

Sonia

A Discussion of Schutzhund

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Contributing Editor

Editor's note: It's clear to me that Sonia doesn't mind the obedience or protection phase of Schutzhund. I wonder why she didn't share with us her views on tracking? Maybe like most of us who have participated in doing this "sport", she doesn't like the early morning wake up calls!

Before anyone sighs, and says "now why was this article in a 'blood and guts' magazine like Dog Sports, I'll tell you. It is one of the first articles that even touches on the TRAINING aspect of the sport of Schutzhund, and I want to have more TRAINING articles in this magazine.

The following is a letter from GSD "Sonia" to one of her doggy pals on the GSD list on the Internet. She received a message from 15-year old "Halla", wanting to know if there were other "mature" dogs out there, what they were doing with their lives, and how they handled their humans. Owner Julia Priest intercepted the message, and would like to share it with DSM readers. Maybe it will give the readers another outlook on how to view the sport of Schutzhund!

Wow Halla---you ARE old---no disrespect intended. I'm so glad to hear from you, I thought I was old, but I guess I'm middle aged---will be nine in April.

I had this damn bloat/torsion thing back on 4th of July. My stomach blew up like the Hindenberg, and then twisted all around in the most God awful excruciating way. I managed to make it up the stairs to tell my human, Julie, that I was in a real bad way, and she took one look at me and knew. She whisked me off to the emergency place, since it was midnight on a holiday, and she kept whimpering and stroking me the whole time while we were going real fast. Jeesh – I looked at the speedometer and it was over 100 mph. Didn't think a 93 Dodge van could do that! Anyway, we got there and then they took an X-Ray, muzzled me (how absolutely tasteless and rude!) and then stuck a big needle in my side. Yow! Actually, when all the gas whooshed out I felt a ton better, but it still hurt like crazy. Then, I don't remember much, because they gave me some happy juice and knocked me out. The last thing I remember is Julie crying and petting me, saying, "Do whatever you have to do to make her all right!" The Docs there were really nice, but when I woke up, I felt like I'd been run over by a bus, and my stomach was all tight and sore. Then, to add insult to injury, they put one of those cone things on my head so I couldn't even lick my own stomach wound. Julie didn't come for some time (I think 4 or 5 sleeps and one eat) but then she did, and took me home. They didn't give me much to eat there, but to be honest I wasn't all that hungry anyway. Julie said I should be a prize show dog now because I cost \$2300. I don't know about that but I sure was glad to get home. For three weeks I had to live in an ex pen in the den, and got to lie around on pillows, and Julie even brought me my food three times a day! I was a little mushy, but I got some cottage cheese and baby food with it, which was pretty cool. I still only get small meals, but really, I feel fine.

Last week, in fact, I went to a tournament and showed my stuff by walking right next to Julie (she calls it “foooos”) and sitting and lying down while she runs away. Sometimes she comes back to me and sometimes she’s too lazy to, so she says “heeee-er” real loud, and I gotta run up and sit in front of her til she decides what to do, and then I go around to her side and we “foooos” again. Then she throws a wooden thing, and again is too lazy to go get it herself, so she tells me “brrring” , and I get it. No sooner do I bring it back to her than she goes and throws it away again, over a wall, which, although it would be far more economical to walk around, she insists that I jump over it, bring her damn wooden thing, and sit in front of her again. The last part really kills me though. She asks me all secret like in a whisper, do I want my ball, do I want my ball? No shit, Sherlock. I only fall asleep with it in my mouth. Of course I want my ball. What has that got to do with anything? Well, she keeps asking do I want it, then finally points her arm up the field and says “for owse”, like, that’s where it is. I run like my tail’s on fire to go get it, and the next thing I know she yells “plotz”, so I got to lay down real fast. What a rip. No ball or anything. Oh, well, she seems real happy when we do this stuff, and th epeople watching all make a big noise slapping their front paws together, so I humor her. I know that she will play with me with my ball eventually, so it’s not all work.

The best part comes after that anyway. I get to go search for this jerk with the removable arm, who is not real bright, because he always hides in the same place. I always find him - duh – and then he holds real still, because I tell him in no uncertain terms, that if he makes any sudden moves, I’m gonna remove his arm for him again, and this time, by God, It’s gonna bleed. Then, Julie shows up, taking her sweet time while some foreign guy stands there looking at me barking at this guy. I’m like, “What are you, new?” to this judge guy. I look at him, look at Julie, and keep barking at this guy. Then Julie steps in, like she’s going to handle it – right – (!) – and then, don’t ask me why, blows it and tells the guy to leave. He does, and we go back in the tent where I found him, and she lets him get away. I swear, these humans are just a trifle too slow to survive in the wild, if you ask me. Then, we just saunter up the field like nothing happened, and I am totally thinking, “Yo, dummy, this guy is still out there somewhere. You wanna be just a little alert or something?” Julie is clueless – no instincts whatever, and keeps saying “foooos” like that’s important right now. Geeez. Just like I knew this was going to happen, this same idiot comes running out from another tent, waving a stick for Pete’s sake! Well, I take care of that, no problem, and the idiot hits me with the stick. What can he be thinking? I just bit the heck out of him and he’s still not gonna give it up. Finally, he gets a clue and quits fighting, so I gotta cut him loose, and here comes my beloved pet human, Julie. (You know she’s really loyal and affectionate, and she does pay my medical bills, but I’m starting to think that it’s a good thing she never reproduced.) She grabs my neck chain, yells at the guy to get lost, and lets him get away again! How many times you want me to find and catch this guy for you, Julie? What do you think this is, a Sport or something? Off runs the bionic arm, and as I am fairly tearing uo the

ground to go for it again, she turns loose my collar and I'm off. By this time, I really am PO'd – after all, he did hit me with that stick – so I'm not slowing down for nothing! When I get about halfway there, he turns around and raises the stick at me again, like it's gonna matter. Look, moron, you hit me once and I still bit you, so what makes you think running and yelling at me with a stick will wrok any better? He's too dumb to stop, so I have to hit him real hard with my whole mouth, and I must say, it is a satisfying crunch. From way back in the field, I hear Julie yelling "owwwwwwse", like she's worried for this guy with the stick! Go figure. All right, so he quits fighting, I let go, but I really give it to him barking, because he does not seem to be getting the big picture about knocking this aggression stuff off. Slowpoke Julie finally shows up, tells me to "plotz", which is really poor tactics if you ask me. This guy has already shown a tendency to run off, and I should really be on my feet. This publicity about humans bieng the one with higher intelligence is vastly overstated. Now, she goes and takes the stick, as though she had anything to do with it, and parades the guy up to the judge character with me watching Mr. Arm all the way. She gives the stick and the bad guy to the judge like it's a present or something, and then we leave. Crying out loud. I do all the work and she gives the prize away. All in a night's work, I guess. They gave her some kind of trophy thing. I guess for being smart enough to hang out with me and we ate some wieners, let my grandkids out to play a while and went home. She needs to work on her survival skills, but I guess I'll keep her around a few more years. Anyway, I'm glad to hear from you and I hope I will still be around when I am your age!

Your pal, Sonia

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