



The USDAA®

OVERview™

A quarterly publication "promoting competitive excellence in dog agility.™"

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

A publication of
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Dog Agility
Association, Inc.**
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the sport of dog agility.

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The Bay Team Starter's Cup



During the first weekend in May, horses run for the roses...dogs run for the silver.

The Bay Team often offers loads of classes for competitors to choose from, so why not add a completely new class just for our Starters dogs to run? Enter the Starter's Cup Challenge, a two round, non-titling, non-qualifying class that only dogs in Starters are allowed to run. At stake was a sterling silver cup trophy plus a beautiful rosette.

All dogs, whether they participated in the Championship or Performance program, competed head-to-head. There were no spread jumps, table, weaves or A-frame in the course. Scoring was time-plus-faults, which included the regular five point

standard faults and a 20 point fault for an off course. We were lucky to have Evelyn Robertson, from Seattle, Washington, to design and judge both rounds.

The straight line home was exciting to watch as spectators cheered on the teams with dogs and handlers racing to pick up or make up time.

It was a fun class and many competitors enjoyed the opportunity to participate in something just for them.

— T. Chadwick

For more photos from this event visit http://usdaa.com/sub_article.cfm?newsID=495

Off the Leash

One of the ongoing services USDAA provides is disseminating information to the public. It seems not a day goes by that we don't get queries from people who have just discovered the sport, or who have contemplated for some time getting involved. Perhaps the most common question is, "How can I get started?" We also get requests for exhibitions, speaking engagements and seminars. We get all types of queries from across the U.S. and even from other countries.

In a more general light, we get questions from the media, for which we have a public relations specialist who helps to distribute information, as well as to help promote the USDAA regional championships, the Cynosport® World Games, the U.S. team competing abroad in IFCS events, and other interesting stories from the local and regional levels. We look for any factoid or story to attract attention and spread the word about dog agility and USDAA. In fact, a number of USDAA competitors have been featured in their local newspapers over the past year as a result of these efforts. These stories also find their way on the USDAA Web site news pages—either the public page, or the Subscriber Services page, or both. If you know of an interesting tidbit that you think others might enjoy hearing about, please send us a note to pubrel@usdaa.com.

We also get queries from television networks for video footage, to arrange interviews, or for other competition information to include in their various projects. These too have resulted in exposure for dog agility on NBC, Fox Family, ESPN2, Nickelodeon, and in the not-too-distant future, National Geographic channel. In fact, USDAA pioneered dog agility for television, introducing the Grand Prix of Dog Agility® to television audiences for the first time in North America in 1998 in one-hour programming on Animal Planet. Programming has also since appeared on OLN (now Versus) and World Sport HD Network, and we are continually seeking new outlets for exposure through electronic media.

Among the various processes we perform as a sports authority for dog agility, creating more awareness and understanding by the public at-large is important to the continued growth of the sport. Sharing the fun and excitement of dog agility lends support to spending quality time with one's pet in a physical activity that serves the common good for people, pets and the community. On a larger scale, it provides still yet another means to connect to other communities and cultures, which draws us all together as a society.

Ken Tatsch, *President, USDAA*



From the Editor

When I sat down to write the letter for our third issue of *OverView*, I realized that I'd been editing the USDAA subscriber services news page at www.usdaa.com for over a year now. It's amazing how time flies!

What a great year it's been. I've really enjoyed the challenge of providing new, interesting, and varied content four days a week. Over the last year I've gotten to interview some amazing competitors, I've read some tremendous course analyses, I've experienced exciting events through someone else's eyes, and I've enjoyed enlightening and heartwarming stories. I've also gotten tons of great training advice and exercises to use now and to keep for later.

I can't wait to see what the next year will bring! With the **20th anniversary** of the **Grand Prix of Dog Agility** on the horizon, we will certainly have excitement in store for us. If you have any thoughts to share, content you'd like to see, or articles you'd like to contribute, please contact me at brennafender@gmail.com. I look forward to sharing our wonderful sport with you for many years to come!

Sincerely,
Brenna Fender

Happy Dog's Grand Prix/ Performance National Standard Qualifier

Teams hoping to enter the Grand Prix/Performance National Standard events at the USDAA Cynosport World Games in November must have two qualifying runs during the tournament qualifying season. In late May, 54 Performance teams and 80 Championship teams tried their hands (and paws) at Happy Dog's GP/PNS local qualifier course, which was designed and judged by Lynn Sigman.

During the walk-through, handlers discussed strategies for remembering the two pinwheel patterns (jumps #10-#13 and #18-#20). Nobody wanted to be having a perfect run only to confuse the first and the second patterns and send the dog over the wrong jump! Championship handlers were concerned about the double at #11 and #19 (Performance handlers didn't have to worry about that since there are no doubles in Performance).

Jumps #1-#3 provided the first handling decision. Handlers of some small dogs could run with their dogs off the start line and handle like a serpentine or lead out to the second jump. Those with larger, faster dogs often were forced to lead out to jump #3. Such a long lead out often led to the dog dropping bar #1 or #2 in his haste to catch up to his handler. The key to a good start was making the right decision.

The first major change of direction occurred between #5 and #6 and teams handled this in a number of different ways. In order to

get their dogs to switch leads many handlers did a front cross between tunnel #4 and jump #5. Others did a rear cross before or after jump #5.

The weave poles provided the biggest surprise on the course. Most dogs were able to make what seemed to be a tricky entrance. However, a surprising number of dogs popped out at the 10th pole. Most handlers had their dogs on their right going through the poles and they wanted to do a front cross after the poles. Dogs that didn't have rock solid

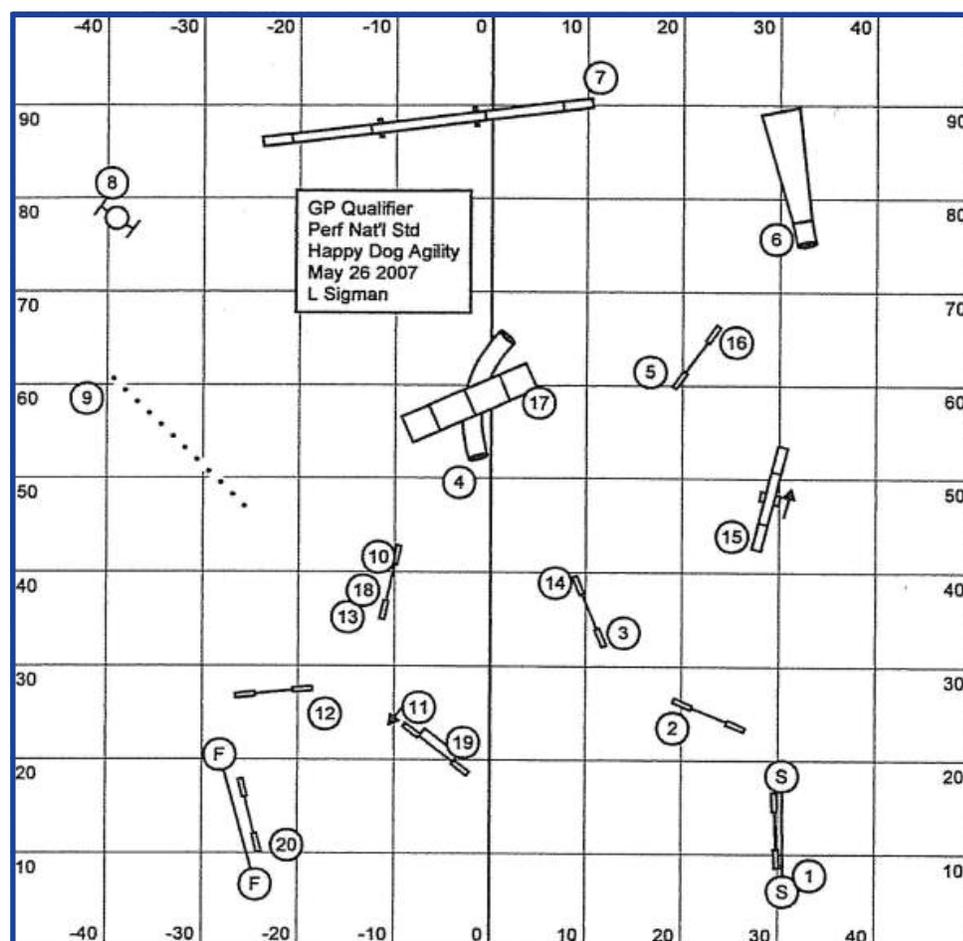
independent weave poles or handlers that started the cross too early ended up having to do the weave poles again!

The only major off-course danger was at the A-frame. A few dogs came off the teeter, went over jump #16, and went straight for the tunnel instead of the A-frame.

All in all, most thought it was a fun course with a fair number of challenges.

— S. Harvey

Condensed from the full article at http://usdaa.com/sub_article.cfm?newsID=520



How Embarrassing!

Fear of embarrassment is one reason why people get nervous when they compete in agility. Unfortunately, it's almost guaranteed that, if you're in the sport long enough, you'll have something unplanned and unpleasant happen while you are in the ring.

From taking a potty break on the dogwalk to running amuck at top speed, our canine friends do all types of things that make us feel foolish on course. Realizing that these things happen to everyone—and laughing about it a bit—can help handlers get over their embarrassment.

A few brave competitors agreed to share their embarrassing stories. Read on and enjoy; you're laughing with them and not at them!

Beki Blackson

It had been a pretty long weekend and it was the last standard run. I walked out to the first jump and lined my dog up. Like every run before and since, I took a moment to look over at the next obstacle and the rest of the course. I had a moment to think “Well, how the heck was I planning on getting over to jump #2?” It was only then that I began to hear the crowd yelling to me.... I had lined my dog up on the wrong side of the first jump!

I had been so far in the “zone” that I had not heard the people (or the judge) telling me that we were wrong! Needless to say I was laughing too hard to take the course seriously and we NQed.



Lesley Bowen's Zip had the last laugh with some creative course running. Log on to the article for the full story.

Photo © V. W. Perry. Used by permission.

Tracy Roth

I remember a particular moment at a show in Kiln, Mississippi, best. As I left my Jack Russell mix, Jedi, on the start line in a stay a couple of pigeons fluttered down from the rafters of the covered arena and then back to their perch again. I knew I was in for it at that moment and in retrospect, maybe I should have just picked him up and excused myself.

He left the start line blazing for the back corner. Unfortunately the pigeons spooked and took off out of the arena at about 10 feet in the air. Not to be ignored, Jedi took off after them, sliding under the horse fencing around the arena. I had to climb the fencing and run into the field behind the arena to chase him down.

The trial was stopped, waiting for me to control my dog since everyone knows pigeons are going to fly back to their perch. When they did return to the rafters Jedi was still after them, but gave up the hunt when

they perched. As he realized he had lost his prey I snuck up from behind and dove on him, cutting my knee in the process and getting covered in dirt. The worst part was when I got up and noticed everyone watching us, laughing, and calling out scores for my dive technique (10, 9.9, and so on). I wish I could've melted into the ground.

The World Laughs With You

Learning to laugh at yourself is the best way to handle these agility embarrassments. Nobody completes an agility career embarrassment-free!

For more embarrassing agility moments, check out http://usdaa.com/sub_article.cfm?newsID=502 and http://usdaa.com/sub_article.cfm?newsID=503

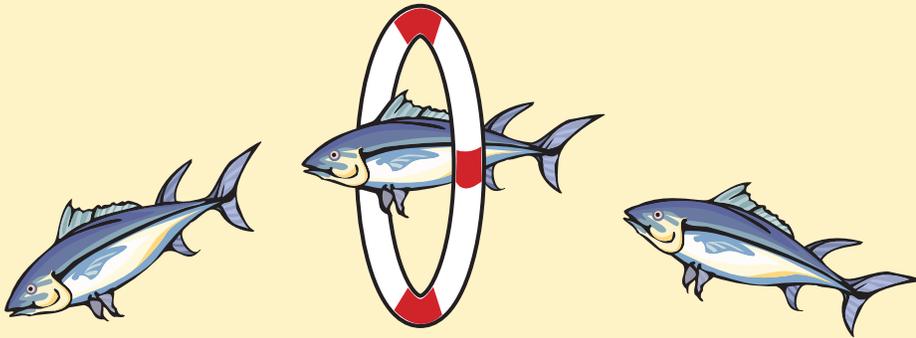


Looking for more?...
Sign up for Subscriber Services at www.usdaa.com and enjoy expanded versions of many **OVERview** stories and much more! These articles have appeared in recent months.

Courses for All Levels With Minimal Movement
By *Leona Hellesvig*

Inclement Weather Can Help Your Training Session Rather Than Hinder It
By *Lisa Baird*

How Can We Encourage Juniors to Play USDAAGames?
By *Leona Hellesvig*



Tuna Training Treats

Worried about what's in your treats? Make your own! This treat recipe is loved by both dogs and handlers. Handlers appreciate it because it's fairly cohesive and not strong smelling, and dogs like the yummy tuna taste.

TUNA COOKIES

- 1 Can (12 ounce) tuna in water (don't drain it)
- 2 Eggs
- 1 t Garlic powder (optional)

{Editor's note: Garlic can be toxic to dogs. Consult your vet if you have concerns or leave it out.}

- 1.5 c Flour (or more as needed to make it stiff)

Mix everything together in a bowl until well blended. With wet hands press flat to about 1/4" thickness on a cookie sheet. Bake at 250° for 30 minutes. Take off the cookie sheet and cool on a rack. Cut into cubes and refrigerate or freeze.

Chef's note: I used half whole wheat flour and half unbleached all purpose flour. When measuring the all purpose flour I added 1 Tablespoon of ground flax seed per cup. Put the ground flax in the bottom of the cup and then add the flour to fill and level off; for this recipe it was a total of 1 1/2 Tablespoons ground flax.

— S. Semago

Q & A

Q: I am interested in agility training for my dog. How do I find a qualified training facility and/or club in my area?

A: To locate a USDAA affiliate, please visit our web site, www.usdaa.com. Click General Information, Group Locator, and select your region. You'll find clubs listed in your area. If none are in your city, contact those nearest to you to see if they know of any competitors who train in your area.

Another good way to find out where training is taking place is to attend an event in your area. Our Event Calendar lists shows held each weekend, with the city/state listed. Click on the name of the club to obtain contact information and details about the time and show site.

Local obedience clubs, kennels and other dog-related services may provide training as well.

Good luck!

— H. Smith

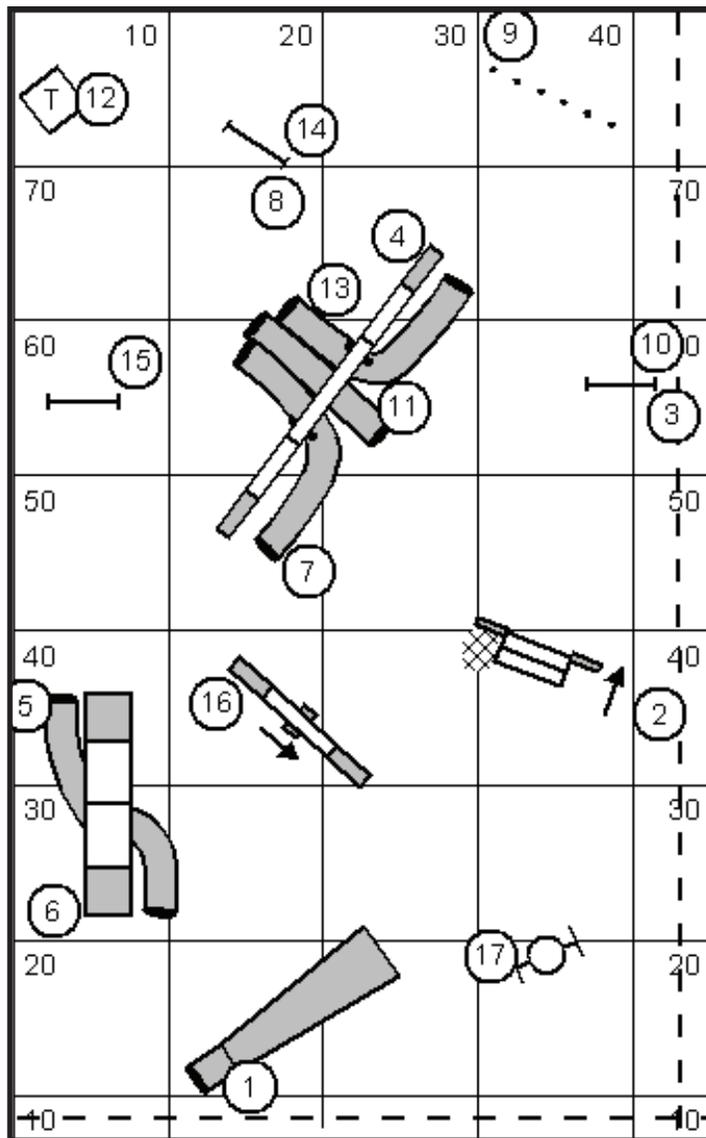
TRAINING CORNER

Distance Handling Obstacle Groups

Use this course and description to teach a distance handling class or to practice on your own.

— L. Hellesvig

- 1A** Work on the send-to-table through the center tunnel under the dogwalk.
- 1B** Then work on teeter #16, send to center tunnel (get out) to table.
- 2A** Work on doing the A-frame-to-tunnel on left side (dog turning out from handler).
- 2B** Work on same with the tunnel first—how far do you need to pull your dog out for a successful A-frame? Smaller dogs usually should be pushed further out, bigger dogs usually just go further out on their own. Medium dogs usually do this one the easiest.
- 3** Layering (if you have time, or for fun after class.) Do tunnel #7 and send dog over jump #8.
- 4** Run the full course.



A Page of USDAA History:

On June 11, 1991, the USDAA sent its first team to the FCI World Dog Show in Germany. JC Thompson, Stuart Mah, Felicia Whalen, Sharon Nelson, and Hazel Thompson (the alternate) made up the team. They placed third, behind Denmark and France. There was also a Germany versus the U.S. competition in which the USDAA team emerged victorious. USDAA was the first North American canine sports authority to field teams in “world” competition.

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