppy you love, invest in, and build a lifetime of memories with. Because at the end of the day, families don't fall in love with a pick number. They fall in love with their dog.

In our experience, once that puppy is curled up on your couch, following you around the house, and becoming part of your family, nobody remembers whether they were first pick or last pick. ❤️