

## **THREE RIVERS BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB**

Northmoreland County Park, Apollo, PA

Saturday, October 1, 2011

JUDGES: Mary Alice Eschweiler and Sara Steele

DRAFT TEST CHAIR: Nancy Melone

DRAFT TEST SECRETARY: Kim Moran

Chief Steward: Ken Cechman

Grounds: Randy Walter

RV Reservations: Joyce Frey

Hospitality: Betsy Walter

Judges' Hospitality: Kim Moran

Raffle Chair: Joye Neff

Trophies: Kim Moran

Catalog/Advertising: Ellen Folke & Nancy Melone

Ring Decor: Lisa Edwards

8 Entries (3 Pass, 4 Fail, 1 Absent)

1 Brace Open (Pass)

1 Brace Novice (Pass)

6 Novice (1 Pass, 4 Fail, 1 Absent)

All dogs were Berners

It was a pleasure and honor to be invited to judge draft for the Three Rivers club and, in so doing, have the opportunity to spend some time with old friends and make new friends.

The weather did not cooperate. It rained all day long with temps somewhere in the high 40s--don't know for sure. It did not feel to me to be as cold as the predicted temperature of 44°, but perhaps that was because I was wrapped in thermal underwear, fleece, and insulated Gore-Tex and wearing Mucks. But, weather aside, the show site was out of this world with beauty. The perfectly flat, well mowed ring lay at the top of a hill with a spectacular view of the Pennsylvania countryside with trees just beginning to hint at the forthcoming color. We had the hilltop all to ourselves. The ring was colorfully decorated in accordance with a festive fall theme that included straw bales, scarecrows, autumn leaves, and corn.

The course, a very nice one contributed by Mary Alice, was plain and simple and included just the basics. It was very spacious, leaving plenty of room to perform all of the stations. It included features which I appreciate, such as a first lap without any station (this offers the teams an opportunity to get acclimated before negotiating the hard stuff), the Narrows set on the diagonal, and the Slow/Change of Pace having an entire lap to itself. The circular motions right and left included a circle right and a circle left and a serpentine, the serpentine starting with the first obstacle to the handler's right shoulder. With this, we weren't trying to confound the agility and rally people, who are accustomed to entering with the first obstacle on their left. Having the first obstacle to the

handler's right offered more room to make the initial bend. The distractions were, audio, a Swiss bell, and, visual, a couple of small USA flags waved simultaneously, Navy style. I, Sara, decorated the course map in accordance to the autumnal theme.

The freight haul went through the nearby trees and across the road that bore just enough light traffic that we needed to use a steward to halt it so that our little parade could cross. On the other side of the road the route went up a long hill of gentle pitch. We then turned right and went into a grove of trees, then turned left and ascended another, shorter hill of greater pitch. Following that we crossed another road and turned back. On the return trip we passed by a pavilion and then performed a serpentine through adjacent trees. Once again crossing the road with the steward once again stopping traffic, we were soon back at the ring. There were no dramatic hills to negotiate and there were few terrain types: grass, pavement, and puddles and mud which increased in amount as the day wore on. We modified our path to avoid what mud we could. People with children out braving the weather provided natural distractions.

The three teams that passed did sterling performances. Two of the failed teams also worked handsomely and missed by just a hair. A couple of the teams needed more work.

There was a pavilion on the other side of the small parking lot from the ring. In that pavilion was a huge gourmet spread of hot food, assembled under the direction of "hospitality queens" Betsy Walter and Cathy Bath. It was very welcome on such a cold and miserable day. The pavilion had electricity so club members had brought along their crock pots and plugged in. These Three Rivers folk know how to cook and really like to eat. The night before, they had treated Mary Alice and me to dinner at a historic restaurant. I told my husband that we should move back to his hometown, Pittsburgh, to eat!

Everyone, club members and exhibitors alike, did beautifully at performing their various functions in the persistently inclement and uncomfortable weather. Nancy Melone did an awesome job pulling this whole thing off. Her secretary, Kimberly Moran, was a newbie to the function as Draft Test Secretary and did a fantastic job. I predict that Kim may now have a "permanent" job on her hands. Kim was coached by Ellen Folke.

Not surprisingly, Joye Neff, the famous money-making wizard, brought in \$272.50 on the raffle. We had a terrific team of stewards that included "the boys": Ken Cechman in the role of Chief Steward, Randy Walter (who also doubled on Grounds) as the lead Freight Haul steward, Jim Meyer, Bill Stayduhar, Tom Atkian, and Tim McGuire. Other helpers were Cheryl Sams and Debbie Godrey. Joyce Frey served as the RV coordinator and park liaison. Lisa Edwards was in charge of the festive autumnal decorations and ran the CGC test. I hope that I have not omitted anyone in my list of helpers. There were a LOT of people from this happy club there helping.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Steele