PennHIP vs OFA

PennHIP and OFA screening are the primary methods of assessing hip health for breeders. PennHIP screening measures joint laxity (known as the distractive index. or DI) as well as the conformation of the hip joint. The higher the DI, the laxer the joint, and thus an increasing probability of developing degenerative joint disease known as hip dysplasia.

OFA uses a single radiographic view: a stretched hip-extended view. PennHIP uses three views: the same hip-extended view, plus two in a neutral, natural position with hip joints gently compressed and 'distracted' (pulled into tension.)

These 2 methods score the hips differently. OFA has a radiologist look at the hip-extended view on the x-ray, and gives their opinion on how good they think it looks on a somewhat subjective Excellent-Poor scale.

PennHIPP uses three radiographs which are taken to measure the hip joint laxity. The PennHIP is a very good repeatability between experts, and most importantly is actually a great predictor for degenerative joint disease in the future. It's simply a better tool for a breeder focused on hips. The PennHIP method is more accurate than the current OFA standard in its ability to predict the onset of osteoarthritis (OA). Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative joint disease (DJD), is the hallmark of hip dysplasia (HD).

PennHIP Reports and What They Mean

PennHIP is not a pass/fail screening and there is no such thing as "PennHIP Certified", or "PennHIP'ed clear" of hip dysplasia. PennHIP only addresses two criteria:

Dogs are given a score called the Distraction Index, or DI, which measures the amount of laxity (also called subluxation) in the hip and compares it to other dogs from the same breed. A score of 0 would mean no laxity, a score of 1 indicates a hip that can be forced completely out of the socket. Based on the dog's DI the report will show where the dog lies in relation to the rest of the breed in the PennHIP database. For instance, a dog in the 90th percentile indicates hips that are in the tightest 10% of the breed. Dogs that score better than the median score for the breed will decrease the overall incidence of dysplasia. (Breed standard for the Golden Retriever is 0.55) According to PennHIP, a DI of .3 or LESS almost always indicates good hips. Dogs with a DI of .7 or greater virtually always have dysplasia.

Many breeders are adding the PennHIP evaluation to their health testing lineup to improve their program.