

It's no joke - comic's dog wins 'Best in Show'

- **April 27th, 2010**
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By David Johnson of the Tribune

Lakeland Terrier named Scotch is partly owned by comic Bill Cosby



Tony Dibley of Roberts Creek, British Columbia, shows off his standard poodle, Gabriel, during the n...



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Comedian Bill Cosby should be happy.

The dog, of which admirers joked Cosby owns the back third, won "Best in Show" among a field of more than 900 competitors Monday at the 70th annual Lewis-Clark Kennel Club all-breed dog show in Lewiston.

The dog, registered with the American Kennel Club as Black Watch on the Rocks and called Scotch for short, is a Lakeland Terrier. Already a champion, Scotch beat out six other finalists.

"I am a co-owner, co-breeder," said a triumphant Susan Atherton of California, who handled Scotch in the show ring. In addition to her and Cosby, Scotch is co-owned by Jean Heath, also of California.

"He is the 12th consecutive generation best-in-show Lakeland Terrier," Atherton said. "And that's a record."

"I haven't called Bill (Cosby), but I will," Heath said as everyone, including Scotch, posed for pictures with Judge Pete Dawkins of Altoona, Fla., who judged the best-in-show competition.

"Very true, good coat type and movement," Dawkins said after picking Scotch.

Cosby's involvement in show dogs underscores the cost of, as competitors say, campaigning a dog. Dawkins, 75, who's been judging for decades, said it's not unusual for people to sink in excess of \$200,000 into shows (including travel expenses) to make a dog a champion.

"I started in dogs in 1953," said Dawkins, who also played backup quarterback for the University of Florida in the late 1950s. "Like football, dog shows have changed." Shows were more local and regional 50 years ago, Dawkins said. Now people travel in motor homes and often fly their dogs across the country.

"In those days, when you got caught up in dog shows, people drove station wagons," Dawkins recalled. "They'd sit outside on a tailgate, like at a football game, and discuss dogs. Now they load these big rigs up after showing and they're up and gone."

That was evident Monday. After four days of showing at the Nez Perce County Fairgrounds, with four shows co-sponsored by the Lewis-Clark Kennel Club and the Palouse Hills Dog Fanciers of Moscow, the parking lot was virtually empty by the time Scotch was named best-in-show.

Dawkins said he looks beyond "type," or how a dog appears while standing still, to how it moves. By the time the winners of the seven AKC groups of dogs are named, Dawkins said judging best of show from among the seven is relatively easy.

"When he comes at you from the front," Dawkins said of judging a dog, "you want conversion, gradually coming in towards the middle." He equated "type" alone to having a \$200,000 Mercedes Benz car with no motor. "When you go to crank it up and it don't go

anywheres, what good is it?" Dawkins said. "Think about it. You could have a beautiful type dog, but when you go to move him and he's doing all kinds of crazy things, here to there, and here to there. As far as I'm concerned, he's not a whole dog."

Judges, of which there were 18 at the shows that started Friday, get paid between \$200 and \$800 for their expertise, plus expenses, said officials. Herman Shuping, chairman of Monday's show, estimated the two dog clubs paid around \$17,000 for judges, plus all the other expenses of putting on the show. Entry fees and other revenues, such as parking fees and concessions, usually cover the costs, he said.

"The only people who make money on dogs," Dawkins said, "is really the professional handlers."

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