

Rude Dog Does The Pap National!
by Gerianne Darnell

I entered the Papillon Club of America's combined TD/TDX Test with Rudy solely as a "supporting" cast member. No other dog had entered the TDX test, and I thought, oh what the heck, it's the Papillon specialty! and a chance to practice on a blind TDX track. The last three times I took Rudy out to practice tracking before the test, he was abysmal. I was concerned about being embarrassed at the test, for example, that he wouldn't even start. Then it poured down rain the day before the test as we drove north to Wisconsin, and it was still raining the morning of the test. If somebody would have said "Here, take your \$75 entry back", I would have said GREAT and beelined on down the road... Papillons don't like to go to the bathroom in the rain, much less track.

We arrived at the tracking site early on the morning of May 18th to hear that one of the two TD entries had passed! There was lots of hugging and congratulations for Jolene Roudebush and "Taz" (Mickthea Aussie Ahtee CD TD). This was Taz's first try at a TD, so there was much excitement in the air before it was Rudy's turn.

Several spectators had arrived to watch the TDX portion of the test, including the president of PCA. Most of the spectators had never been to a tracking test, and of course they would be expecting to actually see a dog TRACK. What pressure! We pulled up to the area for Rudy's track, and when I was getting Rudy out of the van I thought about having my mom videotape the start of his track. Then I decided, nah, that will be too painful to watch...what a dumb decision, as she could see most of the track from the road.

So, up to the starting flag Rudy and I went. In front of us was what looked like a highway in the wet grass, so I sort of pressured the Rudster in that direction. He obligingly went right down the grassy highway, and then he veered to the right and started pulling hard. Bummer, I was thinking, my worst nightmare is coming true and we won't make it past the start! I kept waiting for the whistle, and nothing happened. Rudy was trucking right along, and I was thinking how rude it was of the judges to let us go so far without blowing the whistle. All of a sudden Rudy wheeled and went in a new direction, and I could see a footprint in the grass ahead of us. WOW, we actually made the first turn! We continued on and came to a little tree, where Rudy checked in both directions and then pulled straight ahead. I thought, gosh, that's interesting, that looked like a crosstrack indication (which I later found out it was). Rudy continued forward, made another turn, and the next thing I knew he was nosing a sock! I was feeling great, we actually made it to the first article, and he looked like he belonged in the test! I re-started him after the article, and he made two more turns and then crossed a horse trail and headed for the woods. I assumed that the track went into the woods, but right before the woods Rudy turned sharply to the right.

After another 75 yards or so, we found another article, a shoulder pad! I started to think, gosh, I will be sort of disappointed now when he doesn't pass (At this point I still never thought it possible that he would actually pass!!). We continued on, and I could tell that Rudy was really getting tired. We approached what I later found out was the last turn. Rudy decided that enough was enough, and since he couldn't find any hot dogs on the track he was going to make his own brunch, and he started to EAT GRASS. Not just munching a few strands, but serious, serious grass eating, with me going "RUDY, track". Then I started laughing, because it was so, well, RUDY to decide to have lunch so near the end of the track. I knew that I was in danger of getting blown off for either pushing the dog in any direction or for him quitting, but on the other hand, I knew we were near the end of the track and the judges would really be pulling for us. I thought there was probably only two directions the track could

go, either straight ahead or a turn to the left. To the left it looked like there were two sets of ruts, and I was thinking "ack, a crosstrack at the end of the track." Straight ahead looked more plausible to me. I "suggested" to Rudy that he go straight ahead, which he did while grazing a bit more. Then he turned around and said, nah, mom, nothing here. Then, after spending what seemed like a lifetime circling around on the last turn, he evidently had eaten his fill, and he started off to the left. The track then went into a picnic area, with picnic tables, grills, and gravel, and then it crossed a road, and continued into short grass. Rudy was tracking strongly again, and I felt like I was in another world. And then I saw the glove in front of him, and I thought I would die. I did cry...And then there was the usual yelling and screaming. Rudy and his father, "Zipper" (Am/Can CH & OTCH Denzel Loteki Top Secret TDX), are the first father/son TDX Papillons, and hopefully will soon be the first father/son OTCH paps. Rudy followed his surprising TDX performance (on his first try!) by going High Combined at the Papillon National two days later.

The other paps have not been sitting idly by this spring. My eleven year old "Zack" (Am/Can CH & Am/Can OTCH U-OCH U-ACHX Loteki Sudden Impulse UDX TDX MX MXJ, AD VAD, EAC-V NJC-V NGC-V NAC, Can UDT) finished his MXJ in May, and my youngest pap "Rumor" (Am/Can CH U-CD U-Ag1 Loteki Denzel Spread The Word UDT MX MXJ, OJC NAC) finished his MX, MXJ and UD. What good boys they are!