

### American Eskimo Dogs

Our two-part article, to continue in the September issue, is contributed by Jay Kessel. Jay and his wife Lynn Ancona have achieved a total of 45 MACH titles on seven different American Eskimo Dogs. Jay is an AKC agility judge and also has handled the only American Eskimo Dog thus far that has been on the AKC Agility World Team. They competed in South Africa in 2013.

#### KODY AND DENISE, AN AGILITY TEAM EXTRAORDINAIRE

##### PART I: THE ROAD TO MACH48

In AKC agility, the Master Agility Championship (MACH) title is awarded for “superior performance on the agility course.” Speed and consistency are key. To acquire the MACH, a dog must achieve a minimum of 750 speed points and 20 double qualifying scores (“double Q’s”) obtained from the Master Standard Agility and Master Jumpers with Weaves classes. One speed point is awarded for

each full second the dog is under standard course time.

The MACH is a coveted title. Along the journey to the MACH, handlers keep track of speed points and double Q’s they get at each trial. As they get closer to the 20th double Q, pressure kicks in, often making it difficult to get the last few double Q’s.

When teams finally get the MACH, they celebrate with a lap around the ring as the crowd applauds. The club awards them with a huge rosette and a jump bar, known as a MACH bar. A MACH celebration often follows, with “MACH cake.” Everybody signs the MACH bar. It is a *huge* accomplishment. In the days before Facebook, friends of the MACH team would usually take out a celebratory ad in *Clean Run* magazine.

Consistent and speedy teams repeat this accomplishment and can achieve a MACH2, and even a MACH3, and beyond. Multiple MACHs mean that the handler and dog are

really in sync: The dog knows what the handler is thinking, and the handler knows what the dog is thinking.

Last year, Denise Schneider and her American Eskimo Dog Kody achieved their 48th MACH. Kody has more MACHs than any other dog in AKC history. How is this possible? This team must be so in sync that they finish each other’s sentences!

Following is an interview with Denise about their amazing journey.

*You run and have run other dogs besides Kody, but is Kody your first agility dog?*

Denise: Yes, Kody is my Novice A dog. [The Novice A Division is for a dog that has never received any agility title and is handled by a person that has never put an agility title on a dog.]

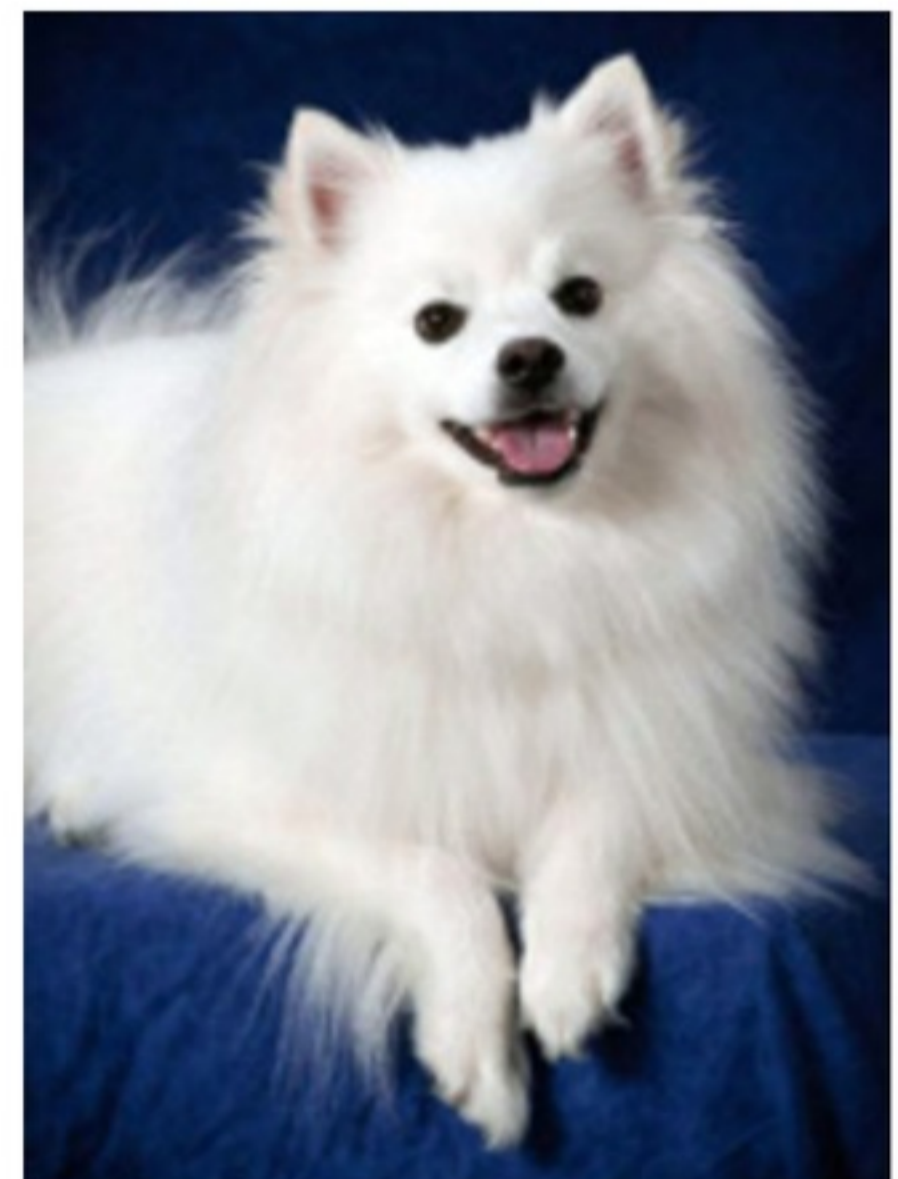
*How long did it take you to get through Novice, Open, and Excellent with Kody?*

Novice and Open did not take long at all: Novice STD took three qualifying runs within four trial days;

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*Denise Schneider and American Eskimo Dog Kody. Kody would become MACH48 SR Extreme Curiosity, MXS12, MJS13, MFB, TQX, T2B5, CGC, TKA—achieving more MACHs than any other dog in AKC history.*

Novice JWW, three qualifying runs within six trial days; Open STD, three qualifying runs within four trial days;

and Open JWW, three qualifying runs within three trial days.

Excellent was more difficult:

Excellent STD took three qualifying runs over 32 trial days, and Excellent JWW took three qualifying runs

COURTESY DENISE SCHNEIDER

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over nine trial days.

*When you got into Master, how long did it take before you and Kody started to achieve a level of consistency?*

We reached the Master level in both STD and JWW in June 2011. It took us six trial days of running before we earned our first double Q on June 19, 2011. Once we earned our first double Q we ran 34 trial days until we started to show consistency.

Our journey in Master to earn the 20 double Q's for our first MACH spanned from June 19, 2011 to March 17, 2012 (9 months /66 trial days). We had reached our 750 points earlier than the 20 Double Q's.

*What were some of the things that kept you and Kody from being consistent at first?*

One of the biggest contributors that kept us from consistency as a team at first was me being a Novice A handler. I did not always understand the commitment point of Kody with the obstacle in order to allow enough time to get into my next side-

change position efficiently (knowing when to trust my dog). I also remember having to learn the concept of when to decelerate, and I often pushed on the dog's line too far too deep, which then may have caused Kody to take an off-course obstacle.

Kody went through challenges that most inexperienced dogs do: off-course tunnels and tables. He was always so proud to find the pause table and sat on it so happily!

But I do have to say, tunnels off-course were his favorite. That is one thing that was always on my radar as a potential off-course throughout our entire agility career—in particular, tunnels that were on the side of the dog's path in between obstacles.

*Did Kody speed up at some point, or was he always fast?*

Kody was a fast-running dog from the start. Obviously, experience created more efficiency. In his prime years, his YPS were as follows: In Standard, he

averaged 4.58 YPS (with 5.03 YPS his fastest STD run ever); and in Jumpers, he averaged 5.60 YPS (with 6.24 YPS, his fastest JWW run ever).

*Of all the dogs you have run, why do you think Kody is the most consistent?*

Kody's natural striding has aided in beautiful, consistent contacts. He rarely ever missed a contact zone, and his dog walk was extremely fast in his prime years.

He was also bred with good structure. He was a very good jumper and rarely knocked bars. Once we became a cohesive team, he listened very well to my cues.

*To what do you attribute your success with Kody? Are there any instructors who were particularly influential?*

Kody and I have worked with two different instructors for regular instruction/classes over the years. I am grateful for what each of them contributed to our journey. Our first agility instructor was Diane

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Quednau of Jump and Run Training. She provided the early stages of foundation fundamentals; taught me the basic crosses and course analysis.

Our second instructor was Helen Kurz of Pinnacle Dog Sports. Helen brought more focus on the dog's speed, enhancing the efficiency of my handling skills, introducing premier and international handling techniques.

Overall, our success was due to having a well-bred, good-structured, healthy dog who has great engagement in the game, along with my dedication and desire to always strive on improvement to become a better team.

The key word that comes to mind is *bond*—the bond formed between Kody and I cannot be put into words.

*What is your training regimen with Kody, and how has it changed over the years?*

We honestly had a relatively simple training regimen. Kody attended weekly training classes for

about five years, coupled with short practice sessions at home one to two times a week. When he peaked in his career, we stepped away from the regular classes and only took an occasional private lesson to fine tune areas we wanted to work on. We always spend time on conditioning walks; treadmill, and FitPaws core work.

*Part II will continue in the September 2023 issue.*

Denise, Geoff, Kody, and their other three Eskies—Zoey, Lucky, and Gypsy—live in Ohio. Thank you so much to Denise, Kody, and Jay for sharing the first part of your amazing trek into the world of agility with us.

It goes without saying that Kody, also known as MACH48 SR Extreme Curiosity, MXS12, MJS13, MFB, TQX, T2B5, CGC, TKA, will forever be an agility legend to which other competitors aspire!

—Stella Brown,

[American Eskimo Dog Club of America](#)

## Bichons Frises

### BREEDING TO THE STANDARD: TEMPERAMENT AND SOUNDNESS

The standard for our breed is not just a pretty piece of paper. It is a guideline for breeding that no breeder should ignore. Every breeder should read and reread this document until it is etched in memory because every word is there for a purpose. Even better, please study *The Illustrated Discussion of the Bichon Frise Standard*, which is now available online on our parent-club website, at <https://bichon.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BFCA-Illustrated-Standard-061021.pdf>.

The first and last paragraphs of our standard are, in my opinion, the most important. Why? Because therein lie the hallmarks of our breed.

First: “The Bichon Frise is a small, sturdy, white powder puff of a dog whose merry temperament is evidenced by his plumed tail carried jauntily over