



Volume 1, Issue 1
April 2011

BIG D HUNTING RETRIEVER CLUB

THE BARKER

Big D Congratulates

HRCH Kanati's Gracious Offering SH

“GRACE”

Owner: Rick Wojciechowski

Handler: Glenda Mitchell



Special points of interest:

- Training
- Health
- Spring Grand
- Committee Reports
- Who Represents Region 12
- AKC Canine Good Citizen Test

April 2011

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Publisher's Information

The Barker is published by the Big D Hunting Retriever Club. The opinions expressed herein, unless clearly designated as official business, do not necessarily represent the views of the Big D HRC, its Board of Directors, or The Barker's editor.

Annual subscriptions are included with your Big D HRC membership.

All submissions are welcome for publication consideration and should be emailed to the editor:

stepperayers@yahoo.com

Photographs should be accompanied with permission from the photographer and the names of dogs and people pictured.

Deadlines are the tenth of every odd-numbered month.

President's Message—Wade Duay

Hi Folks,

First I want to say thanks to the outgoing executives and board of director members of Big D HRC and on behalf of the executive board and all members of Big D I'd like to give a special thanks to our outgoing president Mark Kawalek!

At the time of this writing hunt test season down here in Texas is getting into full swing. Members have been out vigorously training and preparing. At the same time we're preparing for our Big D "Big Dog" mock hunt test

event, which offers a plaque and bragging rights to the best run of the day. This event is loads of fun and is typically topped off with live flyers and a cook out for Big D members.

In the meantime our club secretary is organizing an Eye CERF clinic on July 23rd, which will be open to all dogs. We're also looking to do DNA cheek swab sampling and microchipping. For more information on this check back on our website for updates — www.bigdhrc.com
Also Big D is proud to con-

tinue its support of the Region 11 & 12 Youth Hunter Camp in Brownwood Texas. This is a fantastic 3-day camp event for kids to learn about dog training, first aid and dog handling from some of the most experienced people in our game. Everyone has a great time the kids really have a blast. I urge you to get a kid involved in hunting. It's a lasting legacy that we can all be proud of. Well until next time my best wishes to everyone.

-Wade
-

Vice-President's Report—Mike Walden

Greetings to all!

I would like to say thanks to each of you for the opportunity to serve you and represent the club as your Vice President! I look forward to working with Wade and the Executive Committee to help make certain we provide each of you with the opportunities and programs you want and expect from

your membership in Big "D". I consider it a great privilege to have been selected to serve in this capacity as I am somewhat new to the dog training/ hunt test world and I know there are a lot of members in our club that are certainly more capable/knowledgeable.

That being said, Big D is a great Retrieving club or-

ganization with a great membership. As with any club, we as members will get out of the club what we are willing to put into the club. There will be those of us that can give a lot of time and some that can only give a little time. Regardless, giving any of our time and participation will help grow our club to the organization we all would like it to be. As the opportunities present

Vice-President's Report—Mike Walden

con't

themselves, I encourage each of you to chip in a little which will make a LOT of difference.

The last couple of months have certainly been busy with a lot of Hunt test in the area. I hope each of you had the opportunity to participate and were successful in these great events. I know the other clubs appreciate your support!

Hope to see you all at our upcoming training days. Orië Matthews of Wolf Creek Kennels, one of our Member/Pros, is hosting the next training day at his great facility. It would be great to see a large turnout for this day as Orië has offered his time and facility for what is certainly a great training Venue.

We have a busy year in front of us, as a club, as we

are already working on our Big D hunt test for this upcoming September, always a great event. Let me know of anything I can do for any of you! As well, we would all appreciate any feedback from the membership as to any needs, concerns, suggestions you might have. Call me anytime on my cell @ 214-676-9138.

Thanks!!

Mike Walden



Treasurer's Report—Amy Pyeatt

March 1, 2011

General Fund	\$ 5624.78
Handler's Best Friend (HBFF)	\$ 1003.18
Special Fund (Military Dog Project)	<u>\$ 204.00</u>
Total	\$ 6831.96

Our Goal is to have a
\$10,000

Balance in the bank after our 2011 Big D HRC Hunt Test



Secretary's Report—Stephanie Ayers

General Meeting Minute Highlights

(see Yahoo Groups for full minutes)

January—Elections took place for Officers and Board of Directors.

Officers

President—Wade Duay

Vice President— Mike Walden

Secretary—Stephanie Ayers

Treasurer—Amy Pyeatt

Board of Directors

Dave Benton

Kyle Einhorn

Boone Pyeatt

Keith Reimer

Mark Triolet

February—General Meeting Canceled due to inclement weather.

March—Membership was given and update on what the board has identified as “hot topics” for this term. Training days and events were scheduled. The membership discussed the clubs financial status and the need to raise funds. The military dog project was discussed and items are to be purchased and sent within the next month.

BOD Minutes

The Executive Committee and Board of Directors met 1/13, 2/17 and 3/24 to discuss the following topics:

Increasing Membership—
What do current members
want and need?

Training days

Big D Big Dog Event

Health Clinic

Fundraising events

Bass Pro Dog Demo Event

AKC Affiliation & Spring
Hunt Test

HRC Fall Hunt Test

Website

The Barker Newsletter

Club Calendar



Membership Report

The Big D HRC is please to introduce the following new applicants and members.

New Applicants

No New Applicants this month.

New Members

Michael Bailey—Dallas, TX

A big welcome to all our new applicants and members!

What's Cookin'

Pheasant

Breasts from 2 Pheasants
Can of cream of mushroom soup
Buttermilk



Soak pheasant breasts in buttermilk several hours or overnight.
Wipe off buttermilk and sauté breasts in a little olive oil and butter until lightly browned.
Mix soup with equal parts of water and pour over browned breasts.
Simmer on low heat until breasts are tender. Add small amounts of water if pan begins to go dry.
Serve with Uncle Ben's Wild Rice and steamed carrots.

Submitted by—Mary Veitch
Sneads, Florida

If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please submit to:

Stephanie Ayers at stepperayers@yahoo.com

Training—April's Article

by Orie Mathews

The Swim-By

The Swim-by is a fundamental step in the Basics portion of the program currently used by many successful retriever trainers across the continent. It gets its name from the skill developed by the dog at the end of the lessons: swimming by the handler on command. The Swim-by generally follows the teaching of the Double-T on land. That step prepares the dog for several of the skills that the dog will develop in the water. The Swim-by is an important pre-cursor to teaching your dog about water channels and water cheating singles.

Purpose of the Swim-by

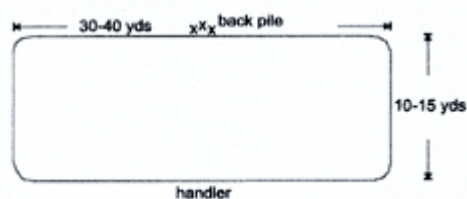
It teaches handling skills in the water – view it as a single-T in water.

The process reinforces getting into the water since it exposes the dog to pressure (e-collar) to get in the water and to drive back while in the water.

It teaches the dog to stop in the water, turn around and look for directions. It develops the skill of treading in water.

It teaches skills of staying in the water, casting into the water and being comfortable while swimming in the water near the shore (without getting out early).

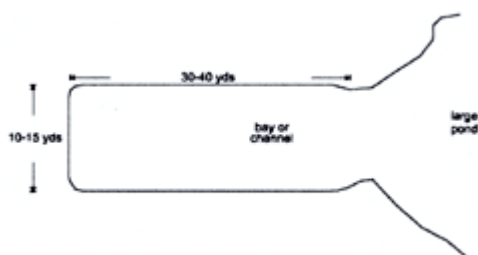
It teaches the skills that are used to handle the dog into the water both on the way to the retrieve and just as importantly on the return from the retrieve.



The Pond Requirements

The correct size and shape of the pond is very important to teach the Swim-by effectively and efficiently. It is worth seeking the ideal pond. The ideal pond is rectangular and about 10-15 yards wide and 30-40 yards long. It should be free of obstructions. It should have a clean shoreline of low cover and you should be able to walk around the edges. Avoid shallow edges. A passable substitute is to use one end of a channel (perhaps a bay on a lake) that has

the other required features. This shape will require some special techniques to complete the Swim-by.



Procedure

The following steps should be followed in sequence. Ideally, the Swim-by is taught in a series of daily lessons for maximum efficiency. Since there is repeated water work over a period of 15-30 minutes, do not teach the Swim-by until the water temperature is at least 60°F. I would also avoid cold, raw, cloudy days even if the water is warm.

Step 1. Lining to Pile

Identify a pile of about 10 white bumpers 2-3' up on the shore across the pond by throwing one to it. I often allow the dog to watch me establish the pile either by walking around or tossing them across the pond.

Send the dog on his name straight across the pond starting close to the edge. Repeat, lining across the pond using the command 'back'. Continue by mixing up sends from your side as well as remote sends with the dog facing you in front (front sit position). Your dog should be enthusiastically going and coming. Get a quick re-entry by blowing the whistle or commanding here, the instant the dog reaches the bumper. Shopping for bumpers should have been cleaned up on earlier land work. Remote sends should be varied from 10-20 feet from shore. Repeat this step a second day unless the first session went perfectly.

Step 2. Forcing to the Pile

This step involves the use of the e-collar to reinforce the 'back' command both on land and in the water. Start the session by marking the pile and giving 2-3 freebies. Put your dog in a remote sit front finish position 10-20' from the water's edge. Command 'back' and just after the

dog has turned, nick and then repeat the command ‘back’. Use momentary mode or a very quick nick on the continuous mode. Use a level lower than you used on land force to the pile. (Example: if you forced on land with a level 5, high momentary, use level 5 medium or low.) The procedure now is to mix-up freebie sends with forced sends and nicks on land with nicks in the water. I do about 2 forces on land for each force on water, 2 freebies for each force, and 2 remotes for each side send. Read your dog and watch for bugging, no-goes, flaring problems. These should have been dealt with on land but they may reoccur here. React to hints of their reoccurrence by adding freebies, more remote sends or lowering intensity and duration. Your goal is not to avoid the force but to avoid bad habits, poor attitude and too much concern by the dog.

The response that you desire is a stable one with compulsion to go. This indicates your dog accepts the pressure, understands what it is for and what to do in response to the command.

Generally, I would only spend two days on the force to the pile step, unless problems escalate. If a mess does occur, consider going back to a land pile to iron out.

Step 3. Stopping to Whistle and Treading Water

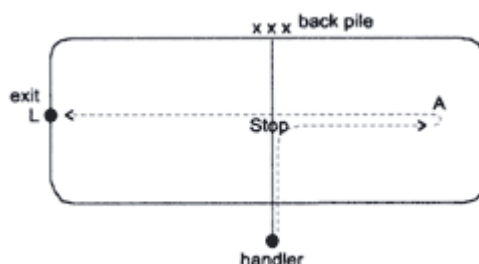
On day 3 or 4 and after step 2 is finished, start once again by identifying the pile and lining across a couple of times. On the next send, stop your dog with a whistle sit when half-way across en route. Be prepared for a quick second whistle and even a verbal “sit”. Your goal now is to get your dog to turn around sharply and look at you while treading water in the same spot. Some dogs will tread naturally, some will want to turn, some will come-in and some will simply sink lower and lower in the water. Try to make progress here each time you stop by gradually increasing the tread and “stare at me” time. First a few seconds before you cast and gradually 5-10 seconds. Such eye contact can be rewarded with a “good dog”. Since the emphasis here is teaching a new skill, I avoid the use of the collar. It’s too easy for the dog to get the wrong idea, not relax or perhaps panic. Remember your use of the collar in this location, up until now, has been to drive back.

What about the dog who won’t stop? First, try the whistle stop earlier, perhaps with a loud verbal command. If this fails and the dog has driven through twice, you may have to resort to a rope. If you have never used a rope near water, it’s best to get someone who has to help you. Ropes can get tangled and confuse or panic some young dogs so some caution is warranted. A better alternative might be to go back to land for a refresher course in which you stop a dog en

route to a pile 2X (and then immediately go to the swim-by pond). After this, I might introduce a sit, nick, sit if the dog stopped but then insisted on driving back.

Step 4. Teaching the Over and the Exit

Finally, we get to the Swim-by part of the drill. This should only start after 1. good lining straight across, 2. good responses of compulsion to being forced en route, and 3. ability to turn on the whistle and tread water. After the usual freebie start, whistle stop your dog half-way and give a right-over cast. After your dog turns, toss a bumper to the right in the middle of the pond.



Try to avoid being seen but don't worry if that doesn't work. Your dog is likely to turn back with your over since that is what he has been doing until now. Simply repeat the sit and cast or toss the bumper and repeat the sit and cast over. As soon as your dog heads for the bumper, run down the opposite shore to exit L so that when your dog turns he sees you there. Your job now is to get him to swim down the middle of the pond and exit EXACTLY at L. Do whatever you have to with body language, casts, whistles and heres to accomplish this first exit. When he gets there, act like he just won the lottery with lots of 'okay, good dog' and excitement.

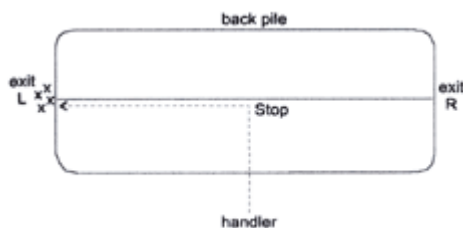
Return to the line and give a freebie across. Again send across, stop in the middle, cast over, throw a bumper to A and repeat the swim to the L and that exit.

Repeat the entire sequence again, but this time start walking down the shore as the dog swims the exit line, using your left over cast and verbals to guide your dog. View this as if you are herding your dog down the exit line. Perhaps you'll need a little toot-toot if he cuts back to the far shore or a back cast or 45° over if he cuts in. Ideally, your dog has had disciplined casting in the Double-T (casting over and back with a bumper in the mouth) so this step should not be too problematic.

On the next day put a right over pile on shore. After lining across, cast to the right and then try to get the dog to swim the L exit line while you stay stationary. Keep your arm down only putting it up to give the left over. By the end of this session you can start to introduce the collar

with a nick. For the dog that drives back, give a sit-whistle, nick, whistle and repeat the over. When a dog swims in and looks at you, often a quick over-nick will straighten that out. This is no time for heavy corrections, just a few gentle momentary nicks to get the dog to give you some attention and compulsion to try.

Once you have perfected the right cast and the left over (“Swim-by”) exit, it is usually a simple matter to do the reverse Swim-by. Establish a left over pile and after stopping at the mid-point, cast left and then help your dog to get the right Swim-by by walking along and casting over. For the first time be sure to get the exit at the correct location (R).



You should be able to establish this Swim-by quite quickly.

If you were forced to use an open ended channel pond, you will have to move across to the other side and cast to the left and then right swim-by. Unfortunately, the dog is really exiting at the same spot so he has not generalized the response very much.

Now go to another Swim-by pond or water channel and do a Swim-by. You may find some confusion the first time but help and teach before you apply pressure . . . The application of the new skills by your dog should come soon.



Orie Mathews

Wolfcreek Retrievers

(214) 315-9500

omathews@wolfcreekretrievers.com

<http://www.wolfcreekretrievers.com/index.html>

Upcoming Events

April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Schedule of Events

- 5th—**General Meeting** 6:30pm at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane, Dallas
- 9th—**Training Day**—Hosted by Tim Slattery
- 16 & 17 **Texas Panhandle HRC** Greenbelt Reservoir Clarendon, Tx
- 16 & 17 **Panhandle Hunting Retriever Club**
- 23 & 24 **Dallas /Ft. Worth Labrador Retriever Club** AKC Hunt Test Ravenna, Tx
- 30th—**Three Rivers Hunting Retriever Club** UKC Hunt Test

Schedule of Events

- 1st—**Three Rivers Hunting Retriever Club** UKC Hunt Test
- 3rd—**General Meeting** 6:30pm at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane, Dallas
- 7th—**Big D Big Dog** . Upland Bird Country, Corsicana, Texas.
- 14 & 15 **ALAMO RETRIEVER CLUB**
Seco Valley Ranch
D Hanis, Tx
- 28 & 29 **Colorado River Retriever Club** UKC Hunt Test
Justin Hurst WMA Hwy 36 South
Jones Creek TX 77541

May 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming Events

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Schedule of Events

- 7th—**General Meeting** 6:30pm at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane, Dallas
- 11th—**Training Day**—Hosted by Rick and Ken
- Judges/Handlers Seminar-Region 11 Heart of Texas HRC, Troy Church, Troy, TX
Instructor: Janet Kmbrough
Contact Paul Malmin 254-295-3812
Malmin_paul@hotmail.com

Schedule of Events

- 5th—**General Meeting** 6:30pm at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane, Dallas
- 23rd—**Big D Health Clinic** Garland School District Agricultural Barn. See www.bigdhrc.com website for further details.

July 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Congratulations to the following Big D
Dogs, Owners & Handlers for your
wonderful accomplishments this year!**

Best of Luck at “The Grand”!

Watch Out Mississippi, Here We Come!
2011 Spring - HRC 50th International Grand Hunt
April 2 - 6, 2011 - Grenada, Mississippi

**A44 - HRCH Arizona Wolfcreek Hope & Liberty
“LIBBY”**

Owner: Rick Reeter Handler: Ori Mathews

**A49 - HRCH Wolf Creeks Speck of Gold
”RON”**

Owner/Handler: Ori Mathews

A54 - HRCH UH C & C Sir Running Bear MH “BEAR”

Owner/Handler: Ori Mathews

**A59 - HRCH Wolf Creek’s Gamblers Addiction
“MOLLY”**

Owner/Handler: Ori Mathews

**C215 - HRCH DBLPlay’s B.C. Moonshine Runner
“COOTER”**

Owners: Coke Waggner/Steve Riggins Handler: Steve Riggins

**C286 - HRCH Kanati's Gracious Offering SH
“GRACE”**

Owner: Rick Wojciechowski Handler: Glenda Mitchell

Watch the **CALL BACK REPORT** at:

<http://www.huntingretrieverclub.org/GRAND/2011SPRING/Spring%20Grand%20Index%20Page.htm>

What's in a Title?

It is not just a brag, not just a stepping stone to a higher Title, not just an adjunct to competitive scores. A Title is a tribute to the dog that bears it, a way to honor the dog, an ultimate memorial.

It will remain in the record and in the memory for about as long as anything in this world can remain. Few humans will do as well or better in that regard. And though the dog himself doesn't know or care that his achievements have been noted, a Title says many things in the world of humans, where such things count.

A Title says your dog was intelligent, and adaptable, and good-natured. It says that your dog loved you enough to do the things that please you, however crazy they may have sometimes seemed. And a Title says that you loved your dog, that you loved to spend time with him because he was a good dog, and that you believed in him enough to give him yet another chance when he failed, and that in the end your faith was justified.

A Title proves that your dog inspired you to have the special relationship enjoyed by so few; that in a world of disposable creatures, this dog with a Title was greatly loved, and loved greatly in return.

And when that dear short life is over, the Title remains as a memorial of the finest kind, the best you can give to a deserving friend, volumes of praise in one small set of initials before or after the name.

A Title is nothing less than love and respect,
given and received permanently.

-Author Unknown-

New Titles

January, February, March

Lucky

HRCH Wolfcreek Luck of the Draw
earned her Hunting Retriever Champion title at
the Tejas Hunting Retriever Club's
25th Anniversary Hunt Test
Feb. 5-6, 2011

Congratulations!
Rick Reeter, Owner
Orie Mathews, Handler



Beth Maryan—Photographer

Tango

U-CH Southern Cross Three to Tango at Denali
finished her Championship at the Jefferson, TX
UKC show February 20, 2011. Tango went Best of
Breed over Champions and Grand Champions.
Very exciting! Turned out the last judge of the day
was a hunter and she knew movement was more
important than coat. Yippee!!!!

Congratulations!
Laurie Burks-Long, Owner/Handler

Points Earned

January— February—March

Patti & Dave Benton

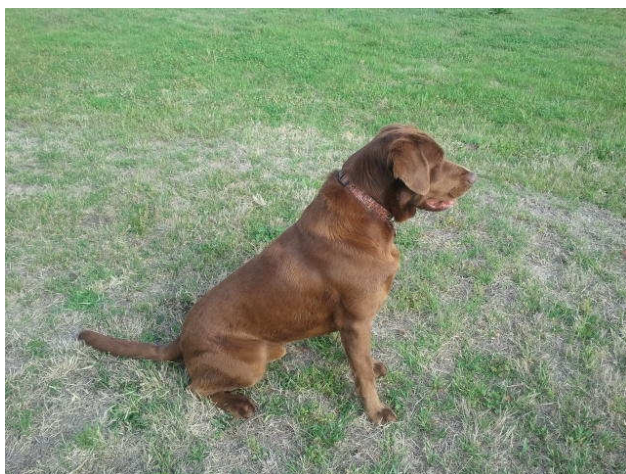
Ria has 1385 - only 8 Finished passed away from 1500

Emma has 175

Libby

HRCH Arizona Wolfcreek Hope & Liberty
earned her Hunting Retriever Champion title at
the Northeast Texas Hunt Test
March 5, 2011 in Pointe, Texas.

Congratulations!
Rick Reeter, Owner
Orie Mathews, Handler



Boudreaux

SHR Boudreaux Dux Hawkins
earned his Started Hunting Retriever title at the
Lone Star HRC Test
March 19, 2011

Congratulations!
Keith Reimer, Owner

Tess

SHR U-CH Denali's Talkeetna Tess WC CD
finished her third leg for her Companion Dog title
at the Texas Kennel Club show
Ft. Worth, TX
March 19, 2011

Congratulations!
Laurie Burks-Long, Owner/Handler/Breeder



AKC's Canine Good Citizen® (CGC) Program

Before taking the Canine Good Citizen test, owners will sign the **Responsible Dog Owners Pledge**. We believe that responsible dog ownership is a key part of the CGC concept and by signing the pledge, owners agree to take care of their dog's health needs, safety, exercise, training and quality of life. Owners also agree to show responsibility by doing things such as cleaning up after their dogs in public places and never letting dogs infringe on the rights of others.

After signing the Responsible Dog Owners Pledge, owners and their dogs are ready to take the CGC Test.

Items on the Canine Good Citizen Test include:



An AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB Program

Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger

Test 2: Sitting politely for petting

Test 3: Appearance and grooming

Test 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)

Test 5: Walking through a crowd

Test 6: Sit and down on command and Staying in place

Test 7: Coming when called

Test 8: Reaction to another dog

Test 9: Reaction to distraction

Test 10: Supervised separation

The April issue of "The Barker" features Test 1 and Test 2

All exercises can be found on the American Kennel Club website at:

<http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/program.cfm>

Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

Test 2: Sitting politely for petting

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place as it is petted. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

Canine Fitness



Crush climbs the slide at the playground

The new millennium is an exciting time for the sport of dogs. More dogs participate in athletic events now than at any other time in history. Dogs and owners alike enjoy preparing for and participating in a variety of new performance events.

In the past several years the AKC alone has more than **doubled** the number of sponsored events. Retrievers, pointers, setters and spaniels can now enter non-competitive hunting tests at a variety of levels of difficulty, sighthounds can try their paws at lure cours-

ing, herding breeds can work sheep in herding tests, terriers can test their mettle by going to ground, and dogs of all breeds can participate in agility, an exciting sport that tests the timing, coordination, and athleticism of dog and handler alike. Additional organized canine performance events include flyball, sledding, draft dog tests, coonhound trials, free-style heeling, weight-pulling competitions, Schutzhund, water rescue and more.

It is our responsibility to understand canine structure and locomotion, to [learn how to condition dogs](#) for specific performance events, and to feed nutritionally balanced [diets](#)—in essence to view and respect the dog as an athlete.

A coach for humans selects the best potential athletes, trains them in the skills of the game, provides them with appropriate conditioning exercises and diet, ensures that they receive expert medical care, and gives them emotional support and encouragement when needed. Those of us involved in canine performance events must play this role of coach for our dogs.

Dogs of all shapes and sizes

Dogs are the most varied of all species. Humans have taken advantage of the plastic genetic make-up, short gestation period, and large litter size of the dog to mold his best friend into a variety of shapes and sizes. It is astounding to consider that the Irish Wolfhound and the Dachshund are not only members of the same species, but that both are members of the Hound group. Therefore, before beginning a program of conditioning and skill-training, it is necessary to objectively evaluate your dog's structure.

Health

First consider whether your dog is of a heavy-set breed such as the Clumber Spaniel or the St. Bernard, light-boned like the Afghan Hound or the Whippet, or of medium structure like the Labrador Retriever or the Border Terrier. The heavier a dog is in relation to its height, the more stress will be exerted on the musculoskeletal system. Thus, although a Clumber Spaniel and an Afghan Hound may weigh the same, the Clumber Spaniel carries that weight on a smaller frame and will therefore create more stress on the musculoskeletal system while jumping, running, and some performance events, **proper conditioning and appropriate modifications** in training can provide significant compensation.



Crush Slides!

Whether a dog is being prepared for the conformation ring or the Iditarod, it is **essential that canine athletes be maintained at a correct weight**. There is no breed standard which states that the ideal dog of that breed should be "flabby, moderately overweight, and with a pendulous abdomen!" Instead, many standards expressly state that the dog should be shown at peak fitness. Excess weight increases the stresses on the musculoskeletal system regardless of the performance event. How can you determine whether your dog has excessive fat? When palpating the ribcage and the loin, you should be able to feel the bones of the vertebrae and the ribs under the skin. How can you judge whether your dog is fit? Stand behind the dog and feel the muscles of the rear legs. They should be firm and well-defined.



Molly herding

In addition to understanding the dog's overall shape and level of fitness, you should evaluate your dog's conformation, both standing and moving. Get the assistance of someone familiar with canine conformation and with the standard for your breed. Keep in mind your chosen performance event(s). Make a list of your dog's strengths and weaknesses (for no dog is without both) and use it to create a conditioning program unique to your dog. For example, while agility training a Doberman Pinscher that has minimal shoulder layback and a short upper arm, the jumps should be at full height only when excellent footing and a soft landing surface can be provided.

Prior to starting a conditioning program, your dog should be given a thorough physical examination by a competent veterinarian to ensure that he is free of any pre-existing

Health

medical condition that could compromise his health. In addition, your dog's hips should be radiographed, and the radiographs evaluated for hip dysplasia by a qualified radiologist. Evaluations can be performed by the [Orthopedic Foundation for Animals](#) (OFA) or veterinarians involved in the PennHip Study at the University of Pennsylvania. In some breeds, elbow radiographs should be obtained and evaluated. In some breeds a cardiac examination is also recommended. Finally, to ensure that the dog has no abnormalities of vision, your dog's eyes should be examined by a veterinary ophthalmologist.

Designing a Conditioning Program

Once your dog has been given a clean bill of health, a conditioning program can be established. What exactly does conditioning mean? The dictionary defines it as "developing a state of health, readiness, or physical fitness." Simply stated, conditioning consists of a planned program of exercise and nutrition.



Denise and Rob herding

When **designing an exercise program**, consideration should be given to the dog's age and current level of fitness, to any pre-existing medical conditions or injuries, to the performance event(s) that the dog will compete in, and to the handler's time and physical constraints. Although young puppies can be introduced to some of the skills and tools of their future trade, conditioning exercises should not begin in earnest until well after a dog's growth plates have closed (at approximately 10 months in small dogs and 14 months in the larger breeds). The growth plates are the locations in each bone where new bone forms and damage to the growth plates can result in serious limb deformities.

Dogs that have physical conditions such as [hip dysplasia](#) that can result in arthritis should be given only moderate exercise throughout their lives. The best exercise for these dogs is swimming, because it is a non-weight-bearing exercise. The owner of a dog with hip dysplasia should ensure that it trains and competes only in ideal conditions, and should carefully monitor it for signs of fatigue or pain.

An **exercise program** should start gradually, should be consistently applied, should provide variety, and should progress towards a specific goal. Conditioning is not just a weekend activity. A Golden Retriever that is being prepared for the National Specialty 2 months away may be taken swimming on Saturday when there is more time for

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travel, and on Sunday it may undergo skill-training (practice stacking, free-baiting, and gaiting) in the morning and a 30 minute trot in the evening. During the week, when the handler has less time to devote to conditioning, the dog may be trotted for 30 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday. On Monday and Wednesday, the dog may be worked on cavaletti and conditioning jumps, and on Friday it gets to watch a movie on HBO.

Exercises should include both general conditioning exercises and specific skill training. Some examples of general conditioning exercises are: swimming, retrieving, walking or running with the dog, mechanical trotters, conditioning jumps, canine cavaletti, specific agility exercises, and stationary exercises. Retrieving is a popular method to exercise a dog, but it has a high potential for injury. Frisbees as a retrieving tool should be avoided if at all possible, or thrown low to the ground to prevent the dog from twisting on landing. Mechanical trotters can be useful, particularly in hot or cold weather, when it may be difficult or unsafe to exercise outdoors. However, they can be exceedingly boring for owners and dogs alike. Agility obstacles can be very helpful in strengthening specific muscle groups and improving coordination. For example, the weave poles can help to strengthen the muscles of the spine.



Marcia and Crush strut their stuff!

Stationary exercises can also be used to strengthen specific groups of muscles. For example, teaching a dog to sit up can strengthen the back muscles. Stretching exercises, such as the play-bow should always be used to warm up a dog prior to training and competition.

Although physical conditioning is important, **mental conditioning** is also essential. The best way to mentally condition a dog is to provide frequent periods of play and to incorporate play into the skill training exercises. Play is an essential part of a dog's emotional make-up. Games such as tug-of-war and chase-the-owner are a great way to relieve your dog's stress while at the same increasing his focus on the owner and strengthening the dog-human bond. Be careful not to over-train, whether it be in physical conditioning or in skill-training. Remember—just like you, every dog needs one day off a week!

This decade's explosion of interest in canine performance events will have many positive effects on dog and owner alike. Training a dog is one of the best ways to

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strengthen the human-canine bond. By learning as much as we can about canine structure and its relationship to performance, we can contribute to our dogs' general health and ensure success in our chosen performance event(s). Take time to appreciate your dog's marvelous athletic ability and to learn new ways to keep your dog fit and healthy throughout his life.

Where to call

The following organizations provide information on conditions that can affect performance, keep registries of dogs that have been certified free of these conditions, and supply lists of veterinarians that can perform appropriate health checks.

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia and other databases
2300 E Nifong
Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 442-0418

PennHip

Hip dysplasia

Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF)

Ocular disorders
1235 SCC-A
Purdue University
W. Lafayette, IN 47907-1235
(317) 494-8179

American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (Cardiology)

7175 West Jefferson Ave., Suite 2125
Lakewood, CO 80235
(303) 980-7136

To find out more about the canine athlete, order

Peak Performance: Coaching the Canine Athlete. by M. Christine Zink DVM, PhD.

Big D Offers Microchipping!

What would you do if your pet got lost?

As the pet recovery experts for 15 years, AKC Companion Animal Recovery (AKC CAR) is here to help. We are a not for profit organization and protecting pets is all that we do.

If your pet has a microchip, the number of that microchip must be directly linked to you. This is done by enrolling it in a recovery service, like AKC CAR. AKC CAR enrolls any brand of microchip and provides you with peace of mind that your pet is protected for its lifetime with **NO ANNUAL FEES**. Our toll free number (1-800-252-7894) assures you that no matter what time of day, or where you are, or what the weather is like where you live, AKC CAR is available 24/7 to help your pet return home to you.

Forget the annual fee gimmicks. Enroll your pet in AKC CAR's lifetime recovery service today.

AKC CAR is a proud participant in the AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Lookup Tool found at

<http://www.petmicrochiplookup.org/>

Big D HRC participates in the AKC CAR program by offering microchipping!

Call Stephanie Ayers at 469-231-9146 to schedule an appointment to have your pet microchipped.

Cost

(includes lifetime recovery service)

Big D Members:

\$25 per dog

\$20 litter rate—per puppy

Non-Members:

\$30 per dog

\$25 litter rate—per puppy

Pet Poison Helpline Service through AKC CAR

When you register your pet's microchip with AKC Canine Animal Recovery, you can also purchase the **Pet Poison Helpline Service** package for \$19.95 . Get access to immediate treatment advice from animal experts 24/7. Normally a \$35 fee/incident, Pet Poison Helpline offers you and your vet access to the best toxicology resources in your pet's time of need, with *no additional fees for the life of your pet*. Call 1-800-252-7894 for details on how to enroll today.

24/7 Pet Poison Helpline 1-800-213-6680 (\$35.00 per case)

Who Represents Region 12

UKC/HRC Regional Field Representative

John Wallace
14126 Rainbow Drive
Forney, TX 75126
(214) 697-7245
jwallace@ticnet.com



HRC Public Relations Committee

Kyle Krause
13520 Charcoal Lane
Dallas, TX 75234
(972) 243-6380
threek@wans.net

Running Rules Representative

Glenda Mitchell
1901 Early Blvd.
Brownwood, TX 76802
(325) 646-2252
gandgmitch@aol.com



Committee Reports

Club Business

Equipment

New Member Orientation

Training Days

Social

Seminars

1. Picnic

2. Game Dinner

Hunt Test's

AKC

UKC

UPLAND

Committee Reports

Community Education

Health Clinic

Bass Pro Dog Demo

Youth Hunt

Other Dog Events

- 1. Microchipping Clinics**
- 2. AKC Canine Good Citizen Tests (CGC)**

Fundraising

Raffle

These are our current Big D Committees. There should be a committee that sparks our interest. We will be discussing these committees at upcoming general club meetings.

If you have an interest or passion for any of these groups, *please*, get with one of the board members and we will be happy to help make introductions. If you are interested in being a Chair a committee we are happy to help you with that as well.

One of the goals set by the BOD is to revive our committees and have them truly become working committees that involve all of our club members.

Consider stepping up and becoming involve in one of these work groups!

- Your Big D BOD



Save these Dates:

When: May 7th

Why: Big D Big Dog

Where: Upland Bird Country
Corsicana, Texas

When: July 23rd

Why: CERF & Health Clinics

Where: Garland High School
Agricultural Barns
Wylie, TX