

# UKC<sup>®</sup> ELITE SHED DOG SERIES RESULTS & UPDATES



# ELITE SHED DOG SERIES NATIONALS 2022 EVENT RECAP

Once again, the stages were set on the grounds of Wayne Fitzgerald State Park in Wittington, Illinois. We have been fortunate to get to use these great grounds and facilities for the past few years. It is almost storybook perfect to get to use grounds fit to host 3 working and 3 champion fields all in walking distance from a centralized headquarters building geographically in the middle of shed dog country. Special thanks to the State of Illinois for permission to use the grounds and thank you to park manager Ted Liefer for the support of the event. The grounds were well kept and easy to traverse, yet maintained appropriate cover to be challenging for each class. My personal favorite aspect was the element of realism the grounds provide. Many of our competitors (both two and four-legged) are shed hunting hobbyists so having grounds where natural sheds have been found and courses littered with old deer rubs adds an authentic feel, paying homage to the origin of the sport.

Last year's event was historic, setting a record for entries and this year we shattered the old record by almost 50%. We had a total of 76 champion dogs, 56 working dogs and 15 youth teams sign up. We thank our shed dog community for continuing to support this sport and our national event. Even with close to 150 dogs and a new score recording system, our judging team didn't miss a beat and got the job done with fairness and efficiency. Thank you judges: Darcy Grieger, Jeff Stingel, Brian Schломann, Jimmy Plackemeier, Tisha Richmond, and Lee Doyle. The exponential growth in this sport is fantastic but it does come with some challenges and our UKC team is committed to finding ways to maintain fairness, enjoyment, and competition within the sport.

Throughout the event there were countless examples of support by numerous members of our shed dog community, but I want to extend a special thank you to the Kuchenbeckers, McBrides, and McPhersons for coming in early to help set up some of our fields. Thank you to our Youth Scholarship Committee for once again outdoing themselves to provide a great scholarship opportunity for our youth handlers.

The UKC team consisting of Director of National Events Nicole Sedlecky and Hunting Ops team member Kristen Wiessner did a great job of setting up our event, doing everything from setting up signage to transforming the headquarters building from an empty room into the Shed Dog hub that everyone experienced. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts and support of Ryan Waterman for his technical assistance throughout the event to ensure our live scoring system was operational and accurate. UKC had a team in place to capture some great footage as well. We are very excited for the release of upcoming UKC shed dog content.

We can't forget our sponsors who help make the event and our awards so special. Thank you to our performance dog nutrition partner Eukanuba for all they do and their involvement throughout the event. They were there providing giftbags, covered seating, education, and of course the iconic giant inflatable dog. Special thanks to our course and prize sponsors: Eukanuba, Momarsh, Bone Clone, Black Rifle Coffee Company, Lethal, Tactacam,

Wetmutt, Duck Dog Clothing, OnX, Lethal Addiction, and Crown Royal Grooming. 🐾





# 2022 UKC ELITE SHED DOG SERIES NATIONAL CHAMPION

Allow me to introduce your 2022 Elite Shed Dog Series National Champion NSDCH ESD2 Soggy Acres Augustus Meadows "Gus"!

Gus put up a respectable combined time of 7:00.66 finishing 20 seconds quicker than the next dog in the running. I got the chance to speak with owner/handler Travis Meadows about this year's National Champion and here is what I learned about Gus.

One would think a dog capable of winning the title of National Champion would have showed potential from the very start but that's not necessarily the case here. Gus comes from a line of Labradors with a few hunt test titles but not "stacked" as Travis put it. The intention behind having Gus trained was to see what his potential was and to have a nice dog to hunt wild sheds with and pass the occasional UKC ESDS event. Travis told me, in vivid detail, the story of Gus's first wild find. They were hunting with Scott Kuchenbecker in Ohio. Travis could hear from a hundred yards away the sound of bone rattling against Gus's teeth as he ran. Travis got chills knowing any second, he was going to see Gus with his first wild shed. Sure enough, Gus comes crashing through the brush with a smaller antler in his mouth. That may seem anticlimactic to some, but every shed hunter knows "the small ones are harder to find."

He was proving to be a fantastic wild shed dog, but as Travis mentioned, not necessarily the fastest on a timed course. All of that changed, however, shortly after Gus earned his GRCHSD title. Travis recalled how they were up at Rob and Erin Lewis' event in Ohio and

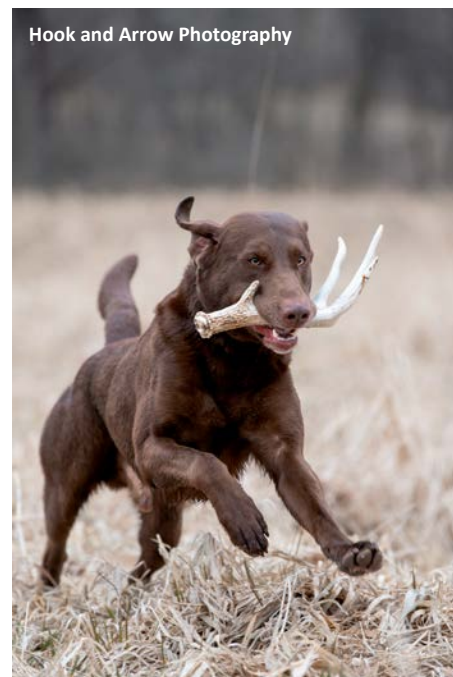
Travis let his friend run Gus for fun, but something in the tone of her voice flipped a switch in him. Gus left the gate in a blaze, with a level of drive and speed Travis had never seen out of him before. Gus ended up coming in second at that event. Once Travis realized what Gus was truly capable of, the two became an inseparable team. Gus was willing to please Travis now more than ever.

Even with a story like that, you would think nothing could stand in their way of competing at Nationals, you would be mistaken though. The Meadows had two dogs come into heat just before nationals and were heavily considering sitting it out entirely not knowing for certain if Gus would be a serious competitor. Now, of course, they are glad they ended up coming.

What have they been up to since earning the NSDCH title? Well, for starters, the Meadows team searched high and low for a steakhouse to spoil Gus after heading home but to no avail. Instead, they settled for a pizza place where Gus got to enjoy some pizza and breadsticks as a reward for his new title. Since then, they have had some great wild shed hunts, finding a personal daily best of 20 antlers with Gus playing a role in finding over half of them. This year they are striving to earn Gus's ESD3 and HOF. We wish them luck as they pursue those goals. I love Gus's story because its inspirational, you never know what you might achieve if you show up and try your best! 🍗



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# 2022 UKC® ELITE SHED DOG NATIONALS

## • OFFICIAL RESULTS •

Whittington, Illinois | March 25-27, 2022



### CHAMPION CLASS - 61 DOGS PASSED

**1st Place:** ESD Soggy Acres Augustus Meadows, Labrador Retriever, owned by Travis Meadows.

**2nd Place:** ESD2 Hunters Little Ann, Labrador Retriever, owned by Nathan Van Schyndel.

**3rd Place:** SHR GRCHSD UH Whiskey Rivers Locked On Code Red, Labrador Retriever, owned by Christina Evans.

**4th Place:** GRCHSD Will's Classy Black Pearl, Labrador Retriever, owned by Will Heckart.

### WORKING CLASS - 49 DOGS PASSED

**1st Place:** Mr. Brig Of Queensland, Labrador Retriever, owned by Dan Young

**2nd Place:** Sable J Moon, Labrador Retriever, owned by Dustin Moon.

**3rd Place:** WSD A&M Recovery's Hear My Call, Labrador Retriever, owned by Melanie Lechleidner.

**4th Place:** WSD RPM's When Legends Rise, Labrador Retriever, owned by Scott Kuchenbecker.

### YOUTH CLASS - 40 DOGS PASSED

**1st Place:** Toby Messer

**2nd Place:** Kacie Hatcher

**3rd Place:** Zach Meadows

**4th Place:** Levi Lewis

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# YEAR END ELITE AWARDS RECAP SEASON 5

Written By: Todd Kellam, Vice President

Completing year five of celebrating the accomplishments of the top dogs and people in the Elite Shed Dog Series seems like a milestone of sorts. We have learned a lot along the way and hopefully we never stop learning and improving upon the best program in the shed dog sport. Looking back is very rewarding as we have recognized some of the best to ever play the game. This year is equally rewarding and the winners of each category equally deserving.

I'd like to thank Scott Kuchenbecker, and now to include Amanda Doyle, at Bone Clone for their unrelenting support of the Elite Shed Dog Series. Bone Clone has quickly become the leader in the training scent

category for shed dogs. The Elite Shed Dog Series has done the same for shed dog events. Bone Clone and United Kennel Club are very proud of how far we have come and vow to continue to support this sport to the best of our abilities for years to come.

So without further a due I offer you the Season 5 year end winners of each category of the UKC Elite Awards presented by Bone Clone. I promise you my favorite awards presentation of my year, which includes many dog sports banquets, begins with, "The nominees for this Elite Award category are....". And it ends with, "And the winner of the Elite Award is....". Read on....

## RETRIEVER DOG OF THE YEAR

**ESD3 Long Spur's Diamond In The Ruff HOF, Labrador Retriever, Rusti and Norm Henderson, IN**



*Rusti and Norm Henderson with Ruff.*

Take a devote shed hunter with as much experience training and handling dogs in this sport as Norm Henderson. Put into his hands a young dog with the drive and raw talent to be named the ESDS Working National Champion in 2021. Combine those two factors along with a goal of making a run at Dog of The Year and you can pretty much be assured the result will be something

special. Not only did Norm and Ruff accomplish their Elite Award goal but they also picked up ESD3 and HOF titles in their first year on the road! That doesn't come from picking up your points 10 at a time. That is the result of a placement percentage that will likely not soon be surpassed. Congrats to Norm and Rusti for giving us a Dog of the Year we can all be proud of.

## NON-RETRIEVER DOG OF THE YEAR

**GRCHSD King Of The Mountain Monte, Border Collie, Kellie Curtis, MI**



*Kellie Curtis and Monte*

When Kellie Curtis found an intelligent Border Collie with a strong work ethic on her hands she looked for something for them to do together. With no previous experience in performance dog sports, they were introduced to shed hunting through the Great Lakes Antler Dogs club. Not only did they both enjoy the game but they were also a quick study and soon running Champion courses. Kellie and Monte built upon their second quarter nomination to end up king of the mountain among a very diverse group of non-retriever breeds. A well-deserved congratulations goes out to this great team.

Visit [ukcdogs.com](http://ukcdogs.com) for more information about UKC Elite Shed Dog Series and upcoming events.

### WORKING DOG OF THE YEAR

WSD8 Nova Of Gobblers Knob – Labrador Retriever – Trenton Rilea, IL



*TJ Rilea, left, and Trinity Rilea, right. TJ won Working Dog of the Year with Nova. Trinity won Youth Handler of the Year.*

Nova led this category in season 5 from wire to wire. She proved her cooperative spirit along the way earning passes primarily for TJ and Tom, but also for Trinity and Kailey. It takes a lot of time, dedication and effort to chase these goals but in the end, the real rewards are memories made on the road with family and friends. The ESDS clubs thank you for your support of events in accomplishing your goal and join us in congratulating our Working Dog of the Year team.

### YOUTH HANDLER OF THE YEAR

Trinity Rilea, IL

The Rilea family set their sights on two awards at the start of season 5 and this was one of them. Congrats to Trinity for following through and enthusiastically logging all those road miles to get it done. Her boy Trump got the nod for 90% of this journey. But, her support group of Magic, Nova and Lilly were always ready on deck when needed to fill in. This young handler has a great deal of experience in our sport and has been a great role model for all of our young handlers who will be making a bid in this category for years to come. Well done, Trinity.

### JUDGE OF THE YEAR

Travis Meadows, WV



*Congrats to Travis Meadows on his Judge of The Year award.*

We are fortunate in this sport to have a top tier of judges that are not only very capable but also very generous with their time. Our top three judges in this category were separated by 1 assignment over the course of a full season! With 20 assignments under his belt Travis Meadows is our very deserving winner of this most important category. When I asked Travis if he set a goal to win this category his response was what I can only assume would be the response of every nominee in this category. They don't do it for the recognition. They do it to give back to a sport that means the world to them and their families. We are lucky to have judges like Travis and each of our nominees in this category helping the Elite Shed Dog Series.

**CLUB OF THE YEAR**

**Great Lakes Antler Dogs, MI**



*Great Lakes Antler Dogs – Club of The Year.*

Great Lakes Antler Dogs exemplifies how productive and supportive a real club atmosphere can be. Capably led by Bill and Jen Marenich, this club is truly a support group for a list of members who have a wide variety of interests in the world of performance dogs. While they did not have the largest event of the year in this category, they did in the second quarter and they followed it with a full schedule of very successful events. But more than anything else, it is the club structure and atmosphere surrounding this group that earns them the club of the year distinction.

**AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR**

**Will Heckert, IA**



*Will Heckert, known for his dedication to help others, was voted Ambassador of The Year.*

From a list of nominees that are some of the most respected individuals in the sport of shed hunting, Will Heckert won by the narrowest of margins, which speaks volumes not only for Will but for our other nominees as well. In talking with participants in this sport the common response regarding Will Heckert is his affinity for helping people new to the program. That includes helping them with rules and training advice, assisting them at their first events, and providing encouragement every step of the way. We are blessed to have many in this sport who also do all of these things, but nobody does it better than Will. Congrats to our well-deserved Ambassador of the Year.



