

Southwest Tracking Association of Metropolitan Houston, Inc.



www.southwesttracking.org
Winter 2003 / 2004

Featured in this edition are articles by Jon Bishop, who received TDX titles on three dogs during 2002 and an interview by Ginny Conway with Jeff Shaver who earned two TDX titles on his Rottweilers in November 2003, at the same test! While we are proud of the accomplishments of all our members, these are noteworthy. Thank you, Jon and Jeff, for sharing your stories with us.

CH Tempo T Trueheart, JH WCX CD TDX

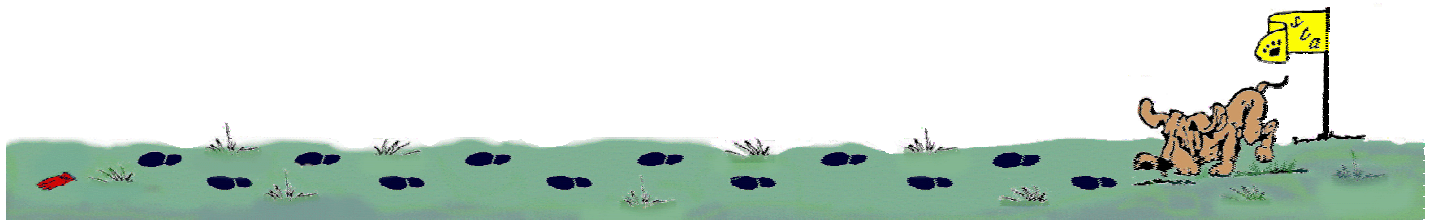
Tess and I received our TDX title in El Paso on March 3rd 2002. Others who had tracked on dirt before had told me that it was different, but that most dogs seemed to like it because the dirt seemed to hold the scent. It was a clear, sunny sky, with a light wind and slightly cool early in the morning, but turning hot later by noon. We had never trained on dirt before so this was our first time ever tracking on dirt with cactus, some sparse grassy spots and large mounds of dirt and sand.

When our turn came, we walked to the start flag where I put Tess's harness on, picked up the 1st article, and proceeded to tell her to "find it". She performed what I like to call a "classic" start. She circled 360 degrees around the flag looking for the scent, found it and proceeded down the leg. At the 1st turn, she showed loss of scent, circled 360 degrees around and off to the left we went. The 2nd leg was 235 yards long with a 60-yard wide gully/wash in the middle that Tess went down into, across and back up the other side. She handled the first one superbly. At the 2nd turn, which went right, she showed loss of scent found the correct direction and continued. 70 yards into the 3rd leg, we found our 2nd article. At the 3rd turn, which went right, she found the correct direction very quickly and off she went. We were now on the 4th leg 210-yards long with the 60-yard wide gully/wash in the middle again. This is where we had our problems.

The gully/wash, was very deep, she veered off the leg and proceeded into the gully/wash at a 45-degree angle instead of continuing down and across it in a straight line. By the time we had gone down the embankment, across the gully/wash bottom and back up the other side we were way off course. We searched at the top of the other side, and then we went back down into the gully

and searched, but couldn't find the continuation of the correct leg. We searched several times up, down, back and forth for what seemed like an eternity without any luck. After awhile Tess was getting tired and hot so I talked to her, gave her water and let her smell one of the other articles. It must have helped because we were able to "finesse" our way to a section of the gully/wash that we had not checked yet. Tess body hooked into the leg and proceeded to pull me down the last 50 yards of the leg. I was relieved and excited at the same time, still keeping in mind that we weren't done yet.

When we got to the turn, which was a 45 degree right turn, she didn't even stop to look or show me loss of scent, she just kept on going down the 5th 150 yard leg. We didn't know it at the time but 60 yards into this leg was our 1st cross track, which she didn't indicate at all. We continued 40 yards down the leg and came upon our 3rd article. 50 yards further down the leg we came to the 5th turn, which went 45 degrees to the right again. 60 yards into this 130-yard leg we passed our 2nd set of cross tracks which again, she didn't indicate. Then, 70-yards after the cross tracks was our last article. Tess picked up the glove and brought it back to me barking all the way still holding onto the glove. I through my hands up yelling in exhilaration, loved on her, praised her for doing such a great job and gave her some much-deserved water. As I looked around I saw the judges, the tracklayer and the spectators coming up to us. Everyone congratulated us for doing such a fine job and our determination to conquer the gully/wash and not give up. Tess never let go of the glove or stopped barking until we reached the Suburban, where she got her well-deserved rewards.



*Nita Chambers and Nash
trying for their TDX at
HOT's December Test.*



Our track was 940 yards long and 3 hours and 15 minutes old. It took us 36 minutes to complete it, which seemed like an eternity. Tess was 11 years old when she passed her TDX test. This was no small feat for an 11 year old. Karen and I are very proud of Tess and all of her accomplishments.

CH Lonely Heart Advisor, JH WCX UD TDX

Abbie and I received our TDX title at the Gateway Tracking Club in St. Louis at Robertsville State Park on April 7th 2002.

I drew track #1. Track #1 just happened to be in the same field that I had a few years ago during another TDX test. It wasn't the same track, but it was the same field. That particular track was also my first entry in a TDX test. This means that Robertsville was my first and my last TDX test. How coincidental could that be?

The sky was overcast and there was a 50% chance of rain. The temperature was around 55-60 degrees and the wind was blowing lightly out of the south. What a perfect day for tracking.

We started out in short to ankle high grass which took us 70 yards to the 1st turn and made a right turn into the wind and proceeded into mid thigh high grass. 85 yards into this taller grass, the 2nd leg, is where we encountered our 1st cross track. We proceeded 75 yards on until we came to our 2nd turn that went left. 35 yards into this leg we found our 2nd article. We proceeded 70 yards to our 3rd turn, which also went left. 70 yards down this leg we crossed our 2nd set of cross tracks. Abbie gave a little head bob at each cross track, but never attempted to check them out, boy was I glad. We continued 65 yards on to our 4th turn that went right. We went 45 yards and entered a dense wooded area. 60 yards inside the woods was a 5th turn that went right and she made it very quickly. 60 more yards and we were out of the woods. Back in the tall grass and 35 yards more, we found our 3rd article. We continued 138 yards more which took us through, tall grass, across an asphalt road, through an area with 5-6 foot tall water reeds and into a short grassy area. Here in the short grass we made our 6th turn into our 7th leg that went 70 yards over a rolling mound and across a small muddy creek. Here at the creek, Abbie broke off the leg and started to search back and forth. She did this for what seemed like an

eternity, in reality probably only 30 seconds. Then, like she knew where the leg went all along she body hooked into the leg, preceded back on course, across the creek and straight to the last article.

It was definitely her day. It was a rare day where, for the most part, all I needed to do was hang on. All of the conditions were perfect that day, including our little bit of luck. Our track was 878 yards long and was 3 hours and 15 minutes old. We completed this track in 11 minutes. WOW!! It happened so fast that my tracking partner, Tom Hacholski, couldn't even get it all filmed on video.

Abbie was one of those one of a kind dogs that loved to please and loved to do everything. Karen (my wife) was well on her way to obtaining Abbie's OTCH title, too. Karen needed only 1 more leg to obtain Abbie's UDX and 40 points to obtain her OTCH. Unfortunately, 2 months later in June, Abbie passed away due to complications from Splenectomy surgery. Even though she was 11 years old she had the heart of a 2 year old, but it just wasn't enough. Karen and I miss her every day.

CH Kennlee Energizer Bunny TDX

As I opened the back of the car and proceeded to get Chloe out and put her harness on I could hear people say things like, "oh my what a beautiful dog". I then heard Tom state that Chloe only needed 5 points and 1 major to finish her conformation championship. I heard it, but let it slip through my ears because I was in a different world at that time.

With harness on we started off to the start flag. At the flag she did a little turn left and then a little turn right, then back left and off she went. A beautiful start. The 1st leg was approximately 50-60 yards to the 1st turn, which went left. The 2nd leg, approximately 150 yards, had the 1st set of cross tracks, which she didn't even indicate. The 2nd turn went right, approximately 40 yards, then an article. Then another 50 yards to the 3rd turn which also went right. Little did I know that Chloe had over shot the turn quite a bit, but she sniffed around at what she thought was the turn and then went right. Even though I didn't know it then, she was tracking down wind and parallel to the 4th leg.



*Sue Jackson and her Golden
Kodiak's Gold Bear TD NA
looking for an article in Bush Park*

She got past the 2nd set of cross tracks, which went through the 2nd and 4th legs, but once she did she got lost. She knew that the correct leg was close, but we looked and we looked and we looked. For some reason I couldn't get her to pick up on the correct direction of the leg. Luckily she wouldn't take the cross track, we just couldn't seem to find the correct direction. Finally after, we guessed 20 minutes, she found the leg, nose and body hooked into it and took off. Man was I glad. I then felt that we at least still had a chance. Tom told me later that he thought that the 4th leg was over 200 yards. The leg went on to the 4th turn, which was slightly open, and into some waist high tall grass. Here this 5th leg was approximately 50 yards to the 3rd article and another 50 or so to a barbed wire fence with a gate that they had gone through. When we picked up the article I could hear the gallery screaming for joy, but I was confused. Did I miss one and the judges didn't stop me or what? So I looked back at the judges and they just waved their hands, like I should ignore the galley and continue on, so I did.

Soon after the article the rope got hung up in some of the small trees/saplings and because of our training I told her to "wait" and she stood still while I got us free. She then continued on to the fence. At the gate in the fence she stopped went left, came back went right, came back and she started to sniff and push the gate open. I felt if she was going to do that much that I should help her and so I opened the gate and she took off again. I figure we went another 40-50 yards to the bank of the pond, she sniffed around a little and up and over the bank of the pond. I had to tell her "no" at the top, because she wanted to go for a swim. Not just once, but twice. Boy was that close.

She did a little looking around; found the leg went right, only a few yards, so she did too. Later the judges had said they heard me say "easy girl don't kill daddy" as she pulled me back down the bank again and onto the next 6th leg. She was moving and I was huffing and puffing. The 6th leg went approximately another 80 yards to the paved road, where she stopped and broke off and started going left. About now I'm thinking that this is possible. That the judges have made turns at the roads and then ended it just 50-60 yards parallel with the road. Not this time.

Chloe broke off again, swung around back towards me and stopped in the middle of the road. I told her to find it, where's the glove, and she proceeded across the road. She stopped briefly on the other side, sniffed around for the leg and once again nose and body hooked into the leg. We're off again. This part of the leg proceeded through more waist high grass and on through a "wall" of high grass, approximately 50-70 yards.

Chloe got to a point and indicated loss of scent once more. Only this time she was very frantic. I was thinking, possibly another turn. Nah, she's trying to find the article. She's sniffing everywhere and I'm looking everywhere. After only a couple of minutes, if that, I see it, there it is. Oh, s---t!!! I'm standing on it. We both had missed it, until then. She had barely sniffed the glove and I scared her when I threw up my hands and screamed and screamed, then I cried and cried for joy. It was very emotional. I was crying, the tracklayer was crying and the judges were crying. I think even Robert Brown had some tears. What an exciting end to a day at a tracking test. Chloe's track was 890 yards and 4 hrs 11 minutes old and she completed it in 46 minutes.

So, on Sunday, December 8, 2002 at the John Zink Foundation Ranch in Sand Springs, OK, running in only her second TDX test, Jon & Karen Bishop's Kennlee Energizer Bunny TD became **Kennlee Energizer Bunny TDX**, the second Irish Setter in the history of the breed to earn the Tracking Dog Excellent Title!

Oh Happy Day! Two TDX in two hours!

The Jeff Shaver Story.

As told to Ginny Conway

Recently, I was amazed to read on the Tracking List that some guy had handled two Rottweilers in the same test and both had passed their TDX tracks! I needed to learn more. Here's an interview I conducted with STA's own Jeff Shaver last month.

gc – Congratulations! How does it feel to be so accomplished?

Jeff – Well, almost earned another X last weekend, Skylar was about 50 yards from the final glove.

*Jeff Shaver and
one of his Rotties
maneuver through an
obstacle in Missouri*



gc – What breed(s) dog to train?

Jeff – Rottweilers, I currently have six in training. Skylar, TD and Andy who are 5 years old; Jack, TDX and Diamond 4; Lang. TDX and Suzy are 17 months old.

gc – Why train more than one at a time?

Jeff – Necessity. While I wait for the older tracks to age, I can be working with the beginner dogs.

gc – Did you breed them all?

Jeff – No, but they were all born at my home, and raised by me.

gc – Did your dogs pass on their first certification attempts?

Jeff – Andy, Jack and Lang all passed on their first try. Skylar took an extra crack at it.

gc – What do you remember about your first TD pass?

Jeff – It was with Jack was supposed to be at George Bush Park, but the test was moved to Park 10. I remember he found a half eaten sandwich on the track on the way to the glove.

gc – What did you do to get him to avoid the sandwich?

Jeff – Told him , “No, leave it.”

gc – What do you remember about your first TDX pass?

Jeff – It was at the Smithville Reservoir in Missouri. My dogs drew tracks #1 and #2. One of the judges made mention that I had to run my dogs back to back, I wouldn't be able to switch track order. That was fine with me. The track took about 25 minutes to run. It was Lang's first X attempt. The last turn was near some deer beds, he had never even seen a deer before. He circled the corner. Once I got him past the deer rut, I was pretty confident that we were on our last leg.

Then it was time for Jack to run, he had been in two previous tests. He took just a bit longer with his track, 35 minutes. He had a little trouble at two corners, then there was a corner of the field and some woods, I saw the glove and then Jack found it.

I've only had one shot with Skylar, so far. He cut a corner, then backtracked to an article, covering the

whole field. I'm not going to give up on him, after just one chance.

gc – Is there anyone that has helped to train your dogs?

Jeff – I was hoping you'd ask. I'd really like to thank Nita Chambers for the training and advice she's given me over the past few years. And I'd like to thank my frequent tracklayers, Sue Jackson and Glenda Robbins.

gc – Do you learn anything from less than successful tracks?

Jeff – Yes, Jack's first X was at George Bush Park, near the shooting range. The noise, really got to him. I realised we needed to practise more often near the range.

With Skylar, I find that I can't let him go the wrong way (if I know it's wrong). He'll work for about 10 minutes and then give up.

gc – What are your future tracking plans?

Jeff – I'd like to get a VST on Lang, at least. But plan to train for V with Jack, Lang and Skylar. Eventually, I'd like to become a judge. I've started Tracklaying at local tests. I really enjoy laying good tracks and making really nice maps.

gc - Do you have any suggestions for the Tracking Advisory Board?

Jeff – I'd really like to keep the diverse tracking styles continue on, I wouldn't want to see the AKC impose restrictions on how dogs should track.

Jeff Shaver's Track record to date:

11/10/2002 – Gr. Houston Golden Retriever Club

Blackwood Jack Frost becomes new TD.

Judges: Judith Bowers & Ed Marrow

12/8/2002 – HOT Dog Club

Ch Blackwood Skylar becomes new TD.

Judges: Sally Elkins & Craig Green

4/20/2003 – STA

Blackwood Langolier becomes new TD.

Judges: Sally Elkins & Linda Bryan

11/2/2003 – Greater Kansas City Dog Training Club

Blackwood Jack Frost, TD becomes new TDX.

Blackwood Langolier, TD becomes new TDX.

Judges: Cathy Hawkins & John Barnard



STA member Phyllis Dorrough and her Border Collie Dillon not only competed in the AKC National Tracking Invitational, September 20th in Asheville, NC, they were one of only two teams to successfully complete their track. You can read the full story about the experience and see their map at http://www.akc.org/dic/events/tracking/noi_tracking03.cfm?page=5

Upcoming STA Meetings and Tests

Sunday, January 4, 2004

4 TD / 4 TDX Test

Judges: Bob Brown & Judith Bowers

General and Board Meetings will be held following the conclusion of the test.

Sunday, April 18, 2004

4 TD / 4 TDX Test

Judges: to be announced

General and Board Meetings will be held following the conclusion of the test.

Don't Forget

We are looking for stories and photos to share both in our newsletter and on the website.

Submit them to: corgi@flash.net

STA

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