

LEONBERGER CLUB OF AMERICA  
FIRST DRAFT TEST  
APRIL 14, 2011  
WARWICK, RI

It was an honor and a pleasure to judge the first LCA draft test held at the Leonberger National Specialty Show. Thank you so much for inviting me.

Six dogs were entered in Novice. Two were absent. All teams were well-prepared and demonstrated excellent teamwork and control. Unfortunately, there were no passing teams, although all will surely pass future tests. Two teams only had one error: one contacted the narrows; the handler restrained the other dog during the 'load'. The third dog didn't 'back' his cart and didn't 'stay' during the 'load' and 'group stay'. The fourth dog didn't 'back' and didn't 'wait' on the basic control 'recall'.

The Maneuvering Course was designed by our Apprentice, Marietta Stolzstein, and included all required elements. After harnessing and hitching, teams moved forward and halted for the load (a folded blanket), then proceeded to a circle right (360°). A very nice nautical bell provided the auditory distraction in the first corner, where the teams turned right. The slow change of pace was along the back of the ring, then teams turned right in the next corner, followed by a circle left (360°). Next, teams halted for the removeable obstacle. The visual distraction was in the next corner, where a fish trap was dragged across the dog's path. After 2 right turns, teams passed through the narrows, followed by 2 left turns. On the final leg of the course, teams backed up the required 4 feet and proceeded to halt for the unload, then out the ring gate.

The Freight Haul was the required half-mile and started in the ring. It followed the snow fencing around two sides of the grass field, with both up- and downhill grades. The course then traversed the lower part of the field back towards the ring. In some areas, the grass was sparse and in others, it was higher. The course then went out into a blocked-off asphalt parking lot. After coming back into the field, a few more turns were added to meet the distance requirement and then teams returned into the ring.

I would like to thank Marietta Stolstein for all her hard work preparing for this first LCA draft test and making it a huge success. Thanks to a thorough secretary (Steve Pflederer) and good stewards, the test ran smoothly. There were an adequate number of helpers to set up and take down the ring. The site was well known to the judges and worked well. Although cool in the morning for the humans, the weather was great for the dogs.

I'd also like to comment on the afternoon draft workshop that was attended by about 20-25 dogs and handlers, with others watching on. I was so very impressed by the temperament of your breed and the level of teamwork between dogs and handlers. Nearly all teams went from putting on a harness to pulling a set of training wheels with shafts within 2 hours! Fantastic! Leonbergers are clearly superb drafting dogs. With the proper support, your draft program can't help but be a huge success.

Respectfully submitted  
Barb Gibson  
BMDCA Draft Judge