

UKC[®] ELITE SHED DOG SERIES RESULTS & UPDATES



ELITE SHED DOG SERIES NATIONALS 2024 EVENT RECAP

To set the scene of Shed Dog Nationals, imagine the best possible weather late March could offer Illinois. We were given some of the best weather that we have had in the last 3 years. Not a drop of rain and hardly a cloud in the sky, only a slight bite in the morning air that was quickly replaced with afternoon warmth all three days. This was what it was like to be at Ballard Nature Center in Altamont, IL March 22nd-24th for the 5th annual Elite Shed Dog Series Nationals. This year's national has continued the trend of getting closer and closer to 200 entries. This year we ended with just shy of 190 dogs pre-entered so maybe 2025 will be the year we break 200!

Ballard Nature Center was our gracious host this year and provided a change of venue that the ever-growing Nationals has been needing. With their countless acres of woods, wetlands, and native grassland fields, the grounds provided a fantastic stage for shed dogs from all over the US and Canada to exhibit their talent. The courses for both Champion and Working class featured two wooded and one field course each. Having grounds where we can closely mimic deer habitat from across the country helps to truly test the adaptability and training of the canine participants. The presence of a field course would go on to prove to be a pivotal aspect in deciding this year's National Shed Dog Champion.

The Ballard Nature Center property proved to be such a great authentic example of shed hunting environment that just mere feet from the parking on a freshly burned hillside, one of our competitors found an old wild shed! One of the unique aspects of the new venue was the fact that, thanks to the expansive trail system, every course had its own trail leading from the parking area straight to each course. Exclusive trails help

to keep each course hidden from competitors until their run and to provide a fast track for each competitor which certainly played a part in how efficiently Nationals ran.



Each course site brought a unique feature to the dogs running.

Course 1 (working) featured a course bisected by a trail. On one side, old growth woods and a creek setting the boundary while the other side featured new growth which was full of deer rubs from various years prior. This course was judged by 4x Nationals Judge Darcey Grieger.

Course 2 (Champion) was a course set high on a ridge with a winding trail throughout separating the course into uneven sections making it difficult for handlers to keep track of where the dogs had searched putting a lot of trust in the dog's ability to be thorough. Not to mention those familiar with deer are well aware of their tendencies to follow ridgelines and other natural barriers. This course was judged by returning '23 Nationals Judge Norman Henderson and First time Judge Ryan Waterman.



Course 3 (Working) was a no frills and straight forward working course with moderate underbrush in an old wood block. This flat laying course closely resembled what comes to mind if someone thought of an ideal course for younger dogs or newer handlers. Don't let the topography fool you though, expert placement of sheds by first time Nationals Judge Zoey Rada still fairly challenged the dogs and handlers who stepped up to the gate!

Course 4 (champion) Proved to be one of the toughest courses of the weekend. The course was situated across two hills, featured dead falls, and a hollow (or "holler" if you're from the south) right near the gate. This course was made exceptionally difficult by the

tough topography which while physically demanding, also blocked much of the little wind that the grounds got over the weekend which proved to be very tough for dogs to locate sheds. This course was judged by 5x Nationals Judge Jeff Stingel.

Course 5 (working) was a matted grass field that did well to hide sheds but still provide enough open air to keep scenting conditions favorable. This course, much like course 3 was straightforward with easy to identify boundaries and easy to navigate topography but thanks to great placement by 3x Nationals Judge Lee Doyle still posed a fair challenge to dogs and handlers alike.

Course 6 (Champion) was the course that all the event officials thought would be the most difficult. This course featured tall native grasses, very few landmarks to note while navigating it, and plenty

of places to hide sheds that only the trained nose of a shed dog could find them. This course was fantastic deer bedding ground and even featured a few spots adjacent where bed mats were noticed. This course looked very similar to upland bird habitat which may be what gave this years winner a leg up on the competition. This course was judged by returning '23 Nationals Judge Jeff Rada.

The stages have been set, and all that is left is for the dogs to run and run they did! Our placing working dogs averaged well under 3 minutes and each even posted a sub-2-minute time on at least one of the courses! Our youth class handlers, also running on our working courses, had also put up some blazing times of under 3 minutes. Our champion class placing dogs, faced with the tougher courses, still managed to average around 3-minute runs! 🐾



2024 UKC ELITE SHED DOG SERIES WINNER SPOTLIGHTS

2024 NATIONAL CHAMPION SHED DOG



NCHSD ESD4 SHR Running In Dancers Shadow HOF or “Shade” as shes called was handled by her owner Ken Newcomb. This exemplary canine athlete is the living definition of never giving up. Despite suffering a growth plate fracture on her leg as a puppy she hasn’t slowed down and has found success in the Hunting Retriever Club and even more success in the Elite Shed Dog Series. Outside of shed hunting, Ken and Shade chase wild upland birds in the fall and she is a veteran to the high grass fields where those birds call home, this no doubt contributed to her posting the fastest time on course 6 by almost a minute. This team also managed to post the fastest time of the top 4 on the tough course 4. Those two courses and her consistency all weekend earned her the title of National Champion Shed Dog!

2024 WORKING CLASS WINNER

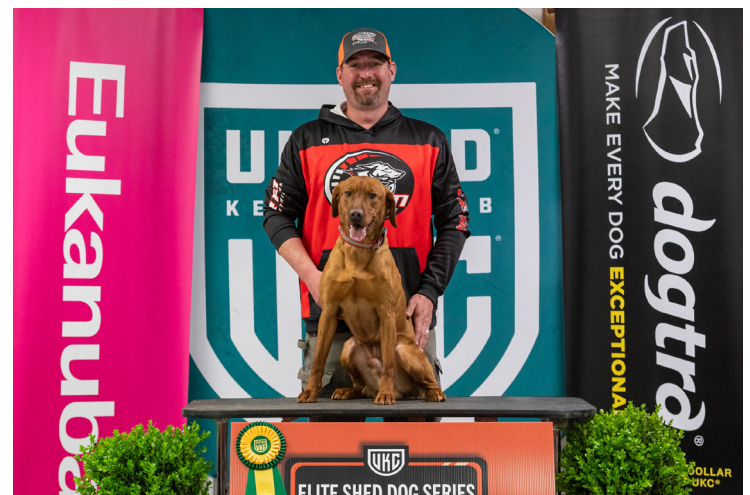
WSD3 RPM’s Light Em Up “Fuse” was handled by Travis Meadows. This team had worked hard all year and while the owner on record might be Scott Kuchenbecker, in a post Nationals interview, Travis hinted that him and Scott may both agree that she might have to stick around with the Meadow clan! Fuse and Travis had an incredible and consistent weekend, never running a time over 2:30.00 and with their fastest time all weekend clocked in at 1:37.67! to cover a course 100x50 yrds in such time reflects the speed and tenacity of these elite shed dogs!

Visit ukcdogs.com for more information about UKC Elite Shed Dog Series and upcoming events.

2024 YOUTH CLASS HANDLER WINNER



Mason Leasure is a relatively new participant in the sport, with just two seasons under his belt, he already has earned some notable accomplishments. He was one of the Youth Handler of the Year nominees last year along side his brother and this year, him and “Pixel” had a fantastic showing. Mason has learned this sport quickly and thoroughly and made quite a team with Pixel who is owned by Whitney Rupp. With a combined time of 5:59.58, Mason and Pixel are a force to be reckoned with!



Written By: Domenick Muoio, Field Trial & Hunt Test Program Manager

DOGS THAT DO MORE™

2024 UKC® ELITE SHED DOG NATIONALS

• OFFICIAL RESULTS •

Altamont, Illinois | March 22-24, 2024

CHAMPION CLASS

1st Place: NCHSD(2024) ESD4 SHR Running In Dancers Shadow HOF "Shade" Owner/handler Ken Newcomb with a combined time of 7:37.52

2nd Place: GRCHSD Two Arrows Malibu Breeze "Mali" Owner Jason MacPherson, handler Ryan Melton with a combined time of 8:00.35

3rd Place: ESD Etched In Stone Indian Royalty HOF "Sitka" owner Jeff Rada, Zoey Rada and Cassie Nelson, handled by Dave Larson to a combined time of 8:38.66

4th Place: USJ ESD4 Kickass Lil Bit O' Black Ice HOF "Loxley" owner Whitney Rupp, handler Grand Rupp with a combined time of 8:42.95



WORKING CLASS

1st Place: WSD3 RPM's Light Em Up "Fuse" Handled by Travis Meadows with a combined time of 6:17.67

2nd Place: WSD4 When The Cold Wind Blows Wikita "Wikita" Handled by Amanda Doyle and owned by Jacob Strang with a combined time of 6:53.82

3rd Place: Long Spurs Here I Go Again "Tawny" owner Rusti and Norm Henderson, handler Ronnie Grambel with a combined time of 6:58.23

4th Place: WSD River Stones Buck "Buck" owned by James Obrien handled by Dave Larson to a combined time of 7:01.03

YOUTH CLASS

1st Place: Mason Leasure handling "Pixel" to a combined time of 5:39.58

2nd Place: Quincy Selby handling "Elvis" with a combined time of 6:56.04

3rd Place: Levi Lewis handling "Monroe" with a combined time of 7:08.10

4th Place: Zach Meadows handling "Blaze" to a combined time of 7:12.91

OFFICIAL PERFORMANCE DOG NUTRITION PARTNER OF UKC

Eukanuba™

OFFICIAL GPS COLLAR PARTNER OF UKC®

 **dogtra® PATHFINDER2**

PRIZE SPONSORS



DOGS THAT DO MORE™

YEAR END ELITE AWARDS RECAP SEASON 7

In an award category started many years ago, the Elite Awards through the support of BoneClone have sought out to award the outstanding dogs, clubs, judges, youth handlers, and Ambassadors of the sport. This year at the Elite Shed Dog Nationals banquet we recognized those individuals and dogs in the following Categories: Dog of the Year, Non-retriever Dog of the Year, Working Dog of the Year, Club of the Year, Youth Handler of the Year, Ambassador of the Year.



DOG OF THE YEAR

10xESD RPM Tyra's Frozen Shot of Ammo HOF "Tundra"



Owned by Zoey and Jeff Rada. This dog was handled by a handful of different people on courses across the country and was still consistently on the podium 50% of the time she was on the field and 25% of the time she crossed the starting gate she found herself in 1st place. To put it into perspective, there was just as good of a chance of her ending up on a podium regardless of her handler as a coinflip showing up heads.

NON-RETRIEVER DOG OF THE YEAR

GRCHSD2 Blue Clay's Lunar Eclipse



This English Cocker Spaniel could put up blazing times and literally hung with the big dogs. Finding herself on the podium above the long-legged Labradors set her above the crowd and earned her the Non-retriever Dog of the Year. "Luna" is owned by Amy Kuchenbecker and Handled by Erin Lewis.

WORKING CLASS DOG OF THE YEAR

Melton's Pickin Up the Pieces "Reese"



The Working Class Dog of the Year went to Melton's Pickin Up the Pieces "Reese" owned and handled by Ryan Melton. These two pounded the pavement and hardly missed a Dog of the Year event last season and almost always found themselves on the podium if not at the top of it. They are a great example of team determination!

YOUTH HANDLER OF THE YEAR

Emery Bianchin



The Youth Handler of the year was earned by Emery Bianchin. This young lady has made quite a team handling Blue Clays' Deep Rooted Wild Oak. Practice makes perfect and she has exemplified that, she has consistently showed up on the youth class reports and is quite the competition for the other young men and ladies in the youth side of the sport!

CLUB OF THE YEAR

Capital City Dog Sports Association



Club of the Year went to Capital City Dog Sports Association. This club is one of the swiss army knives of clubs that we have in the Elite Shed Dog program. They of course are hosts of well-attended and well-loved shed dog events but also host many other UKC sports such as nosework, and agility! This club was represented by Laurie Witucki who received the award on their behalf.

AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

Jason MacPherson



The Ambassador of the Year announcement is always fun. The ambassador winner is a mystery to everyone until the night of the banquet where those in attendance get to vote out of the nominees from that past season and the winner is announced at the banquet. While all the nominees make countless contributions to the betterment of the sport this year's winner stood out to those in attendance. Jason MacPherson was voted the Ambassador of the Year and what a great example. Despite traveling with only a few dogs he heard one of the newer competitors he introduced to the sport had a dog come into heat just before nationals which left them without a dog to run. Jason, acting as the Ambassador that he is, decided to loan them one of his dogs so that they could still participate in nationals.

JUDGE OF THE YEAR

Darcey Grieger



She spent copious amounts of time this season on the road going to clubs all over the country. Not only did she spend a lot of her time behind the wheel going to and from events but her time behind the stopwatch is worth noting as well. While judges are on the course, they are logging countless steps and hundreds if not more miles over the course of a season. All of our judges are appreciated for their time, energy and effort but Darcey's judging assignments this season are beyond deserving of this special recognition.

RECIPIENT OF THE INAUGURAL BONECLONE ICON AWARD

Zoey Rada



Zoey has a list of accomplishments that includes just about every accolade this sport offers. That includes: Nationals youth handler winner, National champion handler, youngest licensed judge, youngest national judge, and countless others. Her brag sheet now includes the first to earn the BoneClone Icon award which recognizes her for her incredible achievements in this sport.

We want to thank all our partners and prize sponsors who made this year's Elite Shed Dog Nationals such a huge success.

For even more details on this year's nationals and full interviews with our winners, check out the **UKC Podcast** and search for the Shed Dog Nationals recap!