

Record Books for Dog Sports

June 5, 2003

by Marie Logue

mclogue@tampabay.rr.com

Tip Sheet #3 — You Are the Author!

"My diary taught me almost all I know of running. ...Lined up on two full shelves of my office are fat notebooks labeled '1986', '1985', ...and so on. I'm prouder of them than of anything else I've published, because they are the evidence of where I've been. They are memorials to myself."

By Joe Henderson in his introduction to "Runner's World Training Diary".

The purpose of a training journal is to add organization to your training program, not add unnecessary work. Journal entries can be as brief or as elaborate as suits your style. You're the author.

DIARY INFORMATION—Day, date, location, conditions, etc. Trends are revealed when viewed in terms of the day's training session. Does your dog train better in cool weather? Work harder in class, the backyard, or the park? Is he burned out by Friday?

WHAT I PLAN TO TRAIN—Prior to a training session, whether it be class, competition or your backyard, list what you will train that day (you can even go on and enter a week's worth of training plans and more if you wish). My plan is based on what I need to work on to reach my goal. "Teach Winston 2 on 2 off, practice serpentines, practice my front crosses" are examples of a day's training list. Jumping drills to teach your dog to keep its feet up throughout an entire course, or teaching yourself foot work for front crosses may help you meet your goal of earning a particular title. If you're working on increasing speed, your day's plan may include working a speed circle, drilling weaves, and practicing fast starts.

EXACTLY WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED—Three men are at a swimming pool. One sat in the sun and never got into the water. The second sat poolside and dangled his feet in the water. The third swam laps in the pool. Later, all three will say they had been swimming that day.

It's easy for us to say we're training when in fact we are visiting with other competitors, setting up equipment, reflecting on last weekend's courses, etc. A journal entry eliminates rationalization and records the facts! It keeps us on track. It causes us to focus on the task at hand. So, following your training session, take a few minutes to list what you actually did, including solutions to challenges. How did you spend the time? What training aids did

you use that worked? A session's accomplishments might include that your dog learned to target, or is starting to do a fast table. Also write down anything you learned today.

SUCCESS ANALYSIS—Writing down your successes increases the probability that they will be repeated and forces you to focus on the positive aspects of your training and your sport. Did your dog do offside weaves all the way for the first time? Are you beginning to feel comfortable with front crosses? Did you get the automatic down on the table you've worked so hard for? Did your dog do a two-on-two-off and wait smiling for you to release him? This section is very important! Write down everything done well. Did you earn your first title? Did your dog leave all the bars up in class?

THIS WEEK'S/MONTH'S GOALS—These goals are your training plans for the week or month. They are the stepping stones to your ultimate (long term) goal. My goal for the week may be to review all of Winston's obedience exercises because I have an obedience trial coming up over the weekend.

LONG TERM GOAL—Briefly state your long-term goal each day! Establishing a long term goal is very personal. Your long-term goal may be to run an entire course and get every contact or to become prepared to enter your first competition in six months. It may be to qualify for the AKC National competition this year, or it may be a spot on the World Team. Only you can determine your goal and it must fit you and be YOUR goal, not someone else's goal for you.

COMMENTS—Write down things you'll want to refer back to, anything you learned today, reminders, anything about the day that stood out.

You are the author. The basic format is here...now it's up to you to make your journal come alive!

(Scroll down to see a sample journal page.)

