

I was blessed to have been able to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> USBCHA National Cattledog Finals. The trial field was in the same place as last years Finals, little moon lake outside of Torrington WY. This property was generously offered again by Georgene Lebar. The camping area was set in the trees, and there was plenty of room to walk you dogs around the lake, or take them for a swim. The supper club was open for food and libation. The all Black Angus Heifers were provided by Bryan Rice. As it was last year the cattle were very even, and it was difficult to tell one from the other. I thought they were a tad lighter than last year, weighing around 550-600lbs. The cattle were very lightly broke, and tough. For me the most important part of a trial is even stock, even easy or even tough, but even.

The first day the calves were set at 200 yards. This was to see how they cattle were going to run, as 1/2 the dogs did not get cattle down the field last year. This year 63% made the fetch on the first day, still tough. The drives were 100 yards each with a Y chute and a 3 sided pen with a wing.

The second day the distances were pushed out and the drive were changed to help accommodate the wind. The wind blew ALL the time we were there. It blew strong and not so strong, and from every direction. It wore me out. I don't think my dogs could hear on any of the fetches until they were almost to the fetch gates. By day 2 I did not even try to whistle until the cattle were close.

The local committee did a wonderful job and the trial ran VERY smoothly. There were trade booths and food all 4 days. They fixed the sharp exhaust corner that was a problem lasts year; they also had more riders at set out. The set out and exhaust cowboys were WONDERFUL, really top notch.

There was an announcer all 4 days, and he kept the banter going with stories on handlers (some true some funny and maybe true). The cattle dog committee worked together very well with Herbert Holmes leadership, and Red Oliver's wisdom and humor. John Doyle and Gerald Bunny did a fantastic job, and 2 judges is the way to go. It is too much pressure for one person, as the sheep side found many years ago. The course was clean with no posts at the panels, and the handlers meetings were short, and sweet.

The final day the outrun was around 350 yards, we had an L chute that was tricky to load, and the 3 sided pen stayed the same size (no wing) for the 6 calves as it had been for the 3. The back panel was 16 foot and the sides were 12 feet...not much room for 6 calves, you had to load the pen very quietly. It had been cool for the first 3 days, but the final day it was quite warm...And oh yes did I mention the wind!

The first outrun was to the left, and the turn back outrun was to the right, and tricky. There were some horses in a nearby field, and some dogs keyed in on them. The wind made it difficult for the dogs to hear the verbal look back if the dogs did not have a look back whistle. The cowboys did a great job of getting the 2nd set out, and nobody had to wait for cattle.

I was very proud of husband Marty and his good dog Duster; they ran very well especially on their second run where the cattle wanted to split. Duster is only 5 so they will be a team to watch for a few years. I was happy with both of my boys, this was Blue's 6th and final cattle finals, and I really wanted to make the top 20 one last time. Kell was very consistent, and we just had all the stars align on the last day. Kell read the cattle well, I did not make in major mistakes, and we had nice cattle.

I am so blessed to have wonderful early mentors in Angie Untisz, Lynn Leach, Lee Lumb, Gayle Cochlan, Kathy Rose and Karen Child.

Moving to the state of Jefferson I was lucky to be guided (advice, sheep setting, cattle drives and all round you go girl encouragement) of Geri Byrne, Ellen Skillings, Elizabeth Baker, and Amy Coapman.

My husband Marty has been a rock and my biggest fan, and my kids were angels on a long (2,500 miles) hard trip. I am so proud of Marty and Duster; they are such a great team. I could not train, and trial, without the full support of my family.

The local committee did a tremendous amount of good work, and I look forward to going back to WY next year.

There are no words for my gratitude to the dogs. Blue and Kell have taught me so much, and carried me through times that I would have quit had I been run by me. I surely did nothing to deserve these dogs.

So many people helped me along the way, I hope I can give back 1/2 as much as I have been blessed to receive.

Lana