

Versatility Award – Past, Present and Future

by Linda Brady

Every year I get many questions about the Versatility Award that is offered at the BSCA National Specialty. What is it? How do I enter? What does my dog need to do? What does it cost? Hopefully this article will answer a lot of your questions.



THE PAST

The Versatility Award was started as a way of coaxing the conformation dogs out of their comfort zone and encouraging them to join in the Performance Events and show that there is more to a Belgian Sheepdog than just a “pretty face.” At first there was just a couple of dogs entered each year but as the years progressed more and more dogs have entered the various venues in hopes of going home with the Versatility Award Plaque and the keeper gift.

Being a Versatile Belgian means that you meet the requirements to show in Conformation and can also qualify in the Performance events. Many times over the years members who did not understand how the Versatility Award originated, lobbied to change the rules, to omit showing in Conformation. Although there has been many long, heated debates, the rules continues to hold. The bottom line is that if you omit it, the Versatility Award will no longer be the award that it was originally intended to be. (As of the past few years the Performance Award has been added for that purpose)

The current rules and qualifications are as follow.

5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points	25 points
Herding Tested	Herding Pre Trial	Herding Started	Herding Intermediate	Herding Advanced
	Agility Pref - Novice	Agility Pref - Open	Agility Pref- Ex	
		Agility – Novice	Agility – Open	Agility - Excellent
Rally Novice	Rally Advanced	Rally Excellent		
Beginner Novice 2 pts (added 2012)		Obed - Novice	Obed - Open	Obed - Utility
			Tracking TD	TD or VST



1. Dogs must qualify per the AKC definition of the event, in two of the five AKC performance events – Regular Obedience, Rally Obedience, Tracking, Herding or Agility
2. Dogs must participate in, and be able to qualify in, a regular, non-regular or sweepstakes conformation class.
3. Dogs that are “excused” or “disqualified” from participation in any event, not including normal “non-qualifying scores” in performance events will be disallowed/excused from further Versatility Award competition and participation for that year’s award.
4. Performance event points
Dogs that qualify in more than one class in the same category of the five AKC performance events (obedience, herding, agility, tracking) may count only the higher class or score, except for tie-breakers.
Ties will be broken by
 - a. Dogs that qualify for all four categories (as listed in #1 above) regardless of level, except that passing the HT shall not count for the tiebreaker.
 - b. Highest qualifying class(es) based on the above ranking.
 - c. Highest score – Herding Trial score, ½ obedience score, TD-85 points, PT-60pts.

Participants in the Versatility Award must sign up BEFORE the closing date of the regular class entries.

Information will be provided in the Premium list and/or Specialty Information Booklet and/or on the BSCA Web Site, so sufficient “participant” rosettes are available. There is no charge for this event.

Over the years the rules of qualifications have been tweaked. Some of the changes include that even in a conformation class the dog must “qualify” or not be “excused” or “disqualified”. Many believe that this rule was instituted because a non-black dog won the Versatility Award in 1996, and deservingly so. But the bottom line was that the rule was changed so that the qualification rule was clear across the board. If you needed to qualify in the performance events and could not be excused or disqualified, then the same rule had to apply to the conformation class.

In the beginning everything about the award was very confusing. No sign up sheets, a lot of the time there was no clear person in charge. Everyone just sort of showed and then on Saturday “somebody” calculated the results and “somebody” won. There were only a handful of dogs so it didn’t take that long. At that time you also had to show in the CGC event, even if you already had a CGC title. That turned out to be very difficult because if you were showing in an event at the same time as the CGC, you could not get there and thus, became ineligible for the award and most of the time you never knew ahead of time where and when the CGC was going to be held. So that qualification was dropped.

The next thing to change was that you had to sign up ahead of time. Signing up in the Hospitality Room worked for a few years, but as the number increased to 12-15 dogs there wasn’t enough Participant Rosettes to hand out. As the numbers increased, so did the difficulty of the job of calculating the numbers, verifying the results and figuring out who the winner was. With so many different show secretaries, it was a nightmare, especially when so much was done by hand and not by computer! So another rule was adopted – Sign up in the Hospitality room and you had to **POST YOUR RESULTS**. We guessed at the number of ribbons and usually had enough or just short by a few and some people didn’t take theirs or donated them back to someone who didn’t get one.

The next problem to solve was that it was becoming apparent that the handlers were not posting their scores once they NQ’d in something. That left the person in charge of the award to hunt down the scores anyway, to make sure didn’t just forgot to write it down. This was not a job for the faint at heart! I spent one full week hunting down agility scores, only to get them on Saturday night about half hour before the banquet! According to what I had, the wrong person would have been awarded the trophy.

I try to keep good records and I have the list of winners with pictures in a photo album that I place in the Hospitality Room every year at the National Specialty. Stop by and take a look at it sometime. In most cases, it also lists the participants and Celebration of Life Trophy winners and the past Banquet Booklets since 2002.

Included in the photo album are pictures of each of the previous winners:

1994

Ch XIV Karat Darq Spirit UD HS & Melinda Hughes

1995

Ch Rodan De Ha Masion Du Bois & Tami Worley

1996

Rigel de Breeze & Allison Schaeffer

1997, 1998, 1999

BISS BIS Ch SumerWynd Dana of Isengard VCD2 HS HI HXAd MX MXJ & Lorra Miller

2000

BIS BISS Am/Can/UKC Ch Sandcastle’s Kutting Edge CDX HT RN U-CD CGC & Sandy Shaw

2001, 2002, 2003

Ch MACH Discovery’s Great Escape CDX HIC CGC WDX-C & Linda Brady

2004

Ch Isengard’s Just in Time HSAd HIAs OA OAJ & Lorra Miller

2005
Ch Quakemakers Nepenthe CDX RN HT MX MXJ & Barbara Harrill

2006
Liswyn's I'll Pay the Piper OA OAJ HXAs HIAd

2007
Ch MACH Reverie's Smooth Sailing MXC MJC CD RE & Linda Brady

2008
Ch Spitfire's Blazing Savanna CD RAE PT CGC TT AHBA-HCT FMD & Nicki & Ernest Jones

2009
AKC/UKC Ch Reverie Rocky Royale O'Horde CDX MX MXJ OAP OJP OF RAE TT HIC CGC TDO FMD & Gail O'Neil

2010
Ch MACH Isengard's Slide'N Into Bayview MXB MJS XF CDX RE HIC & Linda Brady

2011
Am/Can Ch Tczar To Russia With Love UD RD AX AXJ HXc TDI & Tami Worley

2012
Rolin Ridge's Genuine Gold CDX RE PT MX MXJ OF & Stacy Garvin

Which brings us to THE PRESENT!

One by one, the changes of this award are fewer and further apart and it now seems that the Versatility Award is running smoothly and not as much of a headache as it once was. Exhibitors sign up in advance, rosettes are ordered, sheets are posted in the Hospitality room for the exhibitors to post their results and with the help of the show secretaries in all the different venues and the use of computers – the tallying of the scores is easier. Let me give a BIG Thank you to the 2012 show secretaries! The agility trial secretary printed me out judge's books at the end of every class and the conformation show superintendent made sure that I was the one that got the copies first, before they disappeared. After marking my catalog they were taken directly to the Hospitality room and posted! They were great!

At the present time the above qualifications hold. Last year 20 exhibitors signed up for the award before the deadline, which is always the same date as the regular show entries close. There is no charge for this event. 18 showed. Novice dogs, Advanced dogs, Herding, Agility, Obedience, Tracking...all the venues were covered! The only changes that have been made lately is that Rally has been added and we are in the process of adding the newer titling classes that AKC now offers. Beginner Novice was this year and the others will be added soon. Exhibitors must post their scores whether they NQ or Qualify. Any missing results will mean that the dog is ineligible for the award. No more hunting down scores and/or the exhibitor.

Each year it is exciting to hand out all the participant rosettes at the banquet to those who worked hard to try and win the Versatility Award. Whether you win or not, you are acknowledged for all your effort, time, money in entries and dedication! There is still time to work on yours dogs skills for next years National, which brings us to.....

THE FUTURE

2013 ---- Can I put your dog's name here?