

ROBSON VALLEY TRIAL

On September 14th handlers from all over BC and Alberta arrived at the first ever Robson Valley Sheep Dog Trial. The trial was hosted by Jennifer L Arrivee and her husband Dave with Jennifer's parents helping out. The family created a welcoming atmosphere. The camping field was large with lots of room to run dogs. Jennifer's delegated work list ensured the trial ran smoothly with people were more than willing to do their jobs without prompting.

The judge was Dale Montgomery from Maple Creek SK. With a life time of knowledge as a stockman, competitor and judge, Dale was very fair and consistent over the weekend.

The trial started Friday afternoon with three handler teams competing in the Novice Novice class. Terri and Ace , Carolyn and Scotty, and Cathie and Crook were all unable to post scores as the sheep were very "light" and fast for the novice dogs. However, each competitor reported improvements in their dogs over their last trial.

The BC Stock Dog Association AGM was well attended Friday evening at 7pm and featured the election of a new president, Jennifer L Arrivee.

Saturday, the trial started with the Pro Novice class at 6:30 am. The course was challenging with a right hand drive that went down a slope, followed by a very tricky cross drive, requiring the dog had to hold the pressure line so as not to loose the sheep over a bridge/culvert and gate leading into the adjacent out of bounds field! There were several teams that fell victims to the strong draw losing their sheep over the culvert. Those who "walked" their sheep (two ewes and one lamb) around the course were usually fortunate enough to get the pen. Gord Lazzarotto and Toni were top team on day one of the Pro Novice with a score of 73. Wayne and Gem, Lorne and Reis and Brian and Lass all had nice runs scoring in the 70's.

On Sunday the Pro Novice course was moved to the left and was not positioned as close to the "escape culvert". Pro Novice started with a number of RT's. Then Lynn Schweb and her young dog Muggs pulled off a 69 to break the slump! The top five Pro Novice runs were spectacular with George Walker and his Kelpie Mia laying down an 80! Wayne and Gem and Gord and Toni were in hot pursuit with scores of 79 and 77. All the top runs were slow, steady and precise. Brian and his young dog Lass also had a nice run to score 75. Pro Novice Over All winners were Gord and Toni with 150, narrowly beating Wayne and Gem (149) and George and Mia (149). Bev Sommers donated hand painted large cement stones as prizes and of course there were fancy big ribbons as well to go along with generous prize money.

The first open trial followed the Pro-Novice trial Saturday morning. Two fields were involved. Dog and handler stood at the post and could see their set of sheep slightly off to the left in the second field below them. From the post dogs ran down hill and crossed a bridge over a creek and then most dogs kicked out right to outrun around and behind their sheep set in the second field setting up a challenging dog leg fetch. The fetch line then crossed the bridge and up to a second post in front of the handler. On day one it was a right hand drive followed by the challenging cross drive with the peril of losing ones sheep over the culvert! A few were unlucky, but there were also many beautiful runs. Jennifer L'Arrivee and Tweed were number one scoring 85 with Wayne and Drift scoring 81 to place second. Gayle and Tess had an incredible shed to place 4th on day one.

In Sunday's open Jennifer and Bee were first up. They set a high bar for others to follow. scoring 91! Not to be beaten that day! Lee Lumb and Colt were second up demonstrating a calm, smokin' hot run to score 86! Carol Nelson and Kale snuck in for second place with an 88 later in the day! There were many high scoring runs in the open contest on day two that were enjoyable for all to watch. Over all open winners were Jennifer and Kinloch Bee (169), Carol and Kale (164) and Jennifer and Tweed (158).

The trial was well attended by local spectators and they were already asking when the next trial would be held. The concession food was great and we were lucky enough to have Terry Stickle from Practically Famous Leather attend so we all could buy our dogs fancy bling!

The Robson Valley Sheep Dog Trial will go down as a favourite memory for many!
Thank you Jennifer and Dave and all the volunteers!

Kathy Williams