

Success in Show Dogs

Can an unknown dog ever score a big win?

Richard G. Beauchamp

Posted: Thu Dec 2 00:00:00 PST 2004

There is no doubt in my mind that England's Crufts owns the title "greatest show on earth" when it comes to the dog game. The incredible scope of the show and the fact that it now draws entries from the entire dog world makes it unchallenged in that respect. As I sat and watched the finals there in March 2004, I mentally narrowed the lineup down to the two or three dogs from which I would have chosen for the supreme award. And then the judge, Margaret Everton, pointed. Her choicethe Whippet, Ch. Cobyco Call The Tune.

Perhaps not the dog I would have pointed to, but then I wasn't judging, so what I would have done didn't count for two hoots in a handbag. As has been said for time immemorial, ringside judging is the easiest and least meaningful of all our dog pursuits.

The Whippet bitch was probably the least known, certainly the least touted, dog to score Best in Show over some 22,000 dogs entered at the Crufts show in many years. But as the months have passed since the show I've given that decision a lot of thought. Where else in the world would the lesser-known dog, shown by for all intents and purposes a little-known breeder/owner-handler at this level of competition, ever dream of coming home from an event of such magnitude with the Best in Show rosette clutched in her hand? This particularly so in that the all-breed Best in Show award was the first such that the dog had ever won? Certainly not in America!

Have you ever stopped to wonder why this kind of thing doesn't happen here? Has it ever occurred to you as odd that only our dogs that have been winning can win at least at our big shows? Would the proverbial "little old lady from Pasadena" with her wonderful but totally unpublicized dog ever come home from one of our major shows with the top award in hand? Perhaps, but highly unlikely!

If it did happen, what do you think the reaction would be? The pundits would have a field day! The judge is a wild card, totally unpredictable, a giant-killer! How could a dog that has never won anything legitimately defeat dogs with record-shattering accomplishments? You would hear reason upon reason as to why this happened and why it shouldn't have happened. The only thing you would not likely hear anything about is how good the dog was that did win.

I'll tell you, after 50 years in this game I have come to the point where I have nothing but admiration for the fellow who gets in there and uses his knowledge of dogs to point to the best dog in the class, whether it be a Puppy class or Best in Show. The fellow who doesn't concern himself with what has happened or what will happenhe simply applies the knowledge he has to do his job. And there's only one job a judge is responsible for performing, and that is to put up the best dog in the class that stands before him at the moment.