

Clean Run

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PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.AGILITY.RU

The Road to Porto, Portugal Was Paved in Gold and Silver

By Barbara Lombard

Our bags were packed, the dog crates were adorned with USA stickers, and we were finally on our way to the 2001 FCI Agility World Championships in Porto, Portugal.

Our first stop was Newark, New Jersey. We were scheduled to meet at Newark Airport on the morning of Monday, October 1st, where we would be bussed to J.F.K. Airport to take a 7 p.m. flight to Lisbon, Portugal. However, for some of us, the adventure began Sunday evening in Newark. That is where I met up with Barb Davis and her husband, Jeff. Figuring that it couldn't be too difficult to find our way around New Jersey, we rented a car and took off with Barb's Sheltie, Shimmer, in tow. We successfully found the hotel with only a few wrong turns and were quite pleased with ourselves. Soon realizing that we were a bit hungry, we began our search for the local Olive Garden restaurant, which was clearly visible in the distance. Two hours and 137 miles later, we came upon our destination and had a lovely dinner. What we learned, however, was that people from the West Coast shouldn't take the New Jersey Turnpike for granted.

The following morning, we met the other team members, with the exception of Linda Mecklenburg and Nancy Gyes, at Newark Airport. Everyone

had arrived safe and sound and on time, which made Team Captain Sharon Anderson and Team Coach Dan Dege quite happy. From there we were treated to a luxurious bus ride to J.F.K. Airport where Nancy and Linda were waiting. The trip to New York, which passed lower Manhattan, also served as a reminder of the terrible tragedy that had befallen that area. Everyone was thankful to be alive and well, and extremely proud to be able to represent the United States in the coming week.

During the six-hour flight from New York to Lisbon, Coach Dan Dege and several of the team members had the luxury of stretching out among the many empty seats and getting some much-needed sleep—what a sight we must have been—snoring our way to Europe.

After arriving in Lisbon, Portugal, we took a five-hour bus ride through the Portuguese countryside to Porto. Although the scenery was beautiful, it seemed that the traveling would never end.

Finally, we arrived in Porto around 4 p.m. on Tuesday. We were happy to find the hotel accommodations to be quite nice and were able to find small patches of grass to potty the dogs. Everyone had their first taste of Portuguese cuisine, and most were then ready to settle in for the night. Dan

Dege and I were a bit more adventurous, taking the local bus downtown. We had a grand time walking through the pouring rain for four hours with a broken umbrella.

On Wednesday, the rest of the supporters and family members arrived at the hotel. Not wanting to miss a thing, many embarked on a trip downtown to soak up the local culture. They were treated to the sights of a traditional, old European city with beautiful architecture, sidewalk cafes, and shopping. Porto is known for its port wine and several people purchased local vintages to either take home or enjoy on the trip.

On Thursday, the team members, their dogs, and some supporters traveled to a local agility club site to practice. While there, we were treated to the fragrant aroma of the local pig farm, which was right next door. The teams had a wonderful practice and the dogs were obviously happy to be doing what they love. That evening, there was a nice buffet dinner and pep rally that was attended by the entire USA entourage. There were several moving speeches, especially the inspirational message from Kathie Leggett, which brought tears to most people's eyes. The evening ended early as usual for the team members, but several supporters found their way to the lounge and enjoyed an after dinner glass of port.

Friday began with an early bus ride to the Crystal Palace, the site of the competition. The USA team didn't practice until afternoon, but we were anxious to get there early to set up and watch some of the other teams. Supporters took the opportunity to choose their spots and decorate the stands with flags and red, white, and blue streamers. The actual practice was well orchestrated by Dan Dege and Kathie Leggett, and it gave each team member the time to get a feel for the carpeting and the equipment.

Friday night's dinner was a quiet affair for the team members in the restaurant at the hotel. We bypassed the event's banquet this year in favor of an early evening. Some supporters had other ideas in mind, and a group of us went disco dancing at the hotel until the wee hours of the morning. Susan Garrett danced up a storm along with Rachel Sanders, Adrienne Lynch, others, and myself. All had a fun time, but we paid for it when the dreaded alarm went off at 6:30 a.m.

On Saturday, the opening ceremonies proceeded on time and with great fanfare. USA supporters were decked out in red, white, and blue, and let team members know they were standing firmly behind the team in their endeavors. With over 60 supporters and family members in attendance, no one on the team was ever without a cheerful smile or a word of encouragement. The supporters also served as a neighborhood watch for the team crating area, which was on a different level of the facility. Katie Greer made a great neighborhood watch captain and made sure that there was always someone on duty.

As you know by now, the event was fabulous. The members of both the Mini and Standard Teams proved that they not only deserved to be there, but were also a part of two teams to be reckoned with. Each team member stood at the line with enthusiasm, determination, and devotion to the sport of dog agility. All of their runs were proof of their dedication to training and their love for their dogs.

At the end of the first day, both teams were in first place. Never before had a USA Team been able to achieve a similar result. The atmosphere was electric, and hopes were running high for the final day of competition.

Sunday arrived, and everyone was anxious to witness the final team and individual runs. The USA contingent was treated to the best agility moments ever yet seen at a world competition. The Mini Team finished in second place, just 2.5 seconds behind Finland, to win the silver medal. This was a great accomplishment for a team that

was made up of three newcomers—Joan Meyer and Dustin, Jean Lavalley and Taz, and Erin Schaefer and Jag—along with two-time team member Barb Davis and Shimmer. Their performance set the tone for what was to come with the Standard Team.

The Standard Team consisted of Linda Kipp and Jessie, Linda Mecklenburg and Awesome, Steve Frick and Comet, and Elicia Calhoun and Suni—all experienced World Team competitors. After finishing in first place the day before, hopes were running high that this would be the year for the first USA Standard Team medal. The crowd was on its feet from the first USA dog on the line, Linda with Jessie. Following their exciting opening clean run, Linda and Awesome came to the line. The look on Linda's face made it clear that she was determined to fulfill the team mission to "run clean, run fast." The crowd was elated when they turned in a beautiful clean run. Next, Steve and Comet were up. Their clean run solidified the gold medal for the USA. Knowing the team had won first place, Elicia Calhoun and Suni got to run a bonus run backed by the crowd's chant of "USA-USA-USA". Suni had a fault, but she finished with a beautiful, fast run. At this point, tears were flowing freely from everyone involved. The moment was fantastic. The USA teams had come to play and did so in high style.

Following the closing ceremonies, Patricia Cheauré, representing the AKC, treated the team members and all of the supporters to dinner at a local restaurant. The atmosphere was festive, and the wine flowed in celebration of the weekend's events. Linda Mecklenburg and Nancy Gyes gave wonderful speeches thanking the AKC and Iams for sponsoring the team and making the dream a reality. Special thanks were also given to the supporters, without whom the experience would not have been the same.

The last day in Porto was spent sightseeing. Team members and supporters saw some spectacular sights and were able to purchase souvenirs for their friends and family back home. The mood was happy, as all day long you could hear people jokingly reminding each other, "Hey, you won the silver," and "Hey, you won the gold." It was hard to believe.

The trip to the Agility World Championships meant a great deal to everyone involved—especially the team members. It was gratifying to be able to represent the United States during these trying times and to feel the pride of being an American.

The 2001 AKC/USA World Team members urge anyone who loves agility and the thrill of a great run to make plans to come to Dortmund, Germany, next year. You won't be disappointed.



PHOTO BY KATHIE LEGGETT



MACH ADCH Ssky-Leit's Animation EAC EGC EJC ONYX

3/24/93 — 8/30/01

Bred, owned, handled, and adored by
Jean & Kurt Matushek
Elgin, IL

Disney was Jean's first homebred pup, a singleton who became Jean's soulmate. The bond between them was solid gold, the love unmistakably deep.

Disney was the first Tervuren to earn the AKC MACH title, and one of only a handful of Tervs to earn the USDAA ADCH, and to reach the NAFA flyball ONYX level. She was in agility semi-retirement, looking forward to many successes in the obedience ring, when complications of GDV sent her to the Rainbow Bridge.

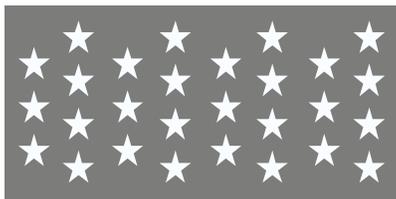
Her accomplishments and Jean's training and handling have been amazing people for years. Their teamwork has become a goal toward which many agility and flyball enthusiasts now strive. The memories of her runs in the ring, or even just after her frisbee, are engraved in the minds of her many friends and admirers... but it's the undying love she had for life, and for Jean, that we will carry in our hearts forever.

Photo By Christine McHenry

Disney

So long, Dis — WE WILL MISS YOU!!

Sue Fregien & Jim Johnston • Terri & Paul Everline • Mary Ann Ralston • Cindy Brick • Laurie Bandy • Becky Barr • Diane Martin • Robin Comp-Zelles • Roberta Whitesides • Helen Hittesdorf • Lisa & Charles Mason • Cindy Knowlton • Liz & Dan Starmach • Nancy Hughes • Libbye Miller • Ann Stewart • Dawn Kundert • Joanne Schaus • Jennie Muldoon • Mitzi Allen • Donna & Paul Darland • Sally B. Davis • Mary Ann Imburgia • Pam Kristoff • Marilyn Bialas • Leigh Carter • Lynn Hostetler • Mark & Lori Guerra • Christy Carrano • Jim Bahr • Sylvia Krpan • Susie & Alexis Manier • Marcia Halliday • Jutta Hammermueller • Diane & Les Sanders • Dana Kurk-Swanson • Beth Diehl • Todd & Nancy Von Haden • Kathleen Schaffer • Deb & Kevin Frank • Jacqui Fredricks • Kristina & Derek Pattison • Janine Jordan • Lynn Vincent • Bonnie Drabek • Pat Szkwarko • Pamela O'Day • Guy & Angela Wills.



Team Agility: Mini

By Barbara Lombard

The first class of the 2001 Agility World Championships was Team Agility for the Mini dogs (see **Figure 1**). Mini dogs are less than 15 ³/₄" in height and jump 16". Standard course time was set at 42 seconds over 172 yards. The team members representing the USA were lead dog Dustin, handled by Joan Meyer of Kansas, followed by Taz, handled by Jean Lavalley of Tennessee, and then Jag, handled by Erin Schaefer of Pennsylvania. Taking the anchor spot was two-time World Team member Shimmer, handled by Barb Davis of Washington. The USA team drew to run second in this event. This turned out to be in our favor as the USA posted a fast time without course faults, setting the pace for other teams to catch. The best three out of four scores count toward the team total in each of two rounds: Agility and Jumpers.

The opening sequence of jump #1 to the #2 tire to a lateral jump at #3 found most handlers running with their dogs on the left and pushing to the #4 dogwalk. Others chose to run with the dogs on the right and avoid the front cross at the end of the dogwalk. The dogwalk caused a lot of trouble with several dogs missing contacts. Three out of the four dogs on the French team missed a contact here.

Jumps #5 and #6 presented a 270° turn. Most handlers went into the pocket with the dogs on the right due to the solid wing jumps. This allowed handlers to pull the dogs into the #7 collapsed tunnel and avoid an off-course onto the dogwalk. Several dogs went off-course here anyway.

The dogs then entered a five-jump sequence, which proved to be no problem for most teams. Following the collapsed tunnel, the handlers were able to have the dogs on the right to perform jump #8, push the dogs into the serpentine at #9 and #10, and then keep the dogs on the right side to perform jumps #11a and #11b. Several dogs eyed the off-course weave poles, but none took them. In FCI, jump combinations such as #11a and #11b are considered *one* obstacle; if a fault occurs at the second obstacle, the first obstacle must be repeated as well to correct the error.

The dogs picked up speed for a fast approach to the A-frame. Most handlers crossed behind at this point to pull the dogs off the incorrect right tunnel entrance, although several handlers chose to remain on the right of the A-frame to block the potential off-course tunnel entrance. Many teams took the off-course tunnel for elimination or earned a refusal when they ran past the correct tunnel entrance toward the #20 jump. This was by far the most technical section of the course.

Upon exiting the #13 tunnel, the dogs were presented with the off-course A-frame on the way to the teeter. Handlers had many choices in this area. One option was to have the dog on the right for the #14 teeter and then push to #15. Some handlers chose to do the teeter with the dogs on the left and perform a front cross at end of the teeter. Several dogs were called for a teeter fly-off. Some handlers also kept the dogs on the left through #15 and crossed between #15 and #16 for a tighter approach to the #18 weave poles. The weave pole entry was no problem for most teams.

The closing sequence of the #19 broad jump to the #20 jump was a nice, fast finish. The crowd cheered loudly as teams cleared the last obstacles.

The USA team posted an impressive score of zero faults and a time of 112.40 seconds. That score was at the top of the leader board for the rest of the runs and the USA team ended the day in first place with a nice lead into Sunday's Team Jumpers run. The 2000 World Champion Finnish team was second with zero faults and a time of 114.41 seconds. Sweden was third with zero faults and a time of 116.85 seconds.

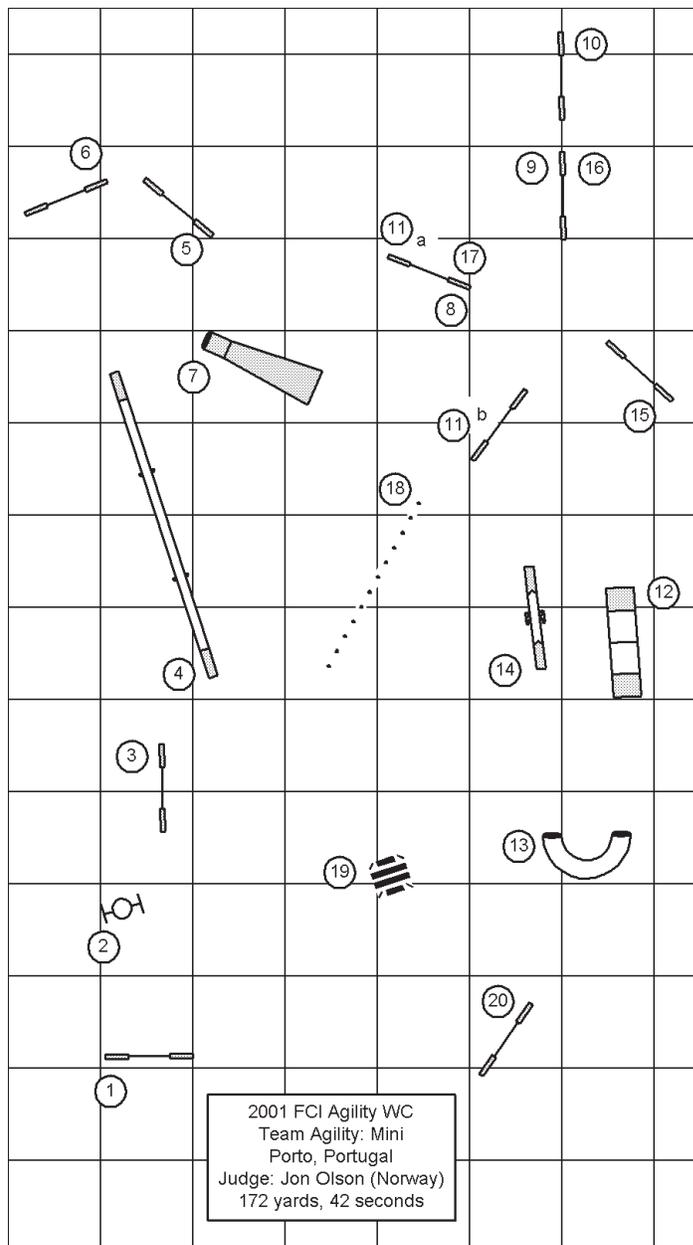


Figure 1



Team Agility: Standard

By Linda Mecklenburg

The USA Mini Team started the weekend by turning in four runs without course faults with a fast total time. This landed them in first place in the Team competition. Now it was the “big” time... the Standard dogs were next to run. Standard dogs are over 15^{3/4}” at the shoulder and jump 26”.

The USA Team had drawn 13th in the running order, giving us plenty of time to study the course as it was built and determine our preliminary strategies. There were three eight-minute walk-throughs and the USA walked with the second group. The entire weekend, we did our initial course planning from the upper tier of seats where the entire course could be seen. Down on the floor, however, the course took on a whole new look. And this year, we had yet a new obstacle to overcome: the jump wings were huge and solid, limiting visibility. Standing at ground level, it was difficult to see from one end of the field to the other because the wings were so prominent. They were also all painted pink, which made them blend together visually. To make matters worse, there were pink banners around the arena. When I walked the course, I felt like a mouse negotiating a pink maze. Every direction I turned, there was another wall of pink.

The SCT was 47 seconds over 191 yards. The opening sequence was not unlike one we might see here in the USA: jump-jump to the far end of a U-shaped tunnel (see **Figure 2**). It was surprising how many dogs had trouble with this sequence. Handlers seemed overly concerned about the first tunnel entrance because many dogs went wide to the right of the #3 entrance. Some nearly went up the dogwalk, which really should not have been a major factor. All of the USA dogs did this sequence with ease. The most common strategy was to lead out to about even with jump #2 with the dog on the right and call the dog over #1 and #2 and into the tunnel.

The next series was the dogwalk-jump-tire-jump-tunnel. Because of the left turn out of the #8 tunnel, it was advantageous to have the dog on the handler’s right at the tunnel entrance. Many handlers were able to race across the end of the arena and accomplish a front cross on the landing side of #7. Others chose to keep their dogs on the left from the dogwalk through the tunnel and rear cross at the tunnel. There were very few spins out of the tunnel even if handlers crossed behind. I suspect there are two reasons for this. First, the tunnel was straight so that the dog could see the handler changing sides behind him. Second, I believe if the front cross was not performed, the dogs landed wide to the left of the tunnel opening (see **Figure 3**) and thus approached #8 from the left on the right lead. To make the entrance to the tunnel, a left turn was required, and the dogs switched to the left lead as they entered. They exited on the left lead, prepared for a left turn.

The loop from the #8 tunnel exit back to the A-frame did not require any fancy moves, but the handler had to be careful. The tunnel positioning forced the handler to go around it, and at best, the action of stepping around the tunnel created some wide turns from #9 to #10. At worst, some dogs perceived that their handlers wanted them to press forward after #9 and went off-course over #7. Such was the unfortunate fate of Steve Frick and his BC, Comet.

Once at the A-frame, most handlers stayed on the dogs’ left and then pushed out to the right over #12; or they crossed behind at the A-frame and pulled over #12, crossing behind again at #13. Both ways worked, but I felt that crossing behind between #12 and #13 helped alert the dog to the left turn after #13 and divert its attention from the #1 off-course jump.

The final handling decision was how to prepare the dog for the right

turn out of the #16 tunnel. Most handlers crossed in front at the exit of the weaves or at the teeter so that the dogs were on the handlers’ left upon exiting the tunnel. Those strategies worked well. The straight-line finish didn’t create too many problems, except that the last jump was a very large extended spread. There were quite a few knocked bars at this obstacle.

The area of the course that created the most faults was not a handling challenge per se. It was an obstacle challenge that no one would have anticipated. There were a huge number of fly-offs at the teeter. In this first run, these were not judgment calls. The dogs were racing up the plank and sailing into space with the board never tipping. As the class progressed, dog after dog had the same problem. The handlers were obviously trying everything they could to slow down the dogs, but the problem continued. This was not an equipment problem, and these dogs were familiar with this style of teeter. In fact, most of the dogs had trained on it the day before. The handlers apparently had never been faced with a problematic teeter because they had no way to control their dogs. In previous years at the WC, it has been common for practice equipment to be available in the warm-up area. This year there were only jumps. So, it was not possible to observe there was a problem and then prep the dog for it on the warm-up equipment. This is, of course, fortunate because it would have given those that ran at the end an unfair advantage. None of the dogs from the USA had a problem with the teeter. Our dogs are quite experienced at unpredictable teeters, and all dogs responded when we asked them to pause.

There was a lot of speculation as to why the teeter problem occurred. Some said the dogs were out of control, or the tunnel was beyond it, and so on. My feeling is that the dogs were quite convinced they were ascending the dogwalk, because the day before during practice, the dogwalk had been located in the same spot. Many handlers had their dogs perform the dogwalk repeatedly. The teeter was off in a corner. I think the dogs that had practiced on Friday simply believed they were ascending the dogwalk because it was in the same location as the day before. A similar situation arose two years ago. During Friday practice, the teeter was set up against one side of the arena and we did not have a dogwalk available. We probably overused the teeter during practice. The next day the dogwalk was located where the teeter had been. Two of the USA dogs went two-thirds up the ramp and stopped, obviously expecting it to tip. The take-home message is be sure you are able to control your dog on the equipment, and be cautious about repetitive training on-site the day before a competition.

For the USA, Linda Kipp and Jessie led off with a clean run to set the pace. Jessie “stuck” the teeter very impressively, sliding down it to a steady two-on, two-off position that delighted the crowd. I ran with Awesome next and was also clean. Steve Frick and Comet had an unfortunate off-course, as I mentioned earlier, putting the pressure on Elicia Calhoun and Suni. Only the best three scores count toward the team total, so we could still have a zero fault score if Suni was clean. Elicia successfully negotiated the course and turned in our third clean run. Much to our surprise, the USA soon was posted at the top of the leader board! With almost half of the teams still left to run, the USA team went to watch the rest of the teams compete. At the end of the class, the USA was still in first place with zero faults and a total time of 113.76 seconds. The team from Norway was in second place with zero faults and 115.30 seconds, with third place held by Switzerland, also with zero faults and a time of 115.44 seconds. Only four of the 24 teams had zero faults. The British, competing for their first time at the WC, were in a

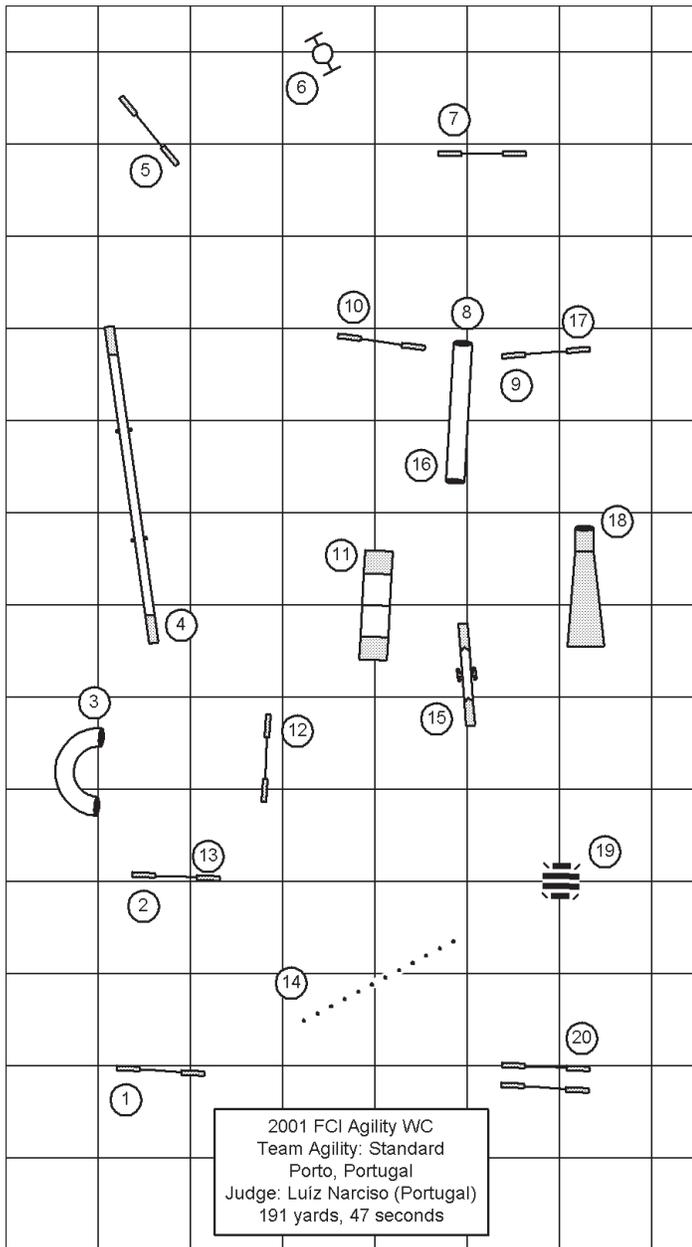


Figure 2

very respectable fifth place with 5 faults in a time of 117.62 seconds.

After the morning's competition, both USA teams were in first place. The afternoon would be the start of the Individual competitions.

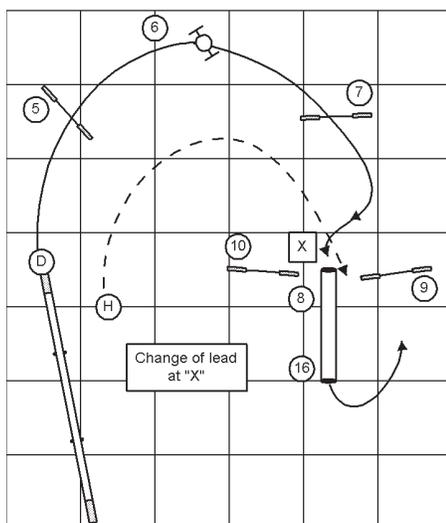


Figure 3

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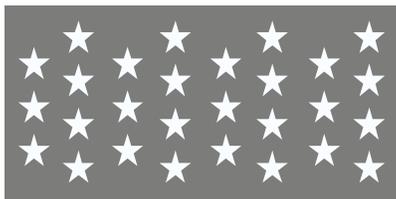
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Individual Jumping: Mini

By Barbara Lombard

The first round of Saturday afternoon was Individual Jumpers for the Mini dogs (see **Figure 4**). Starting out for the USA was Taz, handled by Jean Lavalley. Taz is a phenomenally fast blue merle Sheltie. Unfortunately, Jean and Taz picked up a fault but still finished the course with an impressive time. Next came Jag, handled by Erin Schaefer. Jag is a feisty, fast little tri-colored Sheltie who lived up to our expectations and had a impressive clean run with a time earning him 10th place in the round. Following Jag was Dustin, a gorgeous sable Sheltie, handled by Joan Meyer, who had the run of his life. Dustin posted another fast, clean run for a fantastic finish of 14th place. Last to run was Shimmer, handled by Barb Davis. Shimmer, a blue merle Sheltie, turned in a smooth Jumpers run with a nice time.

This course was 159 yards with a SCT of 35 seconds. The opening sequence started the dogs fast as they had to master the #1 jump to the #2 tire, and then over the #3 jump. Most handlers ran with their dogs on the right from the start, giving them more control after the #3 jump to negotiate the correct #4 tunnel entry. A few handlers chose to lead out with the dogs on the left and push into the left-sided tunnel entry. Several dogs felt compelled to take the off-course tunnel entrance. Barb Davis was able to pull Shimmer off the wrong tunnel entrance but lost time in the process.

Upon exiting the tunnel, the dogs had a quick set of five jumps setting them up for a fast 90° weave pole entry. Jumps #5 thru #9 were handled with the dog on the handler's right. The big decision was how to manage the weave pole entry. Several handlers chose to do a front cross after #9 if they were able to beat their dogs through the jumping sequence. Even if they couldn't beat the dogs, some handlers still chose to use the front cross to serpentine the dogs around and set up the weave entry, though it cost time. The blisteringly fast poodle from Russia that ultimately won was handled this way. The USA team members all chose to let the dog find the entry independently off their right with just a subtle flip and change of lead for help. They then crossed behind and picked up the dogs on the left. This worked well for all of them.

Next came a straight line: jump #11 to broad jump #12, to a sharp 90° turn into the #13 collapsed tunnel. Many dogs picked up too much speed to find the collapsed tunnel entrance effectively. Jean Lavalley with Taz ran into this problem when Taz's speed carried her past the entrance and earned a refusal. Several handlers opted for a front cross after the broad jump to help the dogs.

Jump #14 to tunnel #15 began a fast, winding finish of several jumps to the end. Yet again, we were delighted with the different handling styles of many different countries and teams through this section. Front crosses, rear crosses, and crosses after the dogs landed were all performed with precision and ease through jumps #16 to #20. Several handlers did a front cross between #17 and #18 for a fast, smooth finish.

Jumpers is a fast-paced, exciting event and the world-class handlers put on a great show for the spectators to watch and appreciate.

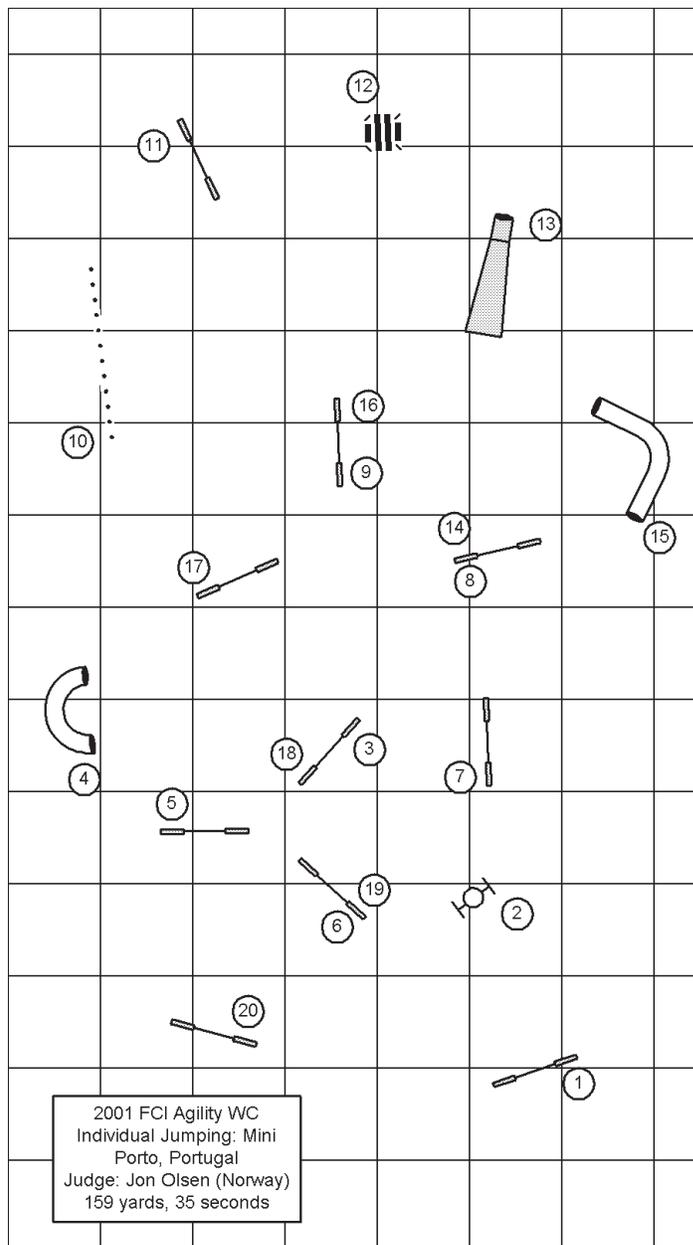


Figure 4

Photos: (Left) The Finnish Mini team celebrates another WC team win. (Right) Elena Klokova and her Miniature Poodle take the gold in the Individual Mini competition.



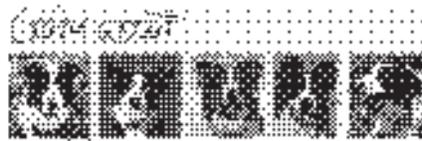
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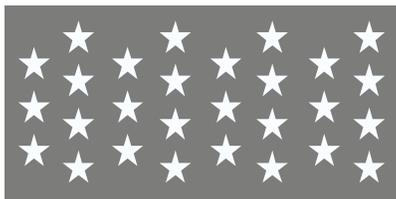
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Individual Jumping: Standard

By Linda Mecklenburg

This was the first of two rounds in the Individual competition for the Standard dogs (see **Figure 5**). The SCT was 35 seconds over 164 yards. The course began with an 80' diagonal run across the arena. It is difficult to appreciate how spread out these courses were unless you ran them. The opening sequence, obstacles #1-#5, would extend from one corner of the field to the other in a typically sized ring in the USA. Most handlers began their runs as I did, with a lead-out to jump #3. When I was in position, I was about 50' from my dog. Once again, the solid jump wings were a concern. **Figure 6** shows how the wings blocked the dog's field of view. To stay visible to my dog, I had to walk the path from *H* to *H2*. Once I reached *H2*, I quickly moved across to *H3* because as I was moving, Awesome could not see me. I have not trained out-of-sight stays; and even with some practice in the warm-up area, Awesome seemed to feel that I had left him behind and wanted to break his stay when he lost sight of me.

The opening sequence was not difficult except that the dog landed off #4 staring at the off-course tunnel entrance. Quite a few dogs had trouble with this tunnel, which was black. Although the dogs had been through this same tunnel in the first round, and at practice the day before, many entered and then turned around and came back out. By the time this course was run, it was getting dark outside and the arena lights on that end of the field were not that bright so the tunnel openings were *very* dark. We have seen similar problems with dark tunnels here in the USA; dogs that are used to them understand how to *feel* their way through. It was obvious that some of these dogs had never been asked to execute a tunnel under these conditions. This course, as opposed to the run in the morning, required the dog to turn away from the side of the handler upon entering the tunnel. Most handlers sent their dogs to this tunnel off the right side. But the tunnel turned right. If the dog was expecting the curve of the tunnel to arc toward the handler's side, and the dog turned left in the dark, it came to a dead end. Many dogs then took the shortest route back to the light, earning refusals. Most dogs were able to do the tunnel when sent in from the handler's left side, but by then any chance for a medal was long gone.

Once the dogs were successfully through the tunnel, handlers chose to either draw the dogs across #6 and cross in front between #6 and #7, or they kept the dogs on the left and rear crossed on the take-off side of #8. I chose to do the rear cross because I wanted my dog to carry a bit wide out of the tunnel and set up a nice line across #6-#8. I was worried that if I tried to front cross, I might create too much of a flat right-to-left approach to #6, which would make the approach to #7 difficult. I even considered the risk that the #13 tunnel would be more inviting than the jump.

The next section of the course was probably the most critical in deciding the outcome. The most popular strategy was for the handler to cross in front of the dog on the landing side of jump #10, picking up the dog on the left for #11 and #12. This eliminated the tunnel as an off-course risk and set up the dog for a right turn to the #13 tunnel. It also allowed the handler to easily cross in front at the tunnel so that the dog exited on the handler's right. Steve Frick did a blind cross at the exit while Comet was in the tunnel. Elicia Calhoun crossed in front at the entrance before Suni entered the tunnel. The other option was to keep the dog on the right through the chute-#10-#11-#12, crossing behind at #12. This was less popular as the rear cross could increase the risk of a knocked bar; and if the dog was on the right as it was airborne over #12, it was tricky to cross in front before the dog exited the #13 tunnel.

Nancy Gyes, our prime contender for an Individual medal, chose the front cross. Unfortunately, she ran into problems as Riot rocketed straight out of the chute. Nancy couldn't get into position quickly enough to rotate to her right and cue Riot to the left turn over jump #10. It was close—had the footing been grass and had Riot had better visibility of Nancy (Riot momentarily lost sight of Nancy behind the solid wings), she might have been able to cut back even though she had overrun to the right of the jump. With the carpeting though, there was no saving it, and Riot squeaked past the right wing of the jump to earn 5 faults.

I ran at the end of the class, so I benefited from watching almost 100 dogs before me. I had planned the rear cross at #12 because I knew I had no hope of getting the front cross at #10 done, especially since I planned a rear cross at #8, which would put me even further behind my dog. My strategy was to go deep with my dog to #10 and wrap him around the jump off my right. I knew I'd have to work to pull him off the tunnel and probably could not move forward until I felt the off-course danger had passed. That would be okay because I planned to pull him left after the tire rather than sending him forward over #12, and I could do that from behind. My goal was to create a right turn and change of lead *before* he got to #12 to produce a rounder jump and tighter turn back to the tunnel. After watching many runs, I was convinced this was a better strategy than the front cross for my dog and me. Most handlers that did the front cross found their dogs catapulted straight over #10-#12 off extended strides with flat jumping trajectories. This made an already challenging 180° turn more difficult as the dogs landed some distance off #12, in the wrong direction, and then had to make a tight turn on the carpet. For the most part, the carpet was not a problem; but on this turn, many dogs had difficulty getting a grip on the surface and there were wide, scrambling turns with precious time lost. This wasn't necessarily predictable during walk-throughs.

Although it was difficult by USA standards, few dogs had a problem with the weave entry. All that remained was the closing line. Most handlers made this look easy, including all the USA handlers except me. They sprinted down the line of jumps on the dog's left the entire way. I was not so graceful. I was concerned that Awesome would land long off the #17 extended spread and have difficulty turning sharply left to #18. I worried that if I just kept running forward, as many of the other handlers did successfully, he would follow my motion and run wide to the right of #18. I decided not to drive forward past #18 until I knew he'd made the turn to it. If I did that, I had no hope of outrunning him around the left of the last two jumps. So, I was forced to cross behind at #19. When I was planning my course from the upper seats, I planned to cross on the landing side of #19, but once on the field it seemed more logical to cross on the take-off side, although there was a risk that the dog would pull to the right. I watched several handlers do this cross smoothly. When it came time for me to do it... well, I botched it. I have not watched the video yet, but I hesitated just a moment too long before I crossed, and indeed, Awesome turned back to the right because I was so far behind him. I was in trouble then. I tried (at least, I thought I tried) to get him to turn back to the jump, but he ended up turning all the way around. I had to step in on his left to get him over the last jump. He *almost* missed the jump. It wasn't pretty, and it cost considerable time, probably dashing our chances of a medal, but it was clean.

Three out of four USA handlers turned in clean runs with the best finisher being Steve Frick and Comet, who had a super run in his trademark

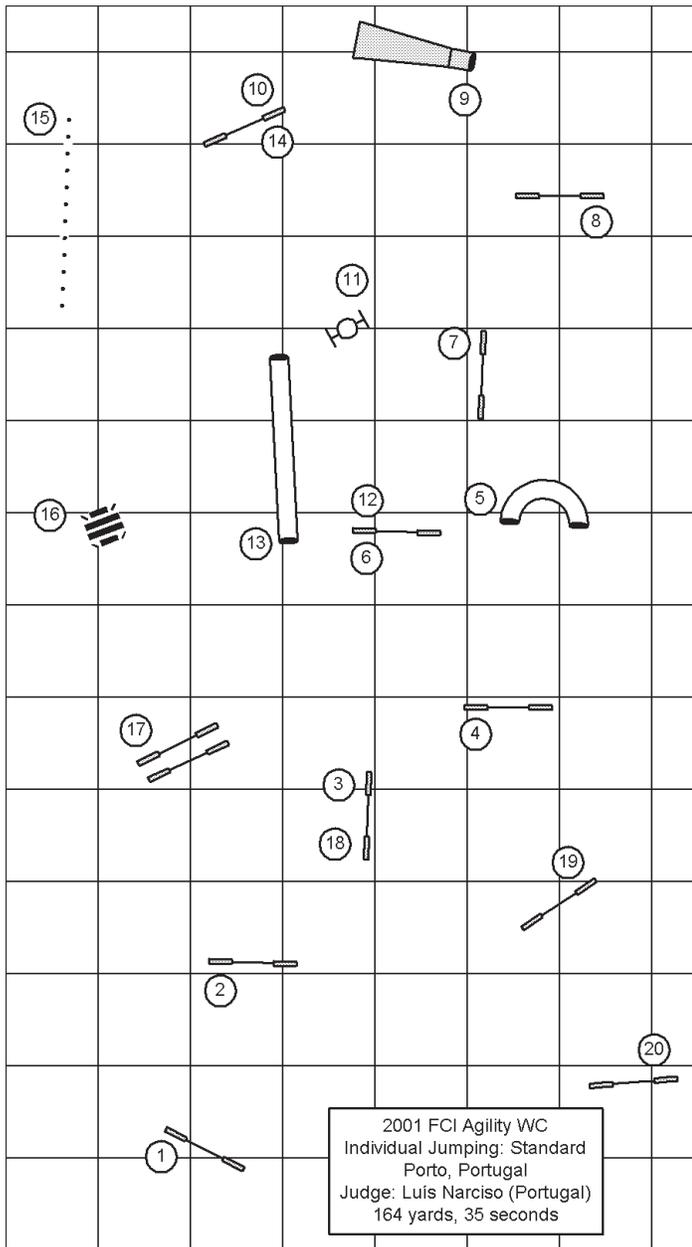


Figure 5

cool, calm style with a time of 30 seconds. That was good for 7th place in that round. Awesome was 23rd with a time of 30.98 seconds, and Elicia and Suni were 26th with a time of 31.06 seconds. Nancy Gyes and Riot had had the unfortunate refusal therefore were out of contention for an Individual medal.

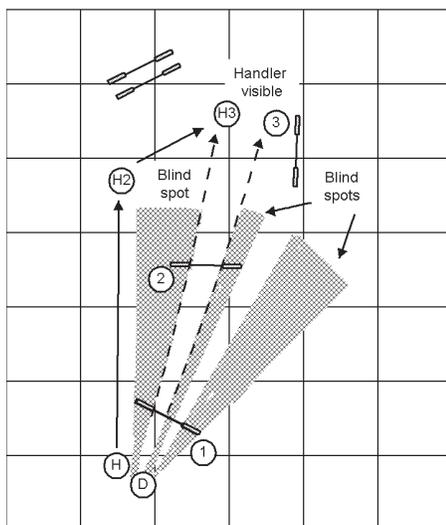


Figure 6



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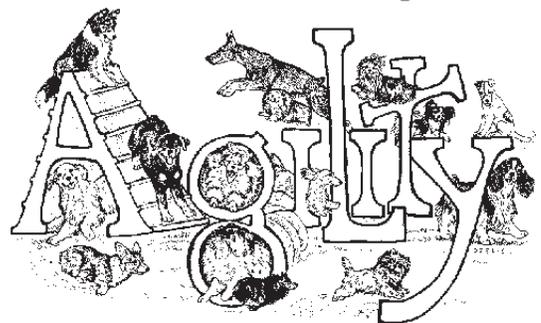
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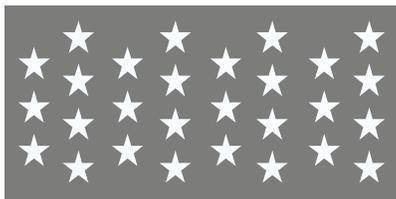
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Clean Run



Team Jumping: Mini

By Barbara Lombard

The USA Mini Team was in first place going into the Jumpers round. Following Saturday's spectacular Agility runs, the USA supporters were anxiously awaiting today's performance. The course (see **Figure 7**) had a SCT of 35 seconds over 164 yards. It started with a fast sequence of jumps in an offset line. It wasn't until after jump #4 that handlers had to negotiate the first real turn of the course. Most chose to run with their dogs on the left through jumps #1-#4, making a 90° turn to pick up jump #5. A few dogs took the #15 tunnel for an off-course when handlers ran them on the right. After jump #5, several handlers either did a front cross or a cross behind between #5 and #6 for a nice entry to the #7 collapsed tunnel. If the rear cross was performed late, however, it was possible for dogs to go off-course into the weave poles. Faced with two tunnel openings, a few dogs chose the off-course #17 tunnel for a fast elimination.

Handlers and dogs then faced the first real handling dilemma, negotiating the #7 collapsed tunnel exit into the #8 weave poles, which were set parallel to the collapsed tunnel. This was a difficult weave entry and was complicated by the background; when exiting the collapsed tunnel dogs saw a wall of Eukanuba banners which were the same color as the jump standards and equipment. There were two possibilities for this entry. One was to have the dog on the right and push out enough to wrap the dog into the offside entry. This got the dogs into the poles faster, but required an awkward exit from the poles. (The entire USA team chose this strategy.). The other possibility was to do a quick front cross at the poles and hope for the dog to turn tightly into the entry.

The weave pole exit was tricky. The dog needed to be on the handler's right to do the pinwheel of jumps #9-#11. Unfortunately, Erin Schaefer, running Jag with the weave poles on her right, could not keep control as he exited the poles, and Jag backjumped #12. Other handlers had problems with this push as well. Handlers that had spent the time to do the front cross at the weave entry were in good position for a front cross at the exit to prepare for the pinwheel. Several handlers kept their dogs on the right through the pinwheel and crossed behind at jump #12 and again at #14. The crowd was entertained with many different handling strategies through this six-jump sequence. The main theme through all the jumps was speed and consistency.

After the dogs landed off jump #14, they were presented with yet another off-course at jump #3, and due to built-up speed, several dogs took this obstacle. Handlers had to decide whether to pull up short and let the dogs take the #15 tunnel entrance on their own or go deeper into the pocket to ensure the proper entry. If the handlers went too far into the pocket, they had to scramble to meet the dogs at the exit to perform a much-needed front or blind cross before jump #16, which led directly into the proper entry of the #17 tunnel. After having beautiful, clean runs up to that point, several dogs took the off-course tunnel entrance when their handlers tried to rear cross at jump #16.

Upon exiting the #17 tunnel, the closing sequence of the #18 broad jump to the #19 tire to the #20 jump was handled in fast style with dogs either on the right or left of the handlers.

The teams ran in reverse order of placement from Saturday. Since the USA placed first in Round 1, they would run last of all the Mini teams. With 2nd place Finland posting a spectacular total time of 92.17 seconds just before them, the USA team members knew they needed to buckle down and run fast, yet clean. Under pressure, they did an awesome job with three

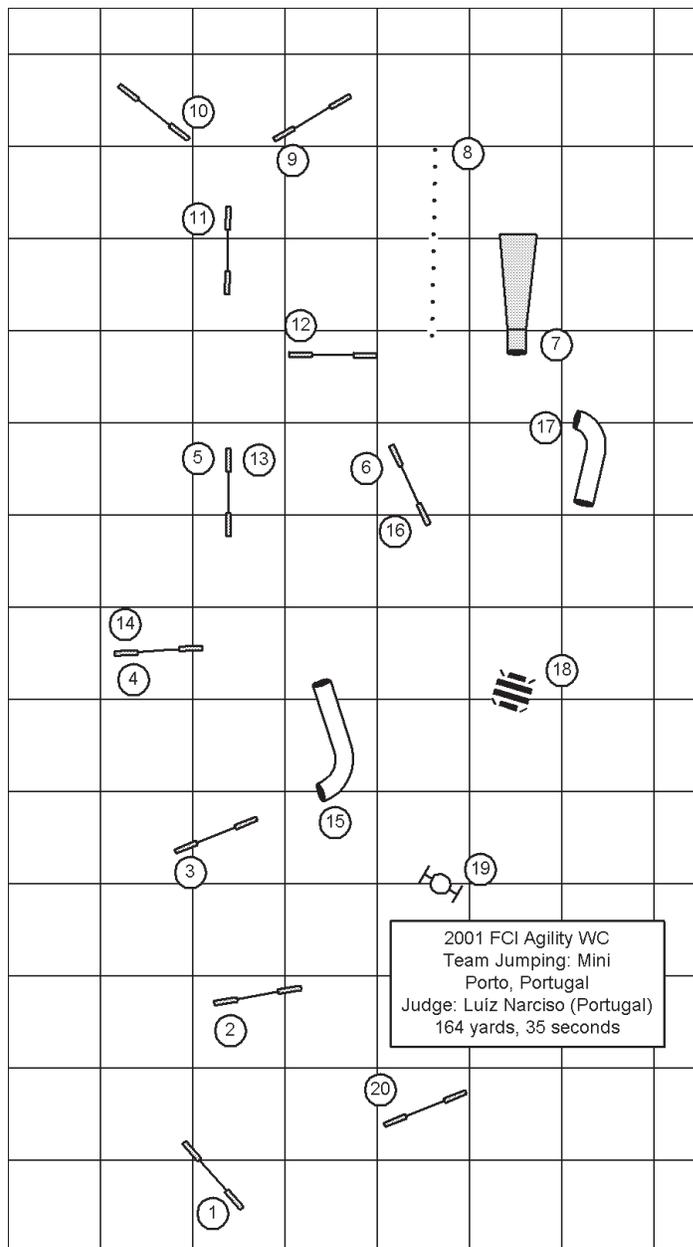


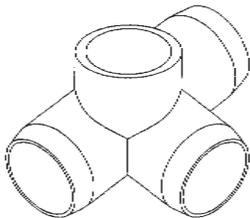
Figure 7

dogs running clean with a total time of 95.72 seconds. The USA lost a little ground, however, and Finland edged them out to become the 2001 World Champions with a total time of 206.58 seconds and zero faults. The USA Mini Team was not far behind with a total time of 208.12 and zero faults for a silver medal finish. The bronze medal winning Swedish Team also had zero faults but was a bit slower with a total time of 226.68 seconds.

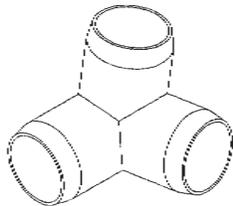


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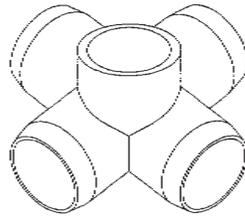
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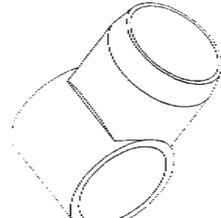
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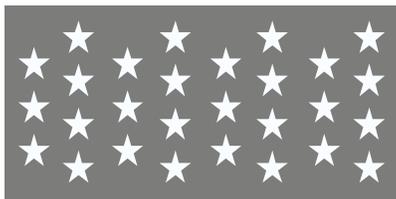
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Team Jumping: Standard

By Linda Mecklenburg

The USA Mini Team had just won the silver medal. It was now the big dogs' turn to strut their stuff. Last year the USA entered this round in third place and fell to fourth, out of the medals. Three of us, Linda Kipp, Elicia Calhoun, and I were on that team. Although we were in first place going into this round, we were careful not to be too confident. We were fully aware that *anything* could happen and this course was no walk in the park. If the USA was going to get a medal, we would have to earn it.

The SCT was 37 seconds over 179 yards. The course didn't waste any time getting tricky (see **Figure 8**). The weave pole entry, with the collapsed tunnel looming ahead, was a source of faults for many teams. Most handlers chose to lead out beyond #2 and push their dogs to #3 off the right side, or do a lead-out pivot. Then, they crossed in front of the dogs on the landing side of #4 to wrap the dogs around the right to the weaves. This worked well for most. Several handlers tried to flip the dogs to the poles off the right side and cross behind to help pull the dogs into the poles, but this resulted in many more dogs going for the chute.

The 180° turn at the end of the arena was not a problem. However, it was a *long* run from #6b to the left end of the tunnel. Handlers had to trust their dogs would jump #6b and get moving, or they had difficulty signaling the correct opening of the #8 tunnel. Handlers who got behind lost considerable time since the further back the handler was, the more the dog pulled left, away from the tunnel. For those concerned about the off-course, this was good, but it did use lots of time. Some handlers mistimed the dogs' turn away from them back to the right, incurring refusals.

The next sequence, #9-#11, doesn't look too challenging on the course diagram. However, when handlers turned toward the #9 tire, they were faced with a wall of pink. It was visually disturbing and it created uncertainty. It was difficult to confidently send the dogs to #10 without doing a mental check that this was indeed the correct jump. There was very little room between the wings of #10 and #12. Some handlers opted to have the dog on the right as it exited the tunnel, which gave them a bit of a head start for the tight squeeze. This was a good strategy because if the handlers were behind the dogs as they jumped #10, they risked that the dogs would push forward toward the off-course tunnel opening as the handlers pushed forward to fit between the wings. Other handlers chose to keep the dogs on the left out of the #8 tunnel, and then cross behind at #10 to pull the dogs to the left end of the #11 tunnel. It was difficult to squeeze between the wings with this method, so many handlers simply trusted their dogs would find the tunnel and stayed on the landing side of #12. When the dogs exited the tunnel, they were faced with many options. Several dogs were so confused by the proximity of all the jump standards that they jumped the air in the space between the wings of #10 and #12 as if there were a bar present.

The #12 and #13 jumps were spaced comparatively tightly and some dogs were caught off guard. Handlers still could not relax. The next major challenge was the 180° turn from #14 to #15. It was tricky getting the dogs past the weave poles and to the chute, no matter how this was handled. Some handlers stayed on the dogs' left for this section, others crossed in front on the landing side of #15 so that the dogs were on the handlers' left on entering the chute. The handlers could breathe easily for a brief instant once the dogs were safely in the chute.

When the dogs exited the chute, they were faced with four options: a tire, a jump, and two tunnel openings. The correct tunnel opening was dead ahead if the dogs went straight. There were some off-courses here,

but mostly the set-up resulted in time lost. The tire and jump proved not to be much of a factor, except that they hindered the handler's ability to move if on the dog's left for the collapsed tunnel.

Once into the #17 tunnel, there were just three jumps remaining. Looking at the course, you might assume this line was most logically handled by picking up the dog on the right side and just running straight out on the left of the jumps. The tire was in an awkward position, however, making that option less appealing. So, most handlers ran this line with the dogs on the left, the slower handlers crossing behind at #19 and the speedier ones just running ahead of the dogs.

The USA Standard Team was seeded to run last, so we had a long wait before it would be our turn. I was trying to watch the last couple of teams before us, but it was tough to do that because of the way the on-deck area was set up. But, it seemed to me that I saw at least two handlers on each of the two teams just before us incur faults. I knew that meant those teams no longer could have a zero fault total for the two rounds. I was surprised: I checked and double-checked with Dan Dege, our Team Coach, because I couldn't believe it. All of a sudden, the USA strategy needed to be *go clean* and not take as many risks.

It was time to start. I watched as lead handler Linda Kipp walked away from Jessie at the start line. I always get more nervous watching my teammates run than running myself. Linda was just about where she wanted to be when Jessie broke. We all had a moment of panic, but Linda reacted quickly and off they went. Linda did a front cross at #4 and easily sent Jessie into the weave poles off her left side. That was about all I saw... I was getting ready for my run. But I know she finished clean.

I had planned to lead out beyond #2 and push to #3, which I felt would be the fastest. But now I was worried that it was not worth the risk. It was a long way to lead out and there was the issue of losing the dog behind the wings. And, Awesome often cannonballs over the first couple of jumps, so I worried that he might slip past me or even run into my leg. It was possible he'd actually turn *too* quickly after #2 and that would ultimately result in him landing beyond the plane of the weave pole entry after #4. So, I changed my plan and went for the slower, but safer option which was for me to simply lead out to the right of jump #2. From there, I felt I could control his path to #3 with the least risk.

I watched him the entire way and he stood up as I walked, which is something he's never done before. I guess he *knew*. I released him pretty quickly after that because I worried he'd move ahead and be too close to jump #1. As predicted, he flew out over jumps #1 and #2 and I barely even got him turned to #3. I crossed behind at #3, and after #4, just told him to *Weave* and he found the entry himself. Then I "relaxed" until the #8 tunnel. Somehow, I found myself right with him as he entered that tunnel, and I had to backpedal pretty quickly because I'd planned to pick him up on my right side for the tire. I did not expect to be so deep to the tunnel; I had imagined being behind him and sending him to the tunnel, not escorting him. I guess I had a bit of extra adrenalin boosting me along. From there, it was smooth sailing until the closing. By this time he was flying... while he was in the #17 tunnel, I waited for him near the right wing of #18. He shot out of that tunnel and was staring directly at the tire. I had to call (yell!) several times before he was convinced to pull right to #18, but finally he did and we finished the course clean.

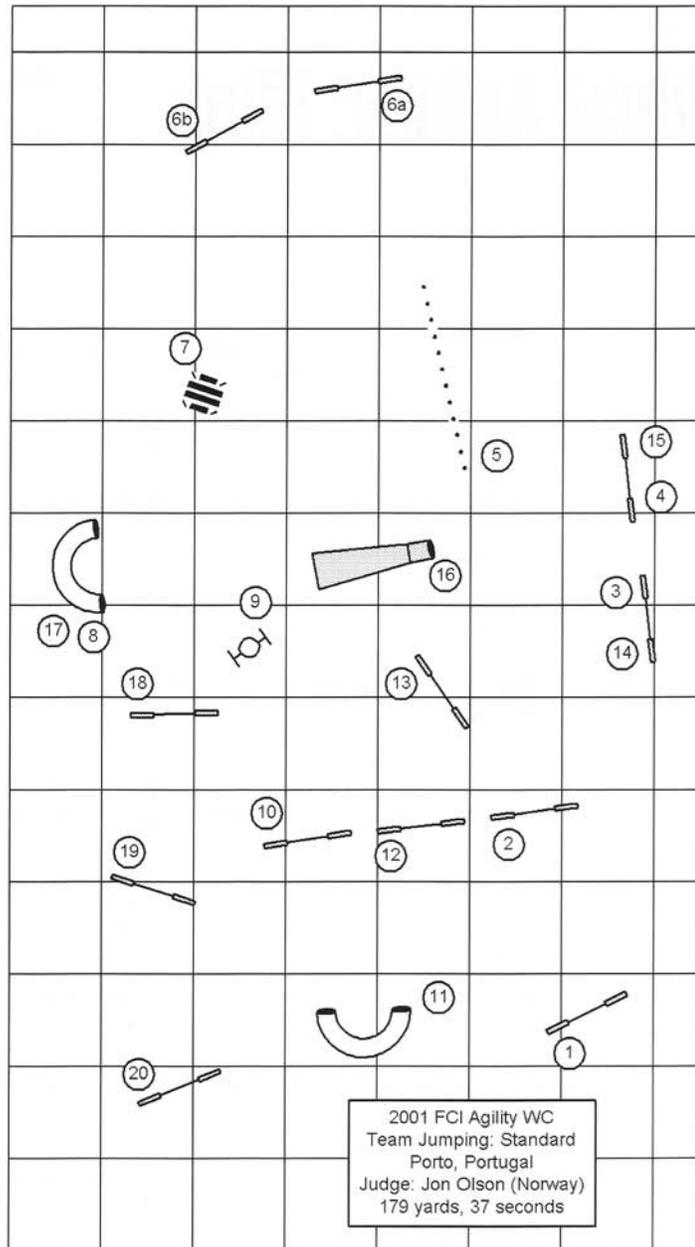


Figure 8

Steve Frick and Comet were next to go. Only the top three scores count, so we just needed one more faultless run. Steve ran the course in his usual casual but deliberate fashion and turned in the final clean run we needed for a total team score of zero faults. Almost immediately, the USA was posted to the top of the leader board. The USA team had won! Elicia and Suni still had not run. Elicia wasn't sure what to do and looked at the judge who shrugged as if to say, "what the heck?" So, as the crowd cheered, Elicia started her run. I'm sure it was difficult for her to stay focused as her teammates were celebrating. Suni had a couple errors, but it didn't matter. They finished the course in grand style and joined us in the celebration!

The USA Standard Team had become the 2001 FCI World Champions. In six years of participation at the WC, this was the first time the Standard dogs had ever medalled. The USA team was the only team to finish two rounds with a combined score of zero faults. The time was 216.88 seconds. The silver medalists were the team from Austria with 5 faults and a total time of 225.07 seconds. Spain was next in line with 5 faults and a total time of 229.38 seconds. Congratulations to all my teammates, to Dan Dege, our Team Coach, and Sharon Anderson, our Team Captain, and to the other two teams that rose to the top of the competition that weekend.

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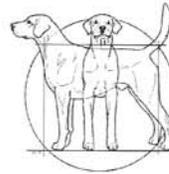
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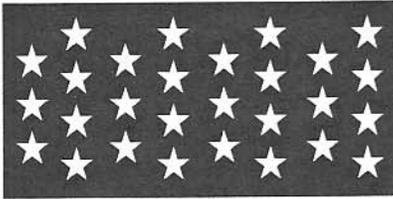
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Individual Agility: Mini

By Barbara Lombard

At the start of the Individual runs, the USA fans were still celebrating the gold and silver medals the teams had won. From now on, whatever happened was icing on the cake! The crowd rose to their feet as each USA dog and handler came to the start line. We just couldn't get enough agility! Yet again, we were treated to outstanding performances by all USA Mini Team members. In this run, with nothing to lose, they were pushing with all they had. Some picked up faults as a result, but they were still great runs in the eyes of their supporters and fellow teammates.

This course (see **Figure 9**) had a SCT of 44 seconds over 175 yards. Handlers were greeted with what seemed like an easy opening sequence of jump #1 to jump #2, and then onto the #3 A-frame. Problems started after the completion of the A-frame for several dogs with running contacts. The handlers' body position on the right of the A-frame caused several of these dogs to take the off-course broad jump, which was parallel to the #4 tire. This was unexpected.

After the A-frame, the #4 tire came next, with a 90° turn heading into the #5 through #9 sequence—jump, pinwheel, and then back to the teeter. Several handlers did either a front cross or a rear cross between jumps #5 and #6 to pull the dogs off the looming #15 off-course tunnel. Unfortunately, many handlers lost their dogs to this tunnel-sucking machine and earned an off-course in the process. Those handlers who kept their dogs with them were able to pick up speed through the pinwheel with their dogs on the right.

Throughout the entire event, the teeter produced some spectacular fly-offs when handlers chose not to work the contact area, going for speed instead. This course was no exception. Several handlers did a rear cross at the teeter, slowing the dogs down enough to make the contact. Other handlers got in a front cross after the #8 jump and handled the teeter smoothly on the way to the #10 tunnel.

Upon exiting the tunnel, most handlers had enough confidence not to go too deep into the pocket to pick up the dogs. They then started the next fast sequence of jumps to the dogwalk. With the dogs on the left, handlers made a quick dash to the #12 broad jump to the #13 and #14 jumps, keeping in mind the #15 tunnel entrance. Handlers only had to make a small pull in the correct direction and the dogs entered the correct side while still maintaining their speed. Unfortunately, due to late calls, several dogs earned an off-course by taking the wrong tunnel entrance. Handlers only had to step back slightly to pick up the dogs for the #16 dogwalk approach.

Speed and the anticipated weave entry at #17 created some missed down contacts on the dogwalk. Handlers were faced with two choices: running the dogwalk with the dog on the right, then pulling the dog to the left and flipping it into the sharp weave entry; or running with the dog on the left and then pushing the dog out far enough so that it saw the weave entry. This was a challenge for several teams, including the USA. Several larger dogs were slipping and sliding here due to speed, and missed the entry.

At the weave pole exit, handlers did either a front cross or a rear cross at the #18 jump to set up for a fast finish over the #19-#20 jump sequence.

The USA dog and handler teams turned in excellent runs yet again. Erin Schaefer with Jag placed 9th in this round. Jag was clean over both rounds, ending up 6th overall. The other USA handlers, Joan Meyer with Dustin, Jean Lavalley with Taz, and Barb Davis with Shimmer all had wonderful fast runs, but due to technical errors did not place in the top 20.

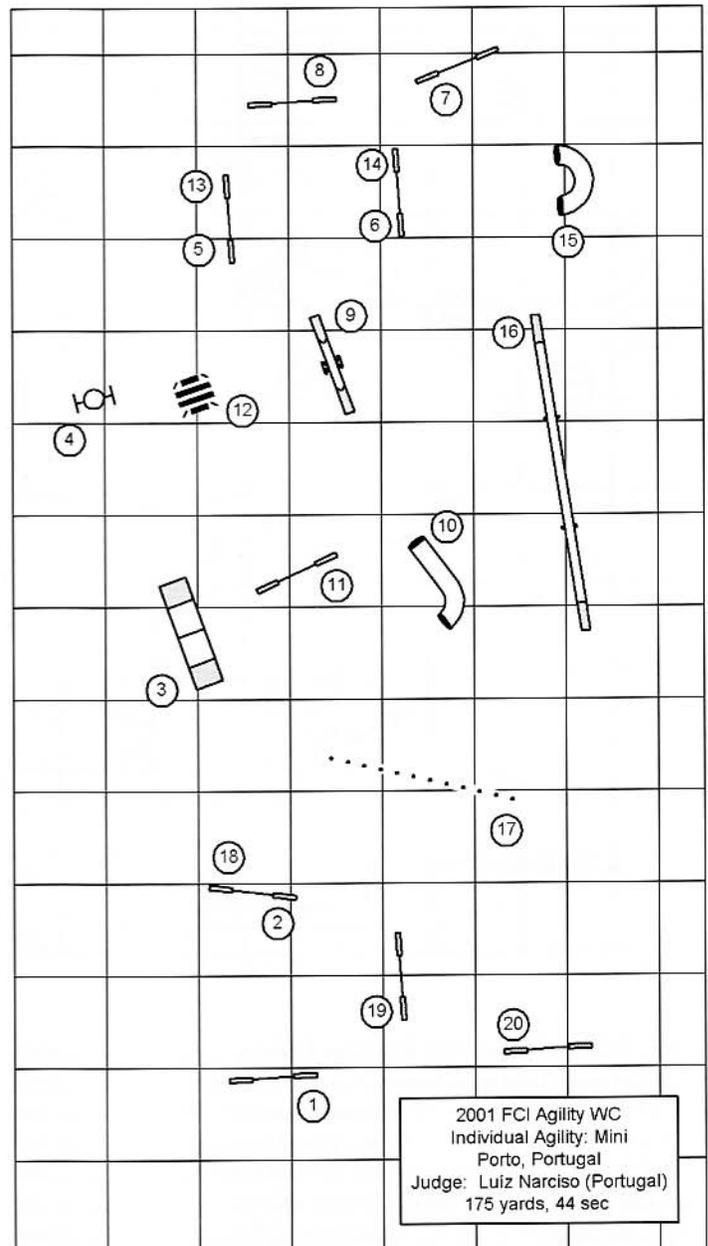


Figure 9

The USA Mini Team proved yet again that they have what it takes to be winners. They all performed to the best of their ability, and the fans applauded each and every one of them. Thanks for the great show.

The gold medal winner in the Individual Mini competition was Bidah, an unbelievable apricot Poodle from Russia handled by Elena Klokova. Rumor has it that Elena said she learned everything from *Clean Run*. Next was Slyvain Tacquemin of France with a Pyrenean Sheepdog named Mira, followed by Tumanova Svetlana of Russia with a Spitz named Osborn.

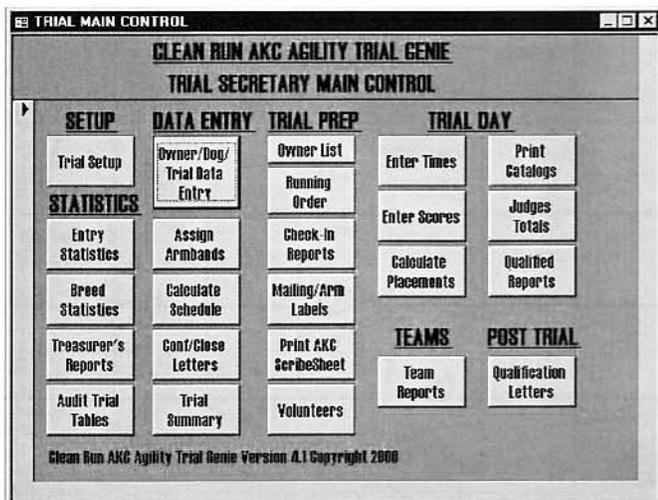
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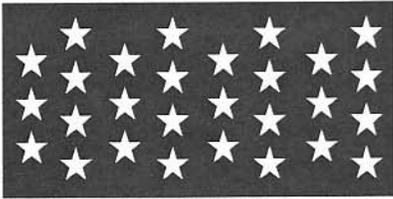
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Individual Agility: Standard

By Linda Mecklenburg

This was the grand finale of the weekend. The Individual medals for the Standard dogs were on the line. The SCT was 40 seconds on this 183 yard course (see **Figure 10**). Most handled the opening sequence with the dog on the right and pulled the dog to the left entrance of the tunnel. There were several off-courses over the broad jump here. A few bold handlers crossed in front of their dogs at the end of the chute and picked them up on the left side for the tunnel approach. Nearly all handlers ran the teeter on the dogs' right. Some were overly cautious at the teeter with the fly-offs from the previous day still fresh in their minds. However, most dogs had no trouble.

Christine Charpentier's two time World Champion BC, Mac, had faulted earlier in the Individual Jumpers round so was not going to be able to repeat the feat a third year in a row. She was just going for an all-out super run. She pushed Mac a bit more than I've seen her do when she was still in contention and the judge called a fly-off on the teeter. It was a close call, and I don't think Christine even knew the call was made. The French fans voiced their disagreement so loudly that Christine pulled up after a few more obstacles, apparently concerned that perhaps there was a problem with the course because of all the noise. Unfortunately, she did not complete the run. It was a shame because everyone in the stands wanted to be treated to yet another awesome agility run.

The tire-jump-jump pinwheel leading to the A-frame was straightforward enough. Most dogs landed off #7 headed away from the course, and the turn back to #8 was a scrambling one for many. With the upcoming challenge of the #10 tunnel, some handlers chose to cross in front on the landing side of #8 to put themselves on the dogs' left at the A-frame. Other handlers crossed on the downside of the A-frame, including Nancy Gyes and Elicia Calhoun. Suni missed the A-frame contact, but it was not due to the cross. Elicia was going for it and took risks, really pushing for a medal. At the A-frame, it just did not pay off. I was worried that this cross might slow my dog or that I would lose my orientation so I chose to keep Awesome on my left and run straight at the correct entrance. For my dog, I felt that would be fastest. Steve Frick, who was sitting in 7th place going into the round and had a good chance for a medal, had a problem at this section of the course. Steve opted to do the front cross as Comet descended the A-frame. Just as he finished his rotation, Comet was off the A-frame and into the wrong end of the tunnel. Unfortunately, that ended any hope for a USA medal in the Individual competition.

Once out of tunnel, there was a loop of broad jump-jump-jump in a tight arc leading to the weave poles. The position of the #4 tunnel made this sequence awkward. Most of the handlers crossed in front on the landing side of #13 to aid the dog with the weave entry. It seemed logical to handle the jumps from a distance and have the tunnel between the dog and handler on the way to #13, but few handlers took this risk. With the two tunnel openings inviting the dog, it was not worth it. Once out of the weave poles there were back-to-back 180° turns. The jumps were very closely spaced, forcing tight turns, but this did not seem to create a problem for the dogs. The weave poles were inviting after #17, and although a side change wasn't necessary for the closing, several handlers crossed in front on the landing side of #17 to remove them from consideration. After the race down the dogwalk, just two jumps remained!

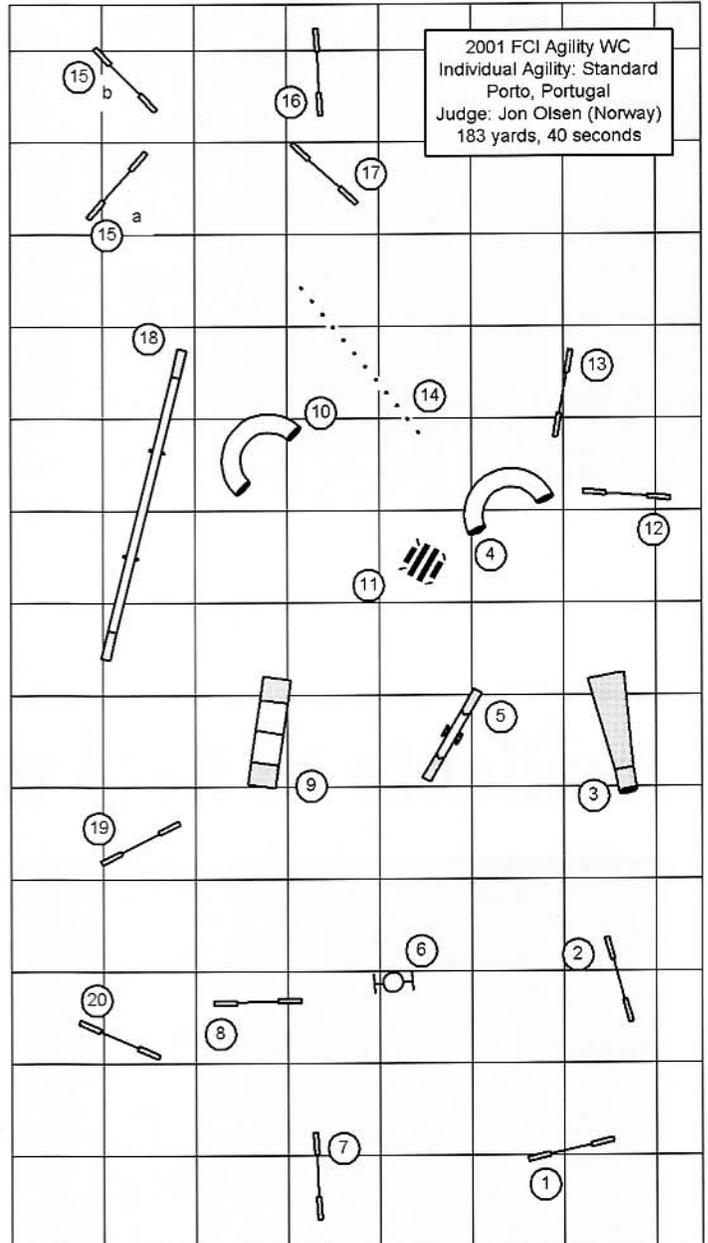


Figure 10

Nancy Gyes and Riot had a refusal in the first round of this competition, so could not hope to medal. But now we were looking forward to watching Nancy and Riot go for the gusto and show the world what she and her dog could really do! We were not disappointed. Nancy set up Riot for the first three obstacles in as straight a line as possible. With no wasted yardage between obstacles and Riot's amazing ground speed, Riot finished the course clean in a rousing time of 34.75 seconds. This was a super-fast run and was the second fastest clean run on the course. It was exciting to watch. Riot's run was deserving of a medal, but unfortunately, the scores from the Jumpers and Agility rounds are combined, which meant she ended with a total score of 5 faults with a combined time of 68.69 seconds.

Awesome ran the course clean in 36.18 seconds for a combined total time of 67.15 seconds and zero faults over the two rounds. Awesome finished a respectable 8th overall in the Individual competition. Elicia and Suni had a fast time of 34.68 seconds on this course but had the missed contact on the A-frame, which put them out of contention for a medal. Suni's combined time of 65.69 seconds would have put her in 7th place. Comet had incurred the off-course at the #10 tunnel, so did not figure in the overall placements. But, she and Steve proved they were strong medal contenders with their 7th place finish in the Jumping round the day before. Maybe next year will be the first year for a USA Individual medal.

The gold medal went to Lotus, a BC from Sweden, handled by Jenny Damm with a combined time of 64.79 seconds, followed by Patrick Willaume with Noun, a Briard from France, with a time of 64.88 seconds, and Sally Andrews with Udine Daley, a BC from Belgium, in a time of 65.31 seconds. All three had zero faults over both Jumping and Agility rounds in the Individual competition. 🇺🇸

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