

Joe Haynes, Arlington, WA

I have lived all of my life in Washington state, growing up in Bellingham and eventually landing in Arlington, where I currently reside with my wife Heather and son Grayson. As a family we raise a cross breed of wool sheep and produce 100% grass fed, non-certified organic lamb. We manage 60 to 120 sheep depending on the time of year. I also work off the farm, currently as the Director of Manufacturing & Engineering for a local biotechnology company.

I got introduced to border collies by a good friend of mine who used his border collie as a turnback dog working cows. I was so intrigued by the tenacity and dedication this dog had to work with a person to accomplish a task. Having grown up on a gentlemen's farm, we didn't have the best fencing and often times my brother and I had to chase cows back through downed fences. After seeing my friend's dog work cows, I understood and admired the usefulness of a dog like this.

I started competing Border Collies about fourteen years ago. Currently, my main two open dogs are Elfa Kelly (Keally) and Spring Pepper. I purchased Keally from Faansie Basson at 18 months of age. Keally is bred from Faansie's great dog Don and Imp. Jesse. Keally is featured in Faansie's instructional training video, "Laying the Foundation". I purchased Pepper from Jamie Springs as a puppy and trained her myself. Pepper is from Jamie's Cort and Pink. Pepper trained up very quickly and is a very versatile, useful dog. I have had many dogs over my career and I can say every one of them has taught me something. I have competed all around the United States, Canada and Europe. I've been fortunate to earn the privilege of competing at some of the most challenging trials at the highest level. I will have participated in the USBCHA finals 9 times at the end of this season.

To prepare to compete at the USBCHA finals, I have several considerations. The nature of the finals is to test the dog's ability to successfully compete in three levels of tests, each with increasing difficulty. The last trial being the greatest in difficulty and duration. My main considerations are physical ability, skill level and competitiveness for my dog and myself.

For physical ability I make sure that my dogs are prepared for running long distances, for durations longer than the hardest test. We practice all of the varied skills demonstrated during all levels of competition as well as all of the difficulties that can arise at any given time. For competitiveness I assess the level of physical ability, skills and availability to compete.

What do I regard as my dog's best traits; This is where I want to be a smarty pants and say she has nice fur. But in all seriousness, I think it's the simple things like how she wants to figure out how to please me and gives me everything she has to offer doing so.

For someone wanting to get started in the sport, I would advise them to attend a dog trial and watch the various competitors. Try and determine what you like or dislike about their dog, or how they run their dog, their relationship with the dog and how they communicate with their dog. And if any one competitor stands out to you, ask them about how they train their dogs or if they can provide you some instruction or maybe recommend someone who instructed or

mentored them. Maybe ask where they got their dog from, or how it was bred and by whom. Be curious, ask lots of questions and above all be teachable.

For someone starting out, I would advise them to have a greater or equal consideration for the sheep as they have for the dog.

For encouragement, there aren't any short cuts worth having. To achieve success at any level is a balance of patience, persistence and perseverance.