

Day of the dogs

Saturday's dog show events were for the quick and agile

By Scott Hammers / *The Bulletin*

Last modified: July 04, 2010 12:13PM PST

As Joan Hagar and her dog Rocky made their way past the final obstacles on the jumper's course at the Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club agility trials at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center on Saturday, her grin grew slightly wider with every hurdle the dog cleared.

At the finish line, the audience cheered, Rocky leapt up on Hagar and an event official emerged from the crowd to award them a ribbon the size of a dinner plate.

Rocky had finally earned his MACH.

The MACH, or Master Agility Champion, is a significant accomplishment for an agility trials dog, said Hagar, 49, from Corvallis.

To earn the MACH, a dog must make qualifying, error-free runs through two different kinds of obstacle courses on a single day — 20 times over.

Additionally, the dog must accumulate 750 "speed points," with one point given per second every time a dog beats the set time on a course.

"They must have been working on this for about seven years," said friend David Vasley, 49, of Corvallis. Art Brest, 52, competing with his 4-year-old border collie Flash, said a naturally fast dog only gets you halfway there.

Smaller, slower dogs tend to do a lot better making it through the course without knocking down the obstacles, in part because their handlers are able to keep up with them. Dogs like Flash tend to outrun their handlers, Brest said, but can rack up a lot of speed points when they can make it through a course with no mistakes.

Brest said Flash had won his class on the standard course Saturday, a course where dogs leap over bars set to their height, shoot through plastic tunnels, weave through a series of poles planted in the ground and run up and down ramps and teeter-totters. But Flash knocked down a bar on the jumper's course — a stripped-down course that skips the ramps and teeter-totters — and was thus no closer to earning his MACH.

"He's up to around 4,000 speed points," Brest said. "I wish I could sell them or trade them or something, but they're kind of irrelevant when you've got a fast dog."

Spectator Terri Frieze, 52, of Redmond, said watching the agility trials got her thinking about what her dog Chloe might be able to do on a trials course. Unfortunately, Chloe's future in the agility trials circuit is probably limited, she said.

"I think we might have to wait until they have a competition where you're supposed to knock things over," Frieze said. "She would be great at that."

Joan Hagar, 49, of Corvallis, leads her dog Rocky over one of the final obstacles on the jumper's course Saturday at the Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center. - Photos by Scott Hammers / The Bulletin
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Photos by Scott Hammers / The Bulletin

Joan Hagar, 49, of Corvallis, leads her dog Rocky over one of the final obstacles on the jumper's course Saturday at the Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center.

The dog show continues today, with events starting at 8 a.m. and continuing through midafternoon. Admission is free.



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Art Brest, 52, of Tualatin, and his dog Flash compete Saturday at the Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center.

An unidentified dog eyes the next obstacle coming out of the weave poles Saturday. The dog show continues today, with events starting at 8 a.m. -

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