

U-CD Blitz, BH, ScH1, CGC: One of a Kind

Obedience, Hunting, Protection or Tracking This Schutzhund GSP Can Do It All

Though throughout my childhood I'd been blessed with many talented GSPs, I came to realize that one dog in particular, Blitz is "One of a Kind." Even though he may not be a NSS winner he certainly can impress any sports dog fanatic.

From the time I acquired Blitz as a 7 week old he immediately showed superb hunting instincts for bird work. At close to a year and half old Blitz and I obtained our first two legs of a UCD in just on weekend. Six months later, I started training with Andres Aportela, a Master Trainer at Professional Canine Center a Dog Trainers Academy, to touch up some of my obedience. At P.C.C.I, I finished my last leg of a UCD with a respectful 185 pts. Next I focused on obtaining a BH, an international competition dog title. Under the guidance of Andres Aportela (an International certified Master Trainer and certified D.E.A agent), Blitz and I learned the precision of the sport of Schutzhund. The BH includes a routine of several hundred paces, a group weave, a sit in motion, a long down under distraction and a down in motion with a recall. In May of 2003 Blitz was titled in the first step of the German sport of Schutzhund.

Schutzhund, a German inspired sport, is most closely related to military or police work. It is predominately done with working breeds and typically referred to as a Master Dog Sport. Trials are completed within 2-3 days, although it could take up to 2-4 years to prepare a dog for a full title (approx. 1500-2000 hours of training). It is a sport of intensity, precision, drive and control and tests the three basic instincts of the working dog: Tracking, Obedience and Protection. These trials test the ability of each individual dog in three separate levels of training, beginning with the Sch 1, following with a Sch 2 and ending with a Sch 3. After obtaining any of these Master Titles a dog and trainer are internationally-recognized.

Upon obtaining a BH, Andres, his helper and I realized that Blitz is not your typical bird dog, a gun dog that can do protection?! The more we all saw the better we realized he was going to make history. Natural with prey, Blitz quickly absorbed the idea of the sleeve, the man and the control game. Working with the natural fighting drive of the GSP, teaching

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and feeding the instincts to bite were not difficult. All the other instincts came into play while using the methods of Andres in teaching Blitz ground tracking and article indication. I continued to build on his obedience by training the dumbbell retrieves over obstacles and the send out with down command. In over a year's time Blitz retained many hours of training in several phases. Whether it is staying steady to wing and shot or tracking articles and protection he's done it all with style.

Trial Day: October 8th, 7:30 am and the Sch 1 dog teams arrive to report in and receive their draws. (In this sport usually there is a German judge sent over for the host club.) The butterflies start and the rain begin to mist. After I suited up in rain gear, Blitz and I heeled to the field to make history. With a judge of distinguished German Sheperd dog background he glances briskly at my master trainer with an inquiring look. I could only imagine what he's thinking: "a GSP doing a GSD sport?"

Blitz knocked the judges' socks off searching around a blind and keeping "the man" with a holding bark and held his ground! We scored respectively with 85pts, pronounced fighting drive. Obedience was next after a significant break for the dog and handler teams.

Surprisingly the rain held off until the obedience started. As the last brace of dog teams, I suited up one last time that afternoon for obedience. Despite the wet slippery weather and a few deductions we did extremely well with 95pts.

Trial Day: October 9th 10:30am, it was a brisk windy Saturday with one of the hardest rainstorms that fall. Through rain that seemed to come down horizontally the Judge, Blitz and I took a long walk to our flag. There before us was our last phase: tracking (Blitz's strongest instinct). Blitz ate the track as if he had tracked in such weather hundreds of times before. Methodical and slow he indicated each article perfectly. The last article unfortunately did not have had enough scent, he hovered over it, and continued without

properly indicating. After reporting out the judge told me it would have been a 100pt track if not for the last article indication, his performance still made my day. In torrential downpours and conditions that we have not even practiced tracking in before our score was 93pts. I know in my heart Blitz gave 110%.

As I walked away from the last day of competition I looked at the drenched dog walking beside me and thought of the amazing opportunity he has allowed me to experience. He is truly a GSP that is a beloved family companion, as well as a performance athlete. In my experience in raising and training an animal that contains the knowledge, concept of application and instinct to retain it is priceless. Along the way many have witnessed the training process and the character of Blitz and have been intrigued by him. Following the competition Blitz went in for an orthopedic evaluation to investigate a lump on his front leg on his ulna. Fortunately after consulting with the orthopedic vet we decided it would be best to remove part of his ulna. Two weeks later I scrubbed in for observation and assistance. The surgery went smoothly and the bone segment was sent out for biopsy. Thankfully the results returned benign. Recovery was tedious and caused minor temporary depression. Over six weeks time I couldn't tell who was recovering more. Yet all ended well with minor restrictions and a clean bill of health, allowing Blitz to continue to compete in the future.

Blitzen, a hunting dog, was able to obtain and conquer one full title of Schutzhund, a working dog sport, considered to be the ultimate challenge. With hunting, obedience, protection, and tracking I truly believe he is "ONE OF A KIND." The only thing left to tackle is AKC Tracking and Agility - Watch Out For Us!