

Chloe's VST Track

Chloe and I recently passed our VST title on track #5 out of 8 entries held by the Denver Foothills Tracking Association Club in Denver Colorado.

For those that don't know a VST track must be between 600-800 yards long, have 4-8 turns and cross at least 3 different surfaces, 2 of which must be devoid of any vegetation. The track must also have aged at least 3-5 hours long before the dog and handler can proceed on the track.

It was a cool, sunny day with a light breeze and a slightly damp ground from previous snows during the week(s) before. The track was laid on April 22nd at 8:15 am and we ran at 11:56 am, this made the track 3 hours and 41 minutes old.

Our track was held at the Littleton City Municipal Buildings in Littleton Colorado. The track was 657 yards long, 376 was on a vegetated surface and 281 was on a non-vegetated surface. The surfaces we crossed were grass, concrete and asphalt.

Our first leg of the track started in grass that went 110 yards towards the Municipal building. Chloe approached the start flag, sniffed the article, and sat like she normally does. I told her "good girl, let's find some more". After scenting the start, circling a full 360 degrees several times, she took the scent and went down the leg. Possibly due to a human crosstrack scent or animal scent about half way she broke off and went to the right towards the parking lot. She followed what she thought was the scent and soon went off to the left paralleling the 1st leg. Chloe broke off near the corner of the 2nd leg, went left towards the corner and continued working the 2nd leg 50 yards long. She proceeded on the leg and broke off at the 2nd turn where she had a little trouble. The turn was at an area near a small incline, which had a chain link fence at the top and was lined with some trees. I can only assume that she was having some problems here due to the way the scent was swirling and pooling in that area via the trees and the fencing.



After a few minutes she found the 3rd leg 175 yards long and continued out of the grass and into a concrete parking area. This leg was slightly inclined and is used for delivery trucks during normal hours, so there had been lots of traffic going across it. After we got around the vehicles in the concrete parking area, Chloe found the first intermediate article. Once again she sat, I reached down and picked up the article and held it high for the judges to see. I told her "good girl, let's find some more" and she started moving up the ramp again.

At the top of the ramp she overshot the 3rd turn, but then came back to the corner and proceeded to go right on the 4th leg, 103 yards which was across the asphalt parking lot. Halfway down the leg she broke off tracking a few yards away from the leg she paralleled it until she found the 5th leg. She in essence had cut the corner of the 4th turn. On the 5th leg 98 yards long, she found and sat at

the 2nd intermediate article. I picked it up and held it high for the judges to see, told her “good girl, let’s find some more” and she was on the move again.

She broke off at the 5th turn, circled, turned, and went left down the 75 yard 6th leg. She made the 6th turn very nicely and started down the last 45 yard 7th leg. But for an unknown reason, she broke off and went across the asphalt street. After a few minutes of searching she took me back into the middle of the street and then continued to parallel the leg. After a few yards she started to move back onto the concrete sidewalk and proceed down the leg. Before we knew it, we were at the final article! She put her nose on the article and I immediately yelled “good girl!” and hugged her. 80-100 yards behind me I could hear the sound of horns honking and people yelling after we had found this last article. By now Chloe was hot and tired. I think she knew that it was the last article she had to find. She even gave me a little smile knowing she had done well. She also saw a familiar face approaching, my closest friend and tracking partner, Tom Hacholski. He and the judges, Ms. Carol Pernicka and Ms. Anne Hershey MD, were coming to congratulate us.

I am glad, but sad that it’s over for Chloe right now. She’s a real trooper and a pleasure to work with. Chloe actually likes to track making it hard to find a companion like her. Karen (my wife) and I are very proud of Chloe and her accomplishments. I would also like to say “thank you” to Karen for putting up with all of our days away from home while training as well as being out of town at tracking events. This put an extra burden on her to maintain the rest of the Irish Setter family while I was away from home. I would also like to thank all of the judges that we have shown under in the past years. Over the years I have received great advice from several people and judges. I took the advice and put it to use in my training where it has finally paid off.

Sincerely,
Jon Bishop and
CH. CT. Kennlee Energizer Bunny

