

## Campaigning a Champion Dog

**Showing a dog to achieve a national ranking requires the right dog, time, and money.**

*By Allan Reznik*

Q. I have a dog who has been doing a lot of winning, she is an American Kennel Club champion, Canadian Kennel Club champion, and a United Kennel Club grand champion. She has best in show wins, and regional and national specialty wins. I'm wanting to campaign her, but I have no idea where to begin. I also would love to find a sponsor. How do I do this? I am pretty new to the show dog world. Any help would be great.

A. Congratulations on your impressive titles and wins.

The term "campaigning" means showing a champion for a period of time – generally for at least a year – to try to attain a national ranking. Some owners would like to end up with the No. 1 dog of their breed in the country, while others are more ambitious and are hoping for ranking in their Group or perhaps to end up among the Top 10 dogs of all breeds in the country. Think through these goals; it's easy to spend \$250,000 financing such a campaign. Do you have the deep pockets necessary for entry fees, travel, advertising, and promotion?

It's important to determine if your dog has the constitution to withstand a campaign. He must be able to fly or drive across the country, eat at all hours, show his best indoors and out, and really thrive on the hectic schedule of a show dog. Some dogs love it; others would much rather be home on the couch.

You didn't mention if you've been using a professional handler to show your dog or handling him yourself. Most owner-handlers, even talented ones, aren't able to take time off work each week and leave their families to cross the country attending dog shows. This is when employing a professional handler is a practical, if not cheap, alternative. Ask your handler for an unbiased assessment of your dog. Does the handler think he is special material?

If so, handlers often hear of backers who are willing to sponsor a worthy dog of a specific breed. Typically, a sponsor is added on as a co-owner of the dog, but sort all of this out and put together a contract in writing so all parties know their obligations and there is no room for misunderstanding.