



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Signs of Dogfighting: How to Spot It

Unfortunately, the blood sport of dogfighting is alive and well in the U.S. Before the Michael Vick case, many people didn't realize dogfighting existed nowadays. Yet, it is a thriving underground crime. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates there are more than 40,000 people involved in organized dogfighting in the U.S. and thousands more involved in impromptu street dogfighting.

One thing is for certain, the public has zero tolerance for dogfighting and cruelty towards man's best friend. The HSUS is working hand-in-hand with the Chicago Police Department to educate the public on how to spot dogfighting.

IF YOU WITNESS A DOGFIGHT IN PROGRESS, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

Signs of Dogfighting: Below are photos of what to look for when identifying dogfighting.



Pit bulls on heavy chains

It's quite common for dogfighters to keep pit bulls on heavy logging chains, sometimes with padlocks. In more urban areas where there is not much room outdoors, pit bulls are often kept in basements, or otherwise confined. In general, if a home has multiple pit bulls that seem aggressive, unneutered, abused or unsocialized, it is highly possible they are being used for dogfighting.



Treadmills.

Dogfighters use treadmills as conditioning tools. Many are homemade ones, like the slatmill shown, but sometimes dogs are tied to electric ones as well. Look for a chain or harness used to tether a dog to the treadmill.



Breaking sticks.

These are used to pry apart a dog's mouth in order to break up a fight. They are about a foot long, and flat on one side. Many times they are blood stained.



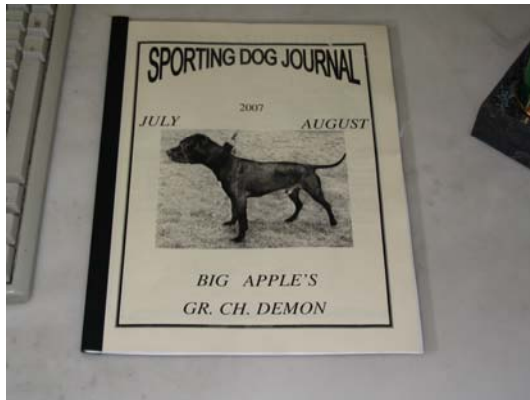
Scarred dogs, especially pit bulls.

Fighting scars can be found on the face, front legs, hind ends and thighs. Puncture wounds, swollen faces and mangled ears are also tell-tale signs of fighting. If you see dogs with these characteristics, please contact law enforcement or animal control immediately.



Fighting pit, often with "scratch lines."

Pits are often constructed out of plywood, measure between 14 and 20 square feet and have walls two to three feet high. Look for blood stains. Recently, some dogfighters have been using chain link fencing as well. Pits can also be constructed out of makeshift materials such as hay barrels. The diagonal scratch lines are drawn in two opposite corners. The dogs stay behind these lines until the referee orders them to be released.



Dogfighting publications.

Dogfighters keep track of which dogs and bloodlines are winning matches through underground publications, such as the "Sporting Dog Journal" shown left. Other titles include: "Scratch Back," "International Dog Journal," and "Certified Contender Report." It is illegal to ship these magazines through the U.S. mail.



Springpole.

A springpole conditions a dog for fighting by building up his neck and jaw muscles. It involves a rawhide, knotted rope, tire or other material that is suspended from a beam or sturdy tree branch. The dog bites and holds onto it to build strength and endurance.



Jenny mill or cat mill.

This resembles a miniature horse walker. The dog is harnessed to a spoke projecting from a rotating center shaft, and chases a small bait animal, such as a rabbit or cat who has been caged or tied to a spoke just ahead of the dog. This encourages prey drive as well as physically conditioning the dog.



Vitamins, drugs and vet supplies.

Although these drugs and veterinary supplies may have legitimate uses, they are commonly found in connection with illegal dogfighting operations. A few commonly used drugs include: Dexamethazone (steroid), Amoxicillin and Ampicillin (antibiotics), Canine Red Dog (iron supplement), and Winstrol-V (steroid).



Washtubs and sponges for bathing dogs.

Both dogs are washed under a referee's supervision prior to a fight. Handlers wash and examine their opponent's dog in order to remove any poisonous or caustic substance that might have been applied to a dog's coat (a method of cheating).

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT DOGFIGHTING IS TAKING PLACE AT A RESIDENCE:

- 1. Call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-535-STOP (7867).** You may leave your tip anonymously and it will be directed to the appropriate law enforcement agency. **Be sure to write down the tip number so you can follow-up later.** Calls from any part of Chicago or the suburbs are accepted at this number.
- 2. The HSUS offers rewards of up to \$5,000 for information leading to the conviction of a dogfighter.** To claim your reward, you will need to follow up on the disposition of your tip. Please call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-535-STOP (7867), give them your tip number and they will tell you the status of your tip and whether or not you are entitled to a reward.

If you have any questions, or would like more information about dogfighting, please contact The HSUS' End Dogfighting in Chicago campaign at animalfighting@hsus.org or call 847-287-8031.

www.humanesociety.org/dogfighting-chicago