

Top Dog 2016

Our awesome VHOC 2016 Top Dog Team earned a very impressive 3rd place finish for our club this year!!

Along with the cool and crisp pleasantries of fall in the November air, our VHOC Top Dog Team received a welcome treat this year - a location close to home for most of our team members at Rancho Tapo Park in Simi Valley!

Fourteen Southern California Dog Obedience Council member clubs gathered on November 12th to strut their stuff amidst the camaraderie of fellow obedience competitors. This event offers the opportunity for club members to represent their respective clubs, ultimately in hopes of garnering the highest honor - Top Dog of 2016.

There are six rings at Top Dog - two each for Novice, Open, and Utility. The event consists of two rounds - the first round scores determine the club placements. The top four scoring dogs in each ring are then called back for a second round after lunch to compete for individual placements.

Our VHOC Top Dog Team did not disappoint - I am very proud of our achievement this year. Along with our more seasoned team members, we had three very green dogs that had never competed in the ring at their level, and one dog that was just returning to work following a long, needed rest. They were fantastic - all of them!

Serena Marshall and her Border Collie, Wynt, competed in Novice. Wynt is one of the dogs that had not competed in the ring prior to Top Dog. He is a super dog and Serena handled him so well in the first round that he was called back to a run-off in the top four of his ring. He won his run-off and came in 3rd out of 14 dogs, earning a call back for the second round. Wynt was a little tired when he went in for the second round but still pulled out some very nice heeling.

Patti Rovtar and her Rottweiler, Pippi, also competed in Novice. Pippi did a very nice job, well, except for when she came upon a "surprise" - a dog in the next ring heeling very close! Green doggie swerved away from the other dog but came right back to heel without being asked! Good girl! She scored well enough to come in 1st in her ring of 14 dogs, netting a spot in round two! Her round two performance only had a couple blips in it and we thought she was done after completing it. Oh, but Pippi was called back a third time for a runoff for a placement!! Surprisingly, this was her best round! She ended the day with a 3rd place finish out of 28 Novice dogs with 392.5 out of a possible 400 points!

Kathy Spilos and her German Shepherd Dog, Lia, were our Novice alternates. Alternates do the group exercise. Lia is another of our dogs that has never competed in Novice. She was next to an exhibitor on a scooter for groups and, being an active herding dog, was a little unnerved by "the machine" and got up during groups. Herding dogs don't see a lot of machinery, just sheepies! Great effort, Lia, we are proud of you!

Paddy Warner and Australian Shepherd Kippy competed in Open. Kippy is another one of our very green dogs for her level. She has never competed in Open in the ring until Top Dog. She left some of her get up and go at home, but still scored well enough to finish in 6th place out of 13 dogs competing in her ring! You're a good girl, Kipperonski, thanks for trying!

Our second Open team was Joyce Davis and her Golden Retriever, Caper. Caper is the dog who has had an extended rest and was just coming back to work. She even fell asleep during the group exercise! Hahaha! She had plenty of enthusiasm for her exercises, though, and told everyone about it (bark, bark) when going out to retrieve her dumbbell! She scored well enough to come in 1st in her Open ring of 12 dogs and clenched a coveted spot in the second round! In her second round, Caper got creative and decided to put some halts in during her heeling/figure 8 where she thought they should be, not necessarily where the judge thought they should be! Points off for creativity and she was bumped out of the placements! Silly girl!

Serena Marshall volunteered for double duty and , with her Shetland Sheepdog Tru were our alternate Open team. Tru was a good boy and held his sits and downs! You're a good man, Tru!

Laurie Burnam and Australian Shepherd Scusi competed in the Utility ring. Always full of enthusiasm, Scusi threw caution to the wind and had a blast showing off her glove zoomies and made sure that everyone saw her "glove corner" go-outs (bark, bark!). Her articles, however, were perfection! Scusi finished up 11th out of 12 dogs in her ring - and I am certain she was 1st in fun! We love you, Scusi!!

Our second Utility dog team was Sharon Clarke and Flynn, a Standard Schnauser. Flynn, always a consistent competitor, wasn't sure if he should do his go-outs towards the scooter in the next ring, but pulled them off! He did great on all his other exercises and earned his second round with a 2nd place finish in his ring of 13 dogs. His go-outs were perfect in the second round and he won himself a 4th place ribbon for his effort with a final score of 378.5 points out of a possible 400. Great job, Flynn!

Last but not least, we have Sarah Sykes and Brio, who were our Utility alternates. Our Utility alternate dog gets to eat cookies and watch all the other dogs work since there is no group exercise at this level. Our blessed seniors, Scoutie and Chili, kept an eye on him all day and gave him a perfect score of 400 for two rounds of cookie eating!

A very special shout out to Cindi Malchose for being our official photographer, Carole Raschella for designing our team shirts again this year, and Shiro Torquato for helping out and bringing all of us lunch! Thanks to all of you very, very much!

Cindi and I are so very proud of the effort - Congratulations to all of you!!

Happy Training!

Patti Rovtar and Cindi Malchose
Top Dog 2016 Co-Captains

