

## K N O W L E D G E

**EQUALS SPEED**

By Dawn Weaver



Well, this month I have good and bad news for you. The good news is that my book Knowledge Equals Speed! will be available from 10 September via my website.

The bad news? Because I have spent so long on said book, my dogs haven't been trained for months - to say they aren't pleased with me would be understatement!

The following is the Preface from my book which I hope you will enjoy:

"I decided that Knowledge Equals Speed! should be the title of this book once it was brought to my attention that I keep saying this during training sessions! I have long believed that if the handler tells

the dog early enough where he wants the dog to go next, then the dog has all the knowledge he needs to keep the power on. Racing drivers always want to know the track they are going to race round really well so that they can do high speeds around the circuit, and the same principles apply with dogs.

If you watch a good handler run a course, it looks not only smooth but also as if the dog already knows the course, as if he is almost on auto-pilot. A dog can run smoothly and confidently if he has the information he needs in advance. If you do not consistently supply your dog with the information he needs to drive ahead, if your commands and handling signals are always late, then there is no point in your dog going quickly. Your dog cannot go fast if he has no information available to enable him to proceed; he can only carry on with the course at the speed in which the handling is supplied.

Speed is a habit, so if your handling and commands are consistently late the dog will become habituated to going at the speed in which they are delivered. If you only divulge handling information slowly your dog will always go at that speed, particularly if when he takes the initiative and tries to drive ahead of you he gets into trouble for doing the wrong obstacle. If your dog is displaying signs of frustration, such as spinning, barking, sniffing or nipping the handler, it is because you are providing him with late information. However, I am always going to let my dog down on occasion because no handler is perfect. The most important thing, from my dog's point of view, is that I never let him find out! My dog doesn't need to know when I have made a mistake. Agility should always be a game to my dogs and I will have failed miserably if I ever let them think there is anything serious or important about this game we play together.

I always want to be true to my dog with my handling system. At the most basic level, I have three rules I always apply:

1. My shoulders must always be totally accurate in facing the direction I expect my dog to take. Sounds easy, doesn't it? However, it is not so easy in practice! Once this rule is applied, though, dogs find it exceedingly easy to follow what the handler



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requires. We will be exploring this method throughout the book.

- The path I run on the ground will directly affect the line of the dog. When I am running a sequence, I invariably try to mimic the line I want the dog to take.
- I never tell my dog 'No' while training agility or in the competition ring. This would slow him down and worry him when in fact it is me, the handler, who has given my dog the direction or 'knowledge' of where to go next on the course. My dog can only follow my commands or body positioning/signals, so either my cues are incorrect for that sequence or my teaching is inadequate and doesn't allow the dog to achieve the behaviour I desire.

There is a general principle with regards handling that runs through this book: while I am facing forwards on a course my dog will accelerate, but when I am turning back and facing my dog he will slow down. This is because he doesn't know where to go next as he hasn't been given any direction to follow. Whenever my dog looks at me I want to be cueing his next direction so that he can flow in a smooth and confident way, knowing what is expected and without any doubt or uncertainty.

I want my handling to be totally unambiguous to my dog. My aim is to provide a handling system for my dog which ensures that the correct decision is obvious... Knowledge Equals Speed!"

**Knowledge Equals Speed! £16.95 plus p&p. For details of how to order a personally signed copy (cheque or credit card), visit**

**[www.dawnweaveragility.com](http://www.dawnweaveragility.com)**



**Editor's Note:**  
*Many thanks to Dawn for providing a highly informative and fascinating series of articles.*



## Alpha Agility Challenge Golden Valley Heat

THE Alpha Agility Challenge heat held as part of the Golden Valley weekend saw a massive entry with competitors keen to make it through to the final at Stoneleigh Park Country Festival.

Judge Tim Jones set a challenging course that saw plenty of clear rounds in this very competitive heat. The eventual winner Emma Greening was in the lead from before 10am with her dog Tess The Rest. By late afternoon Emma was exhausted checking the scoreboard but elated when she found she had held on to her winning place.

With such a large entry Alpha Feeds doubled the qualifying places so congratulations are due to the following 10 partnerships:-

**Emma Greening  
Tess The Rest**

**Sian Powell - Midsummer  
Llangwn Blodyn**

**David Duke  
Tara Boom de ah**

**Barbara Cranfield  
Cleyside Hanky Panky**

**Debbie Coles  
Kinsters Wood Yew**

**Georgina Baker  
Borderstorm Dare To Have Fun**

**Hannah Banks - Zazz Ma Girl**

**Christine Hines - Taddymoor Jed**

**Nicola Mullings - Kamakari Devil Woman**

**Stuart Doughty - Stillinn Dought**

