

You can teach old dogs new tricks.

Hi there. Let me introduce myself. I am a black Labrador called Beau. I am 10 years old this year. I live with a x breed who started Flyball in 2007 with Mum and they kept waking me up at unearthly hours of the morning to go to something called a “tournament”.

At the tournaments I was looked after well but was getting bored, just being in the car, my cage or on the tie out, with frequent walks. Mum and the x breed kept disappearing to have fun and at the end of the day would be really happy with something called a rosette. Dad used to come along and he was really supportive to all of us (Mum, me and the x breed) In fact Mum and Dad caught the flyball bug so badly I heard them talking about going away for a whole week to somewhere called Anglesey and then on to the Wirral. I was beginning to think that I was getting left out a bit, thinking that for a whole week (and a bit) I was going to be second fiddle to the x breed.

Then I heard Mum and dad talking to our team captain about me. I began to get excited as I heard them talk about training me. Yes. Me. Then I worried. Now I was only 9 last year (2008) and still feeling fairly young—but Dad! He’s an old man!!! (Don’t tell him I said this) Due to his history of being a sportsman he has bad knees. Would he be able to cope?

I am and always have been mad about balls. I can carry 2 if you want—but I know you are only supposed to carry one at a time.

Training started. I soon learned how to trigger the box and that I had to go up over 4 hurdles and back over the same 4 hurdles and not to go and say hello to the dogs on the other lane.

Dad had to learn things like “lights” and “changeovers” and not to let me go too soon and not to get in the way of our other team members. And how to cope with his knees!

Anglesey was approaching fast. Mum and Dad were getting the caravan ready (and that is older than all of us!) and I heard them talking about things like “starters” and that I might be able to have a run or two. YEAHHHH!!!!

A lovely lady called Val spoke to other people when we were in Anglesey and then it happened..... I was in a competition.

It was such fun. I’m not the speediest of dogs (an understatement) but I am willing and steady and generally reliable and Dad (the old man) was learning fast. And guess what? Yes—Dad and I got more rosettes that week than Mum and the x breed.

The old dogs had learned the new tricks.

As a post script to this we all went to the BFA Championships in August. Now I know I am not fast enough to run in a “proper” race but Dad took me into a fun event for veterans. With a combined age of 70 I think we qualified for this and guess what? We got a FIRST rosette.

With many thanks to all the teams who have allowed Beau and dad to run with them in Starters and to all those who have helped to train us.  
And please can we do some more?