

When It all comes right

I had Roxanne from a puppy and started training her for flyball as soon as possible. Having had problems with Megan I thought this time with more experience and a better idea of what I was supposed to be doing it should be easy.

However, Roxanne had other thoughts. Being small she had problems holding the ball, so to solve this we got her really small balls – her “bring its”. For weeks we worked on getting her up and down the lane with the ball. Finally she seemed to get the message – bring the ball back.

If only this had been the only problem with her it would have been good. But, Roxanne may be small but she has a huge personality and is very stubborn when she wants.

For a long time Roxanne had to be lead dog because she was such a little madam. When I sent her she had to do a little spin before going down the lane. This is after she had bitten me – I had to wear protection on my arm for ages. Then when she started going down the lane she would suddenly stop and look back to see if we REALLY meant her to go down. Sometimes she would bring the ball straight back, sometimes she would stop somewhere along the way to think about it.

In the end when Roxanne was running we had people on the line shouting “Go, Go, Go”. I was unable to call her or use my arms in any way or she would drop the ball. Eventually we progressed to Roxanne going last with me standing a few feet from the line calling her and clapping my hands to keep her concentration.

Gradually all the little problems with Roxanne were solved, mine are still being worked on. And the defining moment of knowing she is a real Flyball dog was at Princes Risborough on 20th June 2010.

We were two legs to two against the other team and it was the last leg, Roxanne was last dog. She got to the box and the ball (as small balls sometimes like doing) came out of the box at the wrong angle flew over the top of the box, between the bars at the back of the box landing in the middle of the box. The opposite team got a light with their last dog so our only hope was that Roxanne would find her ball. Little Pocket Rocket that she is, went round the back of the box, inside the box got the ball, came back round, lined herself up with the jumps and came back over all four.

I was so proud of her and the fact that she was a pain in the rear when I started training her made it all the more sweet.

So if you have a dog that takes longer than the clever ones to pick it up, remember, the feeling of satisfaction when they do it right justifies all the sideways looks and sighs from other people. Patience is it's own reward, not every dog is a natural but hard work and commitment will pay in the end.

I am so proud of my little Pocket Rocket.