

Dream...



National Obedience Champion!

photo by Chris Anderson

Dreams Do Come True!

by Dee Dee Anderson
San Jose, CA

Held on December 1st & 2nd in Long Beach, California, Dream became only the 8th Golden Retriever to win the AKC National Obedience Invitational (NOI). For a Golden Retriever to qualify for the NOI it has to be in the top 25 all-breed from the previous year, or the top 10 percent of Golden Retrievers earning OTCH points from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. The top 10 percent (22) of Golden Retrievers that qualified for this year's NOI had each earned over 200 OTCH points. That alone in itself is an amazing accomplishment for the breed. Dream qualified both ways. She was 22nd all breed and 12th Golden.

The NOI is two days long. On Saturday there were 96 dogs entered. Each dog went through six different rings, was judged under six different judges, and performed three to four Open and Utility exercises in each ring, plus one set of group exercises (long sit and long down). After six times in the ring each exhibitor had performed all of the Open and Utility exercises two times. No scores were posted until each team had been judged. We did not know where we stood until the AKC banquet on Saturday night. However, this year the scores were posted on the Internet before they were announced at the banquet. Only 32 dogs moved on to Sunday's competition, the top four from each group, plus four more of the top scoring dogs.

Five Golden Retrievers moved on to Sunday: OTCH DD's Dreams Do Come True UDX6, RE, VCD1, TDX, JH, WCX and I were 3rd Sporting and 3rd seed overall. We won top Golden Retriever sponsored by the GRCA, which was an honor beyond my expectations. OTCH Coppertop Celebration UDX4, TDX, JH and Terry Southard were 4th Sporting and tied for 5th / 6th seed overall. OTCH Tanbark's Who's The Boss UDX3, RA, JH, MX, AXJ and David Gannon were 9th seed overall. OTCH Breakwater Ice Skater UDX33, JH and David Gannon were 10th seed overall, and OTCH Golly G's Good Deal VCD3, UDX3, RN, SH, MX, MXJ and Charene Snyder were 11th seed overall.

For Sunday's competition you go head-to-head based on your seeding, and whoever wins moves on to the next round. For the first two rounds there are four



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rings with one judge per ring. Each team performs the same exercises in each ring. For the third, fourth and final round there are two rings with two judges in each ring. The teams are run through one at a time. For the first four rounds you do a

mix of Open and Utility exercises. For the final round you do all of Open in one ring then move to the other ring and do all of Utility. It was not until the ride home that I realized Dream had done all of Open and Utility three times on Sunday.

teams, and anyone could have moved on to the next round. The wins were not easy. Dream and I got a little jumpy in one ring when Dream went to anticipate a finish but caught herself and waited to finish until I gave her the command.

In the next to last round, Dream did not go straight on her go outs, which caused us to tie with Mary Jane Kelley's Sheltie "Harry." We had to do a run off to see which one of us moved on to the final round. Sometimes I think Dream has the scores figured out and she really wanted to heel again — she wanted to make sure she got everyone's heart pumping.

ROUND								
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
(1) 972								(2) 950
(32) 902	972						950	(31) 978
(13) 982	920	972				922	922	(14) 922
(20) 920			972		922			(19) 915
(9) 954 Dave & Boss								(10) 992 Dave & Skater
(24) 909	954	937				992	992	(23) 924
(5) 937	937						944	(6) 944 Terry & Dixie
(18) 967				919				(27) 945
				960				
(4) 955								(3) 960 Dee Dee & Dream
(29) 996	955						960	(30) 962
(16) 919	919	919				960	995	(15) 969
(17) 970			919		960			(18) 995
(12) 926								(11) 985 Char & Andy
(21) 933	926	926				985	985	(22) 908
(8) 979	901						904	(7) 914
(25) 901								(26) 904

This was Dream's and my second NOI. Last year she did very well, but failed one exercise, so we did not move on to Sunday's competition. This year Dream completed every exercise and was raring to go into each ring. The NOI is Dream's kind of event. Dream loves a crowd and likes to perform and be told by me and anyone else that might like to tell her that she did well.

For Sunday's competition we took one ring and one exercise at a time. Every judge was so kind and calming to show under. Dream had to go head-to-head with such wonderful

Making it to the final round was hard to believe. Open was first and Dream did a very nice job. Utility was last with no break in between rings. Shirley Barkan and her Poodle went first and passed every exercise. I could not watch. I sat in a corner with Dream and waited for Shirley to finish. I was not sure if Dream was up for one more time. She was getting tired. We did articles, directed



Coming fast out of the article pile at the NOI. She loves working the articles. Photo by Steve Southard.



Executing a perfect broad jump in the ?? round. Photo by Steve Southard.



Tears of joy when the announcement was made that Dream was the winner! Photo by Mike Godsil.



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retrieve, signals, and then the moving stand where Dream came in slower than normal and I knew we would lose some points. I took a second to get Dream back in my world

and lined her up for the directed jumping. This was the last exercise she had to do. In the back of my mind I knew that only an hour earlier she did not go out straight on this exercise. I knew she had to go straight this time or we had no shot at winning (no, I did not go out and practice before going in).

It was up to Dream. When I sent her on that first go out, and she went straight and then sat on a dime as soon as I told her, I knew it was now up to the judges. Dream had given me everything I had asked her to. I am glad I was not in the judge's shoes. We did not have to wait too long to find out the results. I later found out that after each round *Front and Finish* was posting the results on their website and people at home were following along. When we got to the final round it was a few hours before the winner was posted. Everyone at home said they kept seeing Dream's number move on; then it stopped and there was no information for a few hours. They did not know that there was a lunch break before the final round.

It was very nice the way AKC brought the 32 dogs back in the ring by groups, giving ribbons to all of the group winners, and then announcing the four placements. I have to admit that I totally lost all composure when it was announced that Dream and I were the winners. As it turns out, lots of people lost it along with me when they announced Dream had won. I would have cried even if I was first runner up. I felt Dream was already a winner no matter what the outcome. A woman came up to me after it was over and said, "I have never seen an event like this, you and your dog had such a strong bond together, you made me cry. I do not know you but can I give you a hug?"



Dream was sound asleep on the floor of the motel room when Dee Dee called home with the incredible news. They were too tired to make it onto the bed..

NOC, OTCH DD's Dreams Do Come True UDX6, RE, TDX, JH, NA, NAJ, WCX, OBHF "Dream"

Born: December 7, 2002

Owner/breeder/handler: Dee Dee & Billy Anderson

Co-breeder: Carole Steding

CH. Amberac's Ima Showstopper

Am-Can CH. Pot A' Gold Step Aside Please CD, SDHF

Gold Country's Summer Love CD

Sire: Ch Molly's Cruzing The Hudson UDX, JH, WC, VC

CH. Sunshine's Goldwind Devon, OS

Am-Can CH. Ashford's Molly G Weintraub UD, JH, WCX, VCX

Am-Can CH. Ashford's Annie O'Neill CD, WC, VC, OD

Am-Can OTCH DD's Tagalong Thumper TD, JH, WC, OS, OBHF

Ashord Midas Golden Touch CDX, JH, WC, OS

CH. Starring Dawn Heir Ashford CDX, OD

Dam: DD's Montana Fishing The Ruby UDT, RE, JH, NA, NAJ, WC, OD

DD's Advocate's Quick Decisn MH

Wahkiakum's Montana Sky CDX, JH, NAJ, WC, OD

Wahkiakum's Apache Star JH

This was the first year AKC gave money to the four placements and the National Obedience Club gave money, too. J& J gave gift certificates, which they kindly and generously do every year. Eukanuba gave dog food and some other items. The money was much appreciated as it helped cover many of the expenses associated with getting to the Invitational.

Almost 22 years ago to the date I won the Gaines Classic Super Dog Competition with "Tess" – OTCH Splashdown Tess of Culywood. Tess was Dream's great-great grandmother. After that win I then raised two sons and put OTCH's on several dogs. Twelve years ago I was invited to the NOI with OTCH DD's Takin' A Chance UDX7, VCD3, JH, "Chance," but was unable to attend. Up until a year ago I was unable to show enough to earn the amount of points to get an invitation for the NOI. It is a shame we get penalized for having a Golden, but I wouldn't have it any other way. Sometimes I feel bad I have to show so much taking away points from others, but that is how it is set up and anyone can win on any day.

Dream's year to the Invitational has been exciting. Dream earned five perfect scores of 200, which gives her a lifetime total of six. We went to the GRCA National and won High in Trial and High Combined. That was something I had never done before and was thrilled. We also won three perpetual trophies and Dream earned her WCX. I did not think the year could get any better. We traveled as far east as Texas and as far north as Washington state to show. We met many nice people and wonderful dogs along the way.



Dreams Do Come True!, *continued*

My husband and I both operate DD's Dog Training. I am now a provisional obedience and Rally judge for the Novice classes and look forward to judging soon. Billy handles and titles dogs for other owners. We both give private lesson, seminars and clinics. You can read more information about us at www.DDsDogTraining.com.

This win is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather who passed away in 2005, at age 99. Since Dream was a puppy she would always go next door with me to visit my grandfather. I lived next door to my grandfather for 21 years. He watched my dogs and kids grow up. My grandfather enjoyed watching the dogs mature and learn. He did not have a dog. I think he had a dog when he was around 40, but never trained it. Sometimes I would train the dogs in his yard so he could watch from the window or from his chair in the yard. Although he had never been to a dog show, after I trained he would critique the performance and tell me if I had a chance of winning at the next show. He also liked to tell me when he thought the dogs were ready to be shown. For my first male Golden "Thumper," he told me Thumper would

not be very good until he was about five years old. He was right! That is when Thumper earned his 200 score. For Dream, he thought she was ready at one year old. Every time I worked her in his yard he wanted to know when I was going to show her. He loved to get the dog show reports after the shows. If I had won, he wanted to see the ribbons and prizes.

Dream would not get to show him her winnings; he passed away one month before Dream's first show. Dream and my grandfather had a special bond; he liked to watch my dogs work but never really interacted with them. With Dream it was different; she seemed to know to be careful around him. Every day when we went to see him, we first had to locate him as he was hard of hearing and could be anywhere on the acre and a half of land. Usually he was sitting in a chair somewhere. Dream liked the game of finding him and when she did find

him she would gently come up to his chair and sit looking up into his eyes until he touched her. Sometimes he would be asleep, but Dream waited for him to wake up. She would sit still while he petted and stroked her head with his knuckles. He had arthritis in his hands and had a loss of feeling in his fingers. Using his knuckles was the only way he could feel her fur. Dream did not mind the rougher petting. Once he stopped petting her, she would lay down at his feet until we were done talking.

When my grandfather's health started to deteriorate, he was in and out of the hospital a lot the last few months. When he came home for the last time, he spent most of his time in bed. Dream still went to visit. The first time I took her into his room she did not want to go near the bed. With encouragement she did and he petted her on the head. The day before he passed away he was too weak to talk, but he still touched Dream on the head. My grandfather told me Dream would be special and do some great things for me. I wish he had been able to see her winnings. If Dream won High In Trial or High Combined at shows she wanted to carry the rosettes around. I think she is showing my grandfather what she has won.

Carrying the ribbon around turned into something more. Dream became an AKC

obedience ambassador and Golden Retriever ambassador, too. People would stop to pet Dream while she showed them her ribbon. They would ask what the ribbon was for and I would explain. It became easier to say, "Dream was the most obedience dog of the day," and they would reply, "Congratulations, I want my dog to be as obedient as Dream." Dream visits a rest home twice a month and is now their mascot. Those who did not like to touch a dog touch Dream and Dream loves the attention. Next time we go she will carry her NOI ribbon to show everyone. Dream carried her NOI ribbon through the convention center and two blocks back to the motel where she walked through the lobby doors with pride!

To my teammate Dream: thank you for having happy feet and a heart of gold and for making everyone believe that Dreams Do Come True! ❖



*The 2007 National Obedience Champions
Dee Dee Anderson & Dream*

Congratulations!