

# Editorializing...

## Last Run?

By Jacque Hoye



I set up my dog Isis at the start line and confidently lead out. The course is two jumps past the wrong end of the tunnel. This is an easy lead-out for us; I release her with O.K. She has a quick start and easily reads my pull into the correct end of the tunnel. I need to do a front cross to cue a tight wrap on jump #4. Wow, she does it beautifully and accelerates out of the turn to the next jump; I use her name to check her and to pull her to the left end of the tunnel (not the obvious side). She has never pulled so easily. Now, I get an easy pickup out of the tunnel to the double and a fast entry into the weaves—she nails it. I fade away from the poles to get in a front cross to send her over the broad jump and another jump with a very tight turn into the tunnel. No time to wait—I have to move because I need to do a front cross on the upside of the dogwalk, and Isis comes through tunnels fast. She beats me to the end of the dogwalk and holds her two-on/two-off so I can release her past the first jump (and keep her off the tunnel) to the second jump to do a 180° turn and then back into the tunnel. I get an easy pickup to the A-frame ramp; I push out to the next jump signaling a tight 180 turn back to the teeter and out. What a huge adrenaline rush! She just ran a perfect course! No bars down—not even a tick. She made a perfect weave entry and she stayed in the poles even when very experienced dogs pulled out with the handler fading away. She held her contacts until released. It was a run I will remember for the rest of my life.

Was this run for her MACH? ADCH? NATCH? Super-Q? Nope, none of the above. This was a run in training. The run meant absolutely nothing to anyone but me. Was I happy with the run? Absolutely.

Did I quit training her? Nope, I ran the course *one more time*.

She had a beautiful start again with a nice tight turn from jump #4. Isis did the correct end of the tunnel and I picked her up for the double. This time, though, something was wrong. I don't know what happened exactly but things started to happen in slow motion. I realized she wasn't elevating for the double. She was going to go right through it. She crashed the bars and gave a tiny yelp. I looked at her when she landed and her rear end was paralyzed. She was trying to drag herself over to me with this look on her face like she wanted to do the weaves but her body wouldn't

cooperate. Then she lost bowel control. My dog was paralyzed. I was totally freaked out. I was just holding her and consoling her.

There was a vet on site who came to check her out. His initial thoughts were that she blew out a spinal disc or had a fibro-cartilaginous embolism (FCE) obstructing a blood vessel. I picked her up and carried her off the course and was driven to a local vet's office. The vet happened to be certified in doing manual manipulations (chiropractic) and treated her with those. I was amazed that she could walk out of the vet's office that day. I was so relieved to have my dog back that nothing else mattered. She continues to recover and improve every single day. In fact, if you met her today you would never guess that something like this occurred only a short time ago.

This event has changed my whole perspective on dog agility and dog sports in general. Why do I do agility with my dogs? I love it and my dogs do as well. We both enjoy going out there and trying to conquer



the challenges that the judge has presented to us. Did Isis know if we Q'd? Absolutely not. Did she care? Absolutely not. Did she get to run as fast as she could and have a great time? Absolutely!

I don't know if Isis will ever be able to do agility again. I don't know if that is the last time I will see her do a perfect run: tight turns, all bars up, perfect weaves, perfect contacts. I do know that I will remember that run forever and I will cherish it. In fact, we never know when the "last run" will be with our dogs. I want to enjoy every minute I am out on the agility field with my dog. I am

so lucky to still have this wonderful girl in my life; she enriches every day I spend with her.

Love your dogs and enjoy every moment. They are here for such a short time—make the most of it. Make every agility run fun for *both* of you. If you lose sight of why you are doing this, it might be time to take up stamp collecting or knitting.

*Give your dog a hug—right now.*

*Jacqueline Hoye*

Jacqueline Hoye, who lives in Minnesota with her husband, Bob, and her three Border Collies, Marquis, Isis, and Sizzle, has loved dogs all her life. Her first agility dog, Nuisance, an enthusiastic, talented yellow Lab, introduced her to the sport and she is now an AKC judge for agility, obedience, and Rally. Jacquie, a massage therapist for dogs and people, also teaches agility. She uses positive teaching methods to bring out the best performances by her students and their dogs.