

Gazette Article, Mar 2011

Spring Time = Performance Time!

Our Guest Writer is Joanne Wilds-Snell from Chesapeake, Virginia, and she is excited about another of our many AKC competition venues – Rally. Those of us with Miniature Pinschers know these little dogs are great students with the right amount of patience and a great sense of humor. Joanne worked with her Miniature Pinschers in Obedience for 10 years before taking a hiatus (she was in the Navy) and working strictly in conformation. She has recently returned to Obedience and gives us this insight.

“Our conformation friends have already been out and about in the rings even through a very cold snowy winter. In the meantime, those of us working with dogs in performance events have been working hard indoors to get as much practice and fine tuning of our techniques in preparation for our first experience back in the Obedience rings. Of course, we are certainly looking forward to working outdoors again to perfect our techniques. Performance dogs must be socialized and trained in many different situations, and to fine tune a focused team, we must practice in some of the oddest of places. We take our dogs to the mall (with permission of course), park, buildings set up for performance training, front yards of our homes, and any other venue that affords us the space to do what we do best... work together!

After 15 years being out of performance events, it has been an exciting experience working this past fall and winter to train my Miniature Pinscher, Jag, to go in the Rally Novice ring this spring. Although a bit different from traditional Obedience, the Rally ring requires the same type of basic skills. Jag and I have been working on our Heel, Recall, and Stay commands. First just the basics – getting the feel for the right position for the Heel, sitting at each Halt, changing speeds and directions. Then Jag has to learn Come. Then we progress to Come – Front – Sit. Then our next challenge – Place (Swing, etc). Sit Stays for 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds. We work one foot away, one yard, and then the other side of the driveway. Each step is carefully taken to ensure I don't put Jag in a position that may set him up for failure and each exercise is performed with TONS of praise! Jag enjoys that part the most.

And I am sure our Agility friends are also looking forward to working in outside rings on their exercises. Mastering the jumps, weaves, A-frames, tunnels and teeters! Working to build speed while ensuring accuracy so they are always hitting their “marks”!

We are just as excited as ever for the weather to break and begin our spring shows and trials and show off the work we have done over the winter.”

Thanks, Joanne, for that look into one of the performance areas for this conformation exhibitor. It is interesting to note that the AKC recently reported that entries from our performance events are almost equaling 50% of entry totals at shows.

Congratulations to 2011 Westminster Kennel Club Best of Breed winner GCH Marlex Classic Red Glare – “Classie” and her owners Leah Monte and Armando Angelbello. Classie is handled by Armando and was bred by Carole Ann Mohr-Rio. Congratulations goes to the Best of Opposite Sex – CH Winters What About Me and Award of Merit Winners – GCH Kimro’s Soldier Boy and GCH Dynasty’s Home On The Range.

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