



Bobby Gorgeous by SurfinPaws.com

Internet Interpet

Pet adventures in Wii

By Lisa Treen

A few edition's ago, we reported in Tidbits, there had been an alarming number of household accidents involving pets and their new nemesis—Nintendo's Wii. Most were injuries that occurred from over zealous human players accidentally stepping on or tripping over small animals.

I bought the Wii system a while back. I invested in the Wii fitboard and games that utilise the fitboard for more active pursuits—like simulated snowboarding and other balance games. I'm more of a G-rated fan so my game choices don't involve shooting people or animals nor drag racing.

One of my favourite games is tennis and whacking a virtual ball is quite fun. I even get quite competitive with my Wii-mote in my hand, competing against MiiCharacters. I was enjoying a warm-up game a couple of weeks ago that ended up being thoroughly entertaining. As I made the swinging action of the racquet, Lilly, my Dalmatian, started bouncing around the lounge room searching for whatever ball I must have been chucking. We have regular ball chucking sessions at the dog park, so she must have thought this was some inside action for her enjoyment. She's often there, ready to chase the virtual ball, each time I play, but she soon gives up once she realises there is no yellow ball bouncing off the interior walls.

Playing Wii boxing is a different matter. Lilly doesn't like the boxing action at all. I've found her under the dining room table and perhaps it's some far off reminder of her violent start to life.

Scooter, on the other hand, couldn't care whether I was volleying an imaginary ball, getting excited about making a strike in bowling, punching the air until a Mii is knocked out or reached a personal best in a ski slalom. Scooter just plonks himself in the middle of the floor and I have to make sure he's not in the way of some fancy foot action.

I was horrified when he accidentally got whacked in the chops by the Wii-mote. Poor Pooter—he didn't seem too perturbed by it and just went back to sleep. Which brings us back to the reality of pets getting harmed by exciting Wii action. I sent a funny anecdote about the incident through Scooter's Twitter feed (yes Scooter Twitters and yes this is anthropomorphising your dog at the extreme, but it's fun) and got a couple of responses from his followers. One told the story that the Wii-mote had connected with a dog and the player had ended up with a broken wrist. Another responded with their tale of doing a series of dance moves, trying to avoid the resident moggy (cats always sneak into the action), tripped and ended up with a broken collar bone. Yowch!

So I'm thinking maybe we should just lock up our pets when we switch on the Wii. All that physical activity can do some damage to your pets. Better still, we could lobby for a pet safety rating system for each game.

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It's amusing to see how the Internet is used to make pets famous. We've tipped you before to You Tube videos of pet tricks and celebrities as well as online television show footage of pet competitions. Pet owners don't hesitate to put up videos, photos and even create entire websites to seek fame for their fur fellas. A new contest has come to our attention with the campaign for a pup named Bobby Gorgeous to become a canine millionaire.

The five year old white Pomeranian from Hawai'i which has walked red carpets and been shot attending Hollywood parties, is in the running for a million dollar prize in the online America's Cutest Dog Competition which has been taking votes since August and concludes in late November.

He's a cyber canine celebrity with his own website www.bobbygorgeous.com plus his own Facebook, MySpace and Twitter accounts as well as You Tube videos online. His owners are leaving no application unturned for the dog to share his winnings with his native Hawaiian charities the Hawaiian Human Society, Malama Na Honu which protects sea turtles and Mainline Animal Rescue.

The competition is online at www.votecutestdog.com and has weekly heats which will result in 12 semifinalists which will be pared down to four finalists for the grand prize vote. It's a very shrewd sponsorship from natural pet food Grrr-nola Natural Heart Healthy Dog Food which is getting immeasurable exposure from this online campaign. Rest assured there will likely be a similar contest here as some brand catches on. And of course, there will have to be a TV show to follow this up in the US.

But there was a bizarre twist when other dogs in the voting used an online gaming site to rack up votes and Bobby was bounced due to the surge in voting through controversial means. However he popped up in a Halloween parade dressed as Michael Jackson and stole hearts after he had been robbed of his title.

Some of us trying to get ourselves and our dogs in shape wish there could be a way other than just walking, especially when it rains, or using a treadmill indoors as dogs don't really take to them.

Though Nintendo announced a Wii for pets program for the popular video game Wii Fit Plus, it's not much more than a weigh in program with Avatars you can make up for your pets. You use the scale like Wii Balance Board as a weighing device for you and your pet and the program tracks your weight in tandem.

They haven't got a way for pets to play... yet. But our resident Wii-Geek Girl has had to battle her dogs for the controller and also warns of Wiiiing in small confines.



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