

Holding an AKC “B” Match

Easy to Run, A Great Training Opportunity, and a Useful Fundraising Tool

By Greg Fontaine

Almost a year after Hurricane Ivan flooded western North Carolina, we watched as Hurricane Katrina left much of the Southeast devastated and New Orleans uninhabitable. The difficult evacuation and staggering humanitarian crisis tragically left behind thousands of animals and pets in desperate need of care. Databases on websites like petfinder.com cataloged over 10,000 pets rescued from the city of New Orleans.

Along with so many other volunteer efforts, the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Veterinary Medicine provided emergency care and temporary shelter for well over 1,000 displaced animals. I was struck by a picture of the LSU Ag Center as it filled with crates. At a quick glance, from a distance, one might almost mistake it for crating at an agility trial.

Like so many others, we wanted to do something to help. It was only a matter of weeks before the Asheville Kennel Club’s fall AKC trial. Getting together with the club and with AKC, we learned that we could host a sanctioned match *in conjunction* with the trial, and donate the entry fees collected to efforts like the one at LSU.

The primary purpose of an AKC-sanctioned agility match is to allow clubs to demonstrate that they are qualified for a license to hold trials. Additionally, matches can provide exhibitors a chance to practice in a trial setting.

Further, in particular cases, matches can provide an excellent opportunity to raise funds for charity.

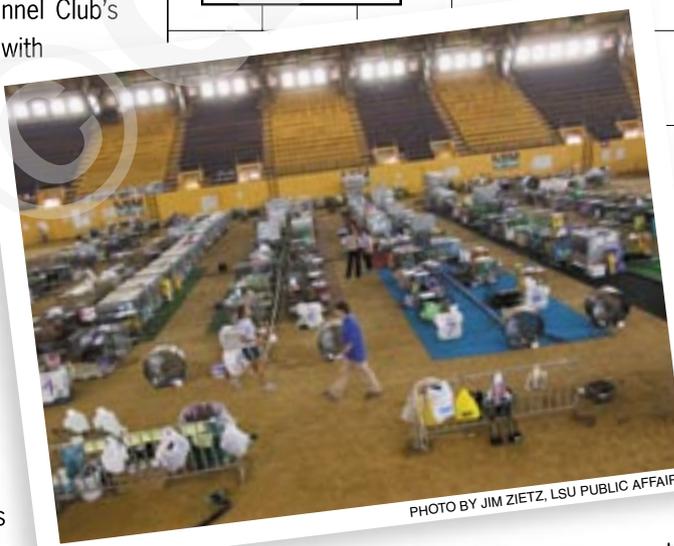
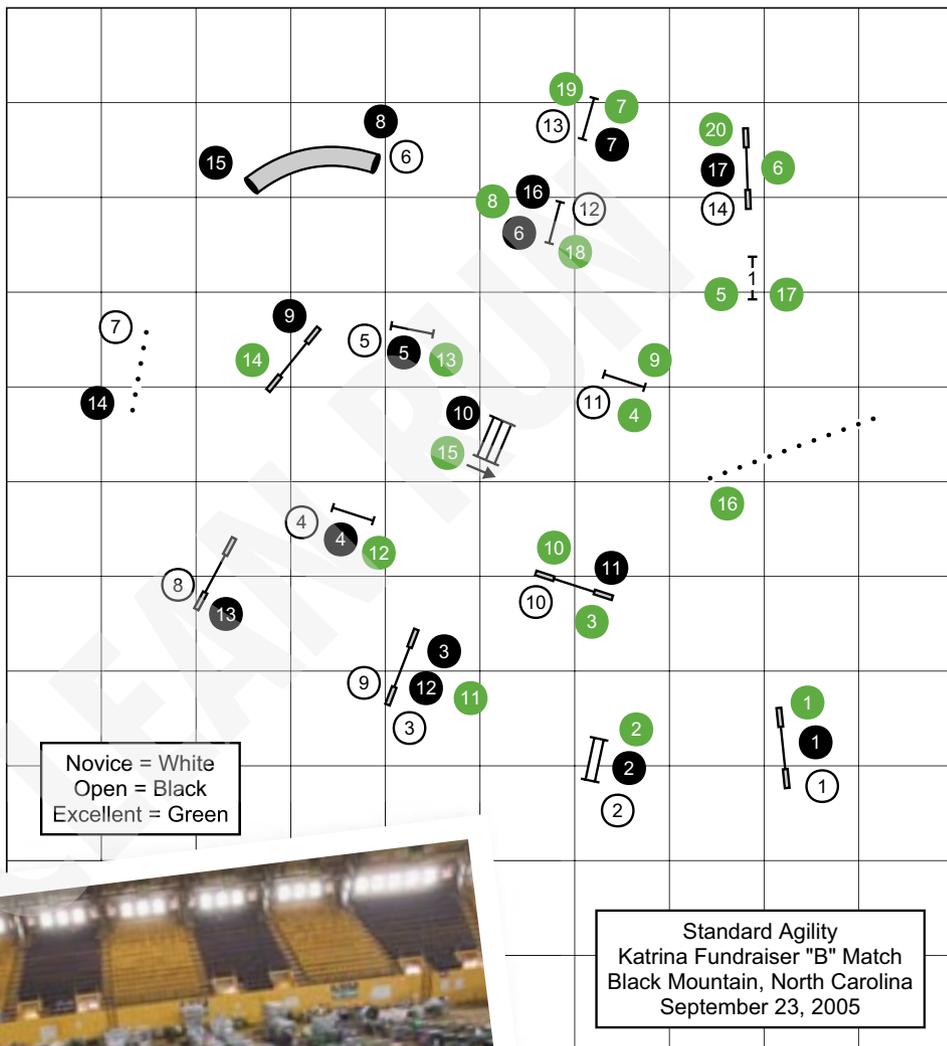


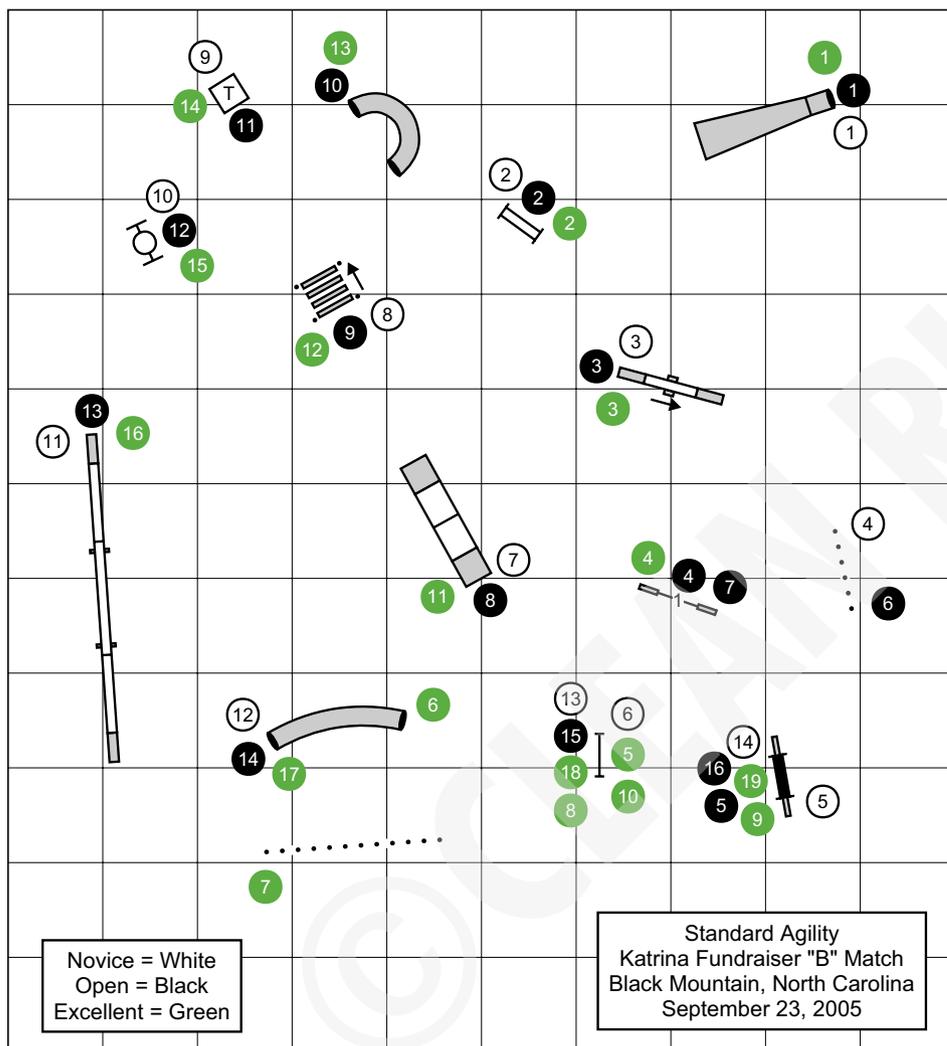
PHOTO BY JIM ZIETZ, LSU PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AKC agility matches are either “A” matches or “B” matches. Either type of match may be run in conjunction with sanctioned trials. Sanctioned A matches are run

almost exactly like a trial. In contrast, sanctioned B matches have far fewer formal requirements.

We were pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to hold our sanctioned B match and at how well it went. Pam Manaton at AKC walked us through the application procedure. Eileen Wilson, the club’s president, coordinated Asheville Kennel Club’s participation. Peggy Franklin, the trial secretary, handled entries after emailing a flyer to everyone already entered

Comparing “A”s and “B”s



in the trial as well as to other agility lists and clubs in the area.

Our sanctioned Katrina Fundraising Match was held the Friday afternoon before the weekend trial. To make things as simple and efficient as possible, both the Standard ring and the JWW ring had all three levels nested and numbered.

Walk-throughs were opened to all entered exhibitors, regardless of level. During each walk-through, blank running order sheets were put up at each ring's gate. Exhibitors

signed themselves onto the running orders; one run per dog per walk-through cycle. We simply progressed through the jump heights, allowing those who had arrived and walked the course to run. When a ring finished a cycle through all the jump heights, it was opened up for 10 minutes of walk-throughs, sign-ups, and then restarted. That way, as long as exhibitors had entered before the start of the match, they could show up anytime between 4:00 p.m. and dusk, and still get to run.

“A” Matches

- Almost exactly like trials, except that qualifying scores do not count toward titles
- Must have a match secretary
- Premium list
- Scribe sheets
- Catalog
- Courses must be submitted for approval

“B” Matches

- Less formal, far fewer requirements
- Entries must close 30 minutes before the start of the match
- Matches scheduled on a trial day cannot start until 30 minutes after the trial catalogs close
- All the regular and preferred agility classes must be offered
- Courses should be designed with an understanding of AKC safety guidelines
- Some training in the ring is permitted; intensive drilling or abusive behavior is forbidden

We ended up with an entry of 188 runs. At \$10 per run, and with additional donations, we raised over \$2,000 for Hurricane Katrina animal rescue charity.

For more information regarding AKC-sanctioned agility matches, contact Pam Manaton at pcm@akc.org. 🐾

Greg Fontaine is an attorney and an agility enthusiast. His eight-year-old black Lab ADCH MACH Ophir's Ivan is a two-time USDAA Grand Prix National Finalist. Greg, his wife, Dudley, and their five dogs live in Fletcher, North Carolina.