

Saturday, March 08, 2008

Subject: Complaint to the USA Judges committee regarding 11/2006 trial and the Judges Conduct, USA Judge Carla Griffith

Investigation was done by the committee, headed by Director of Judges Mark Przybylski, and committee member Mike Gardner.

The complaint summary:

An email received by the committee, written by USA Member Chris Bettin 12/07/2007, alleging misconduct by Ms. Griffith. The complaint states, in part, that Mr. Bettin, recalls, person(s) participating in the AD at the “November 18 and 19, 2006, I attended two club trials hosted by Coastal Bend Schutzhund Club and Greater Houston Schutzhund Club, respectively, in Mathis, Texas.”. Although Mr. Bettin did not go to the AD, he was training his dog at the time, he “heard” and “understood” that the AD had not taken place and the judge was at dinner.

It was further alleged, that a Schutzhund I dog, should not have passed because the “platz” command was given in order to regain control of the dog at the transition from the bark and hold, to the helper escape. And, that the Schutzhund I courage test out (aus) was faulty. Mr Bettin has no direct knowledge of the AD incident, and was an observer at the Sch I test.

The Investigation:

Mr Przybylski, and Mr Gardner, along the way informing all other committee members, contacted all “witnesses” and participants of the 11/06 trial, that were listed by Mr. Bettin. All were contacted either by email or phone, and all were asked to respond to the committee by writing an email to The Director. All members of the committee were copied electronically of all correspondence.

During all responses received there is not a supporting actual witness to any misconduct at the AD, 2 of the 3 participants responded, and give no support to the allegations. (3rd participant did not respond in any form, but was called 3 times on the phone, and one message left) There is no supporting timeline given by the complainant. Participants’ accounts are in line with the judge’s account. There was no response to the requests sent to the trail secretary at the AD, all though the trial sheets were signed by both, the Trial secretary and the Judge. Both Trial Secretary’s were contacted by phone messages, with the request for call back about this incident and their observations, no response was received. Call and email logs are in the case file.

As far as the alleged mis-conduct during the Sch I trial, the participant, The Helper and the Judges responses are in accordance with each other. This was a local club trial, and

some latitude was given to the Schutzhund I dog. This is in line with tradition in our sport, and at the discretion of The Judge, but no blatant rule violation occurred.

Conclusions:

A complaint was made to the USA Judges Committee, albeit over 12 months old. And the investigations into the allegations are unfounded. There is no supporting evidence of misconduct. We do have hearsay and innuendo, and not by the majority of respondents, which cannot be accepted when the credibility and voracity of a long term standing judge's reputation is in question, nor the results of a trial that would affect many other members.

None of the respondents supported the allegations, most importantly the Helper at the Schutzhund I test. The trial secretary's signing of the scores sheets validates the findings of the Judges scores awarded.

The Schutzhund I test was completed at the discretion of the Judge and in accordance with rules and tradition.

In **FINAL** conclusion of this incident, The Committee **DOES NOT SUSTAIN** the allegations against USA Judge Carla Griffith and she is allowed to continue her duties in accordance with rules and standards set by USA and its executive board.

In the official meeting of The Judges Committee, a motion was made by Mike Gardner and seconded by Debbie Zappia, that this report and it conclusions be adopted by The Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectively submitted

M.L.Gardner

Mike Gardner
Committee Member at Large
Lifetime USA Member