



DECEMBER 2019 EDITION

SHOW OPS *NEWSLETTER*

featuring nosework tips, gemstone titles, and group top ten

compiled by Hannah Tsui, with articles by Sonja Nordstrom & Emily Erskin



Happy Holidays

From **UKC**
UNITED KENNEL CLUB®

With 2020 fast approaching, we wanted to take this opportunity to share some highlights from 2019, including the addition of the Gemstone Grand Champion titles to Conformation and the revisions to the Nosework program. We are so excited for those dogs and exhibitors that have made the Group Top Ten Standings in our inaugural year – we appreciate and admire your dedication to the sport of dogs.

We'd like to say thank you, as always, to our UKC Clubs and Judges. The time and effort expended putting on lovely shows and events for our exhibitors is so appreciated. Thank you for cultivating such a welcoming and family-friendly atmosphere.

If you have any questions about the contents of this newsletter, please feel free to contact us at showoperations@ukcdogs.com or (269) 343-9020. Thank you, and we wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season!





THE ROAD TO DIAMOND

Emily Erskin

DGRCH 3Colors Sharp Dressed Man "GrizLee"

October 21, 2019

Hi, my name is Emily Erskin, and I am the Junior Handler that shows and co-owns the first ever UKC Diamond Grand Champion. I co-own GrizLee, a German Shepherd Dog, with Jessica McRae, someone who has been a wonderful mentor to me throughout my showing career. Without her and my mom, Sunshine Gipson, traveling all over the US to obtain this title, I would not be in the position I am in today. I would also like to thank the few people who have stuck by our side through this journey; it is very much appreciated.

My first show with Griz was in January at the UKC California Classic. Jessica had to stay home and take care of dogs, so this was his first time being away from her. This gave us our first real chance to create a bond. We made this trip a vacation, so we spent two weeks traveling all over California. We visited Pier 39 in San Francisco, went swimming in the ocean (Griz doesn't love the waves), visited Yosemite, and much more. The California Classic was where we got our first Best in Show together, and 3 legs towards his Emerald Grand. At the time, we weren't very familiar with how the system worked so we didn't know how close he was to getting his Emerald. Once we familiarized ourselves with the new gem titles and realized how close he was, it became a chase.

We travelled to several states because we wanted to be the first to achieve each gem title. He was the first Emerald, Ruby, Sapphire, and Diamond among all breeds in UKC. He sort of breezed through the first two; he was showing flawlessly and enjoying his show career. We achieved many other great things along the way, such as our performance at Premier. On Top Ten day, Griz took BOB and was a Finals qualifier. He was among the top 20 dogs in the world! A lot of you saw his performance there, but if you didn't, he was flawless. When presenting the dogs in the finals, there are three judges examining one dog at a time. The UKC reps call out the dog's registered name, then you run in the ring and stop about mid-way with a free stack. I was nervous because Griz only free stacks nicely when he wants to, and I didn't want to be embarrassed in front of such a huge crowd of people. He showed me, though. We went into the ring and he showed better than he ever has

before. His movement was gorgeous, and he was so happy to be the center of attention with everyone clapping for him. We stopped for a free stack and he nailed it perfectly. It was hands-down his best performance ever - the kind that brought tears to your eyes. He didn't rank in the final 10, which was kind of upsetting to me knowing how well he did, but I was glad to have even made it into that ring nonetheless. He is believed to be the first GSD to make it that far in Top Ten in several years. I also got Best Junior Handler in the GSD Specialty as well as BJH in regular Premier showing.

Griz went through a small dry patch before getting his Diamond. We were 0.6 of a leg away from achieving it, but he was in an awkward stage (he's barely 2, still a growing boy) and just wasn't winning like he had been. Finally, in Marshall, Texas on September 1st, he got a Group 1 placement under Judge Pamela Simmons to finish his Diamond. He followed that win with a RBIS!

After achieving the Diamond, we decided we were going to continue showing because he has kept all the #1 spots ALL YEAR (GSD, Herding Dogs, I'm #1 Junior Handler, and Griz is the highest pointed dog in the Group Top Ten points) and we didn't want to lose those spots we worked so hard for. We followed Marshall with the show in King, North Carolina on September 13th where Griz got 2 RBIS and 2 BIS! We made the trip to North Carolina a vacation as well. After the show, we went to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and had a really good time! (Griz still didn't love the waves even though they were warm this time.)

Our most recent show weekend with him was the Autaugaville, Alabama show the last weekend of September where he got 2 BIS.

Griz currently has 17 BIS (15 this year) and 7 RBIS (6 this year). Not only is this boy the perfect show dog, he is such a goof and is so sweet (when he wants to be). I have so much love in my heart for this dog and for Jessica for letting me show him from coast to coast (literally)! We hope to finish this year strong! Thank you to all the judges who have acknowledged me and my gorgeous boy this year!





BUT MOM, WHY SHOULD I DO THAT?

THE GREAT FEAR FACTORS: PASSIVE RESPONSE AND THE FINAL RESPONSE

Sonja Nordstrom

October 21, 2019

UKC is pleased to present an article by special guest writer Sonja Nordstrom. As an expert on the subject, we hope she can provide valuable perspective on the value of consistency, clear expectations, and clear signals between you and your dog.

Sonja Nordstrom, a UKC Nosework judge, has been involved with the UKC Nosework program since it was first piloted with United Nosework, and has an impressive background in the "real world" of our sport. She is a retired FBI Special Agent with nearly 25 years of K9 experience as a handler, trainer, and evaluator. She owns Sonja's Dog Training, where she offers Nosework/Scentwork workshops, and is both a UKC Nosework and AKC Scentwork judge. Prior to opening her training business, Sonja completed thousands of hours of K9 training under nationally and internationally recognized trainers, attained state and national level certifications, and completed hundreds of field missions with her dogs for the FBI and local law enforcement, both professionally and as a volunteer.

She has provided hands-on SAR, narcotics, and explosives detection training to hundreds of volunteers and professional Law Enforcement K9 Handlers. Her K9 deployments with the Los Angeles FBI Evidence Response Team include supporting kidnapping and homicide investigations throughout the western United States, in high threat locations in Mexico, the Middle East, and several disaster scenes including the Pentagon after the 9/11 attacks. Sonja has also deployed to Europe with her K9 to assist in locating the remains of WWII MIA soldiers. Sonja currently volunteers as the President, Lead Trainer, and Handler for Great Basin K9 SAR, and deploys with her fifth Human Remains Detection-certified K9.

The detection sport of UKC Nosework tests dog and handler teams in search scenarios modeled after traditional working detection K9s. The sport is developed to be inclusive of all breeds, regardless of physical abilities and/or physical structure, and to showcase and capitalize on "their natural olfactory abilities." The overall performance should convey "fun, enthusiasm, and the ability of the team to work in partnership." Simply put, the objective is to have FUN while at the same time enriching and enhancing your dog's life and your relationship with them!

You may be asking, "How the heck can it be fun if I have to make my dog perform a Final Response?" "How do I get a Final Response without crushing my sensitive dog?" "My dog wants to scratch and dig at odor. Does this need to be corrected in order to qualify?" "Other K9 detection sport organizations say it's better to just read the dog, so, why do I have to train a Final Response for UKC?" "If I teach a Final Response, won't my dog be more likely to false alert?"

Fear not! The purpose of this article is to allay concerns and misconceptions regarding the Trained Final Response (TFR) and to share with you the benefits of shaping your dog into performing a willing, happy, and solid TFR. You have time to build your dog's TFR up through the levels of UKC Nosework. The rules are carefully structured through each level of the sport to include a gradual increase in skill, including an incremental build-up of skills needed for the TFR as follows:

1. Novice level requires that the handler only be able to read their dog's body language when in target odor;
2. Advanced level requires that the handler be able to read their dog's body language and the dog must be exhibiting a change in behavior that is recognizable to the official;

3. Superior level requires that the handler be able to articulate three possible behaviors or chains of behaviors when in target odor;
4. Master level requires that the dog must exhibit up to three possible clearly recognized and concise behaviors or chains of behaviors when in target odor;
5. Elite level requires that the dog must exhibit no more than two clearly recognized and concise behaviors or chains of behaviors when in target odor.

Just so we are all speaking the same language, here are the definitions of Final Response and Passive Response as stated in the 2020 UKC Nosework Rulebook:

- Final Response (Indication): A behavior that the dog has been trained to exhibit in the presence of a target odor. In Nosework trials, this response must be passive (sit, stare, down, point, etc.)
- Passive Response: A type of response that the dog displays or indicates in a manner that doesn't disturb the environment after the dog has detected a trained odor. Responses may include, but are not limited to, sit, stand, or lie down quietly, stare, etc.

Before getting into the "how to," let's address the "why" and perhaps broaden your perspective on the value of a TFR. Whether for performance work or just living with our dogs around the house, clear communication is the foundation for any successful relationship. At the risk of anthropomorphizing, let's use this example: if we play a game of hide and seek with a child, but give no means for the child to communicate their successful find with



us, do we not set that child up for frustration? Does a child have fun on an Easter egg hunt if they cannot share and take pride in their success? It's really no different for dogs. Setting a precise criterion for reward for your dog in the form of a TFR gives your dog clarity of purpose and a way for him to "demand" his reward from you. With clarity comes confidence. Therefore, teaching your dog a TFR is ultimately empowers him and opens up a wonderful avenue of communication between handler and dog.

For the sport of UKC Nosework, there are many passive TFR responses which are acceptable: sit, down, nose to odor/stare, and stop/look back at handler, to name a few. What you choose as a handler will likely depend on what behaviors your dog naturally offers that can be captured. Because the detection sports are timed events, a nose hold at odor is a very effective TFR because it is fast to execute, easy for the dog to perform at variable odor heights, and is not impeded if the dog tries to sit or down in a crowded area or on an unstable surface.

The following is just one example of a step-by-step forward chaining method which shapes a TFR by capturing natural behaviors. For some dogs, we are capturing a natural pointing or flushing behavior. For others, we capture the dog's desire to communicate with us. This method can work for even the most sensitive of dogs without crushing or pressuring them. The rate at which your dog progresses through each step will very much depend on the individual dog. That said, spending too much time on any one step can create a situation in which the dog can get stuck and essentially need to be counter-conditioned to move forward, leaving one step behind as the dog is shaped into the next step.

Step 1: Determine your dog's absolute favorite reward and maximize its value to the dog.

Step 2: Create and build up your dog's expectation of the high value reward every time it is in the presence of odor –

whether that is when exposed to odor in tubes, boxes, drawers, or even your hand. Reward at this stage can be primary reward paired with odor or primary reward pay at odor.

Step 3: Offer your dog a choice of "odor" and "no odor." Wait for the dog to discover that "no odor" equates to "no reward." This essentially allows your dog to make a cognitive choice and extinguish any offered behaviors when target odor is not present.

Step 4: Once the dog begins makes the association of odor with reward, he understands that only odor yields reward. The dog's expectation and excitement for reward when in odor will increase essentially building value in the game. Observe and make note of your dog's natural changes of behavior (COB) when in odor.

Step 5: Set incremental behavior criteria and "capture" the desired behavior via well-timed and well-placed reward delivery (primary reward) or via secondary reward (marker word/clicker).


Step 6: Increase the behavior criteria required of the dog to obtain reward in very small increments until the desired TFR is achieved. The incremental criteria changes can be as simple as getting the dog's nose closer to odor, rewarding odor recognition, increasing duration/hold at odor, or waiting for the dog to sit or down at odor. One important thing to note, if desiring a sit or down as TFR, it is important for the dog to have sit or down on command away from odor before asking for it when in the presence of odor. Another way is to induce the sit or down at odor based on the position of the odor placement rather than commanding the position – where the nose goes, the butt will do the opposite.

During the above process, using the training principles of



classical conditioning, we can employ a secondary reward system with a verbal marker or clicker as a way to consistently and precisely time reward expectation. A secondary reward marker system allows the handler to clearly and precisely time the reward all while maintaining distance from the dog, staying out of the dog's way, and allowing the dog to work independently. All too often, handler's movements unintentionally become cues and part of the dog's final response chain. Once the dog has a clear understanding that the marker is a bridge to a reward, the handler has plenty of time to either move in after the marker to reward the dog at odor or let the dog move away from odor to retrieve the reward from the handler. Keeping the handler out of the dog's way makes the handler's movements prior to the dog's TFR less influencing on the dog.

At the end of the day, a dog will perform the behavior that is reinforced most consistently by the handler. If you want your dog to

hold/stare with nose to odor, but your timing is off and you reward when the dog looks back at you, your dog will ultimately give you a "look back" response, usually also accompanied by moving away from odor. Remember that precision begets precision: the more precise your timing and communication are with your dog, the more precise your dog's TFR will be. If you take the time to tap into your dog's cognitive side and give your dog the opportunity and tools he needs to communicate with you, your relationship will flourish, as will your Nosework performance. 

CLUB REMINDERS

UKC would like to provide some friendly reminders for club officers and workers filling out event paperwork:

1. Entry forms must be fully completed and signed by the exhibitor. Incomplete or unsigned entry forms should not be accepted.
2. All move-up or entry correction forms should be filed behind the dog's original entry form. Please do not staple.
3. All original entry forms must be sent to UKC with the judges' books. Clubs must retain copies of the judges' books, entry forms, and scoresheets (when applicable) for one year after the event.
4. Scoresheets from performance events should not be sent to UKC with the judges' books and entry forms.
5. Obedience, Rally, and Agility clubs should be sure to complete and submit a Junior Participation Form for each trial in which Junior Handlers are entered. Junior Participation Forms can be downloaded from our website.
6. When completing Conformation paperwork, please be sure to transfer the armband and UKC numbers of all Best of Breed winners onto the Group sheets.
7. When changing the scheduled date of a UKC event, please send the date change request as early as possible to scheduling@ukcdogs.com.
8. Any changes or corrections to an event that is already posted on the UKC Events Calendar, such as judge changes, can be emailed to us at scheduling@ukcdogs.com.

Attention Lure Coursing and Drag Racing Enthusiasts!

We realize there are too few clubs offering Lure Coursing and Drag Racing events, and would love to hear any suggestions can you provide to see more Lure Coursing and/or Drag Racing clubs form in your area.

Knowing there are some restrictions to both the Lure Coursing and Drag Racing programs, what changes would you like to see to improve these events?

Please send your comments and ideas to us at performance@ukcdogs.com.

Top Ten and All Stars Standings Reminder!

As 2019 comes to a close, we would like to remind all dogs competing on a Temporary Listing (TL) number that they will need to be permanently registered before January 31, 2020 in order to be reflected on any Top Ten or All Stars list for which they may be eligible. After January 31, all Top Ten and All Stars Standings will be considered final, and no changes or corrections will be made.



GROUP TOP TEN STANDINGS FAQ

If you haven't yet heard about the Group Top Ten Standings (new this year!), or have any questions about them, please take a moment to review the information below.

Q: Who can be on the Group Top Ten Standings list?

A: Any dog that is permanently registered with UKC is eligible to compete for a place on the Group Top Ten Standings. Dogs competing on a Temporary Listing number may earn Group Top Ten points, but are not eligible to be listed on the standings.

Q: How do you earn Group Top Ten points?

A: Group Top Ten points are awarded to each dog that wins a Group placement. One point is awarded for each dog shown in the breeds represented in the Group that a dog has placed over. For example, a Golden Retriever that wins 1st place in the Gun Dog Group over a Standard Poodle (6 Standard Poodles had competed for Best of Breed) and a Labrador Retriever (4 Labrador Retrievers had shown for Best of Breed) would be awarded 10 Group Top Ten points.

Q: Does my dog have to be a Champion to earn Group Top Ten points?

A: No, any dog that wins a Group placement will earn Group Top Ten points, regardless of what titles they have earned (if any).

Q: How do I check the Group Top Ten Standings?

A: The Group Top Ten Standings list is available on our website (ukcdogs.com/top-ten-group-standings). It is regularly updated.

Q: My dog is showing on a Temporary Listing (TL) number. How can they be on the Group Top Ten Standings?

A: If your Temporary Listed dog has earned enough Group Top Ten points to have a place in their Group ranking, they will need to complete the permanent registration process in order to make the list. All dogs must be permanently registered before January 31, 2020 in order to be reflected on the 2019 Group Top Ten Standings.

Q: What does my dog get for finishing the year on the Standings?

A: All dogs on the final Group Top Ten Standings for 2019 will receive a special certificate for their achievement from UKC, and will be invited to participate in the Top Ten competition at the 2020 Premier.

SAVE THE DATE



JUNE 11 - 14, 2020