

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13-15 May 2011

Bristol, England

18 Countries Make History at the First World Agility Open Championships

The World Agility Open Championships (WAO), an annual international agility competition, held its inaugural event on May 13-15, 2011 in the United Kingdom at the Hand Equestrian Centre. Over 200 competitors from 18 different countries traveled to the event to compete under judges Andy Hudson of England, Dave Grubel of the USA, and Mia Laamanen of Finland.

The WAO was designed to provide the ultimate in dog agility competition; showcase the highest level of agility training, human/canine partnership, and athleticism; and enable all dogs, whether pedigreed or not, to compete in an environment that is solely focused on the sport of agility. It is the first international agility event created and run entirely by agility competitors (Greg Derrett, Mark Laker, and Monica Percival).

The WAO is not part of any agility organization. People interested in being a team manager for their country, apply to the WAO. If accepted, the team manager develops the official team selection criteria process for his or her country. However, WAO does require that each country's selection process be non-discriminatory with regard to both handlers and dogs. In addition, the country's selection process must allow for at least one dog in each jump height to win its way onto the team.

WAO also allows a limited number of "wildcard" entries for qualified individuals (people who have previously won national or international events) who were not on their country's team or who were from a country that did not send a team. This option, along with four available jump heights and no pedigree requirements, allowed maximum accessibility so that the best competitors in international agility could meet to compete.

The event featured Individual and Team competitions, and included a variety of classes:

- The Individual Agility Pentathlon consisted of two rounds of Agility, two rounds of Jumping, and one round of Speedstakes. The combined results from these classes determined the *Individual Agility Pentathlon World Champion* in each jump height.
- The Agility Biathlon consisted of one round of Agility followed by one round of Jumping. The combined results of the two classes determined the *Agility Biathlon World Champion* in each jump height.
- The Agility Games Championships consisted of one round of Snooker and one round of Gamblers. The combined results of the two classes determined the *Agility Games World Champion* in each jump height.
- The Team Agility Pentathlon consisted of two rounds of Agility, two rounds of Jumping, and one round of Speedstakes. The combined results from the five classes determined the *Team Agility Pentathlon World Champion*.

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Competitors were extremely pleased with the event. Comments included:

“The atmosphere in the arena throughout the weekend was quite something and, especially considering what a small team you were, I think you put on a tremendous event. Long may it continue!”

“The footing and equipment was top notch. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate having those things as the primary considerations. Thank you very, very much for that.”

“[There are] many big events but this one is on top of the list! Very well organized, efficient, nice courses, cool handling, great volunteers, excellent weather, you name it, it was there. Thank you and congrats to all involved.”

“What a great weekend of competition! Thanks to the entire WAO organization for the opportunity to be a part of it! The bar has been set high for 2012!”

“It was, without a doubt, the best organised agility world championship I've even been to, and I've been to 11 now!”

The 2012 World Agility Open will be held on May 18-20, 2012 at the Equestrian Centre De Warre in Belgium.

People who are interested in organizing a team for their country should contact info@worldagilityopen.com. Competitors interested in trying out for their country's team should visit www.worldagilityopen.com and select Country Managers from the main menu to see whom to contact in their country.

2011 WAO Team Agility Pentathlon Champions

- Gold: England
- Silver: US
- Bronze: Scotland

2011 WAO Individual Agility Pentathlon Champions

300

- Gold: Anneli Hilton and Slice, Canada
- Silver: Marilyn Adams and Tia, England
- Bronze: Heather McLean and Bud, Scotland

400

- Gold: Karen Holik and Sizzle, United States
- Silver: Tricia Elms and Jazz, Scotland
- Bronze: Mimi Shimono and Marie, Japan

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550

- Gold: Mark Douglas and Ruby, Wales
- Silver: Dudley Fontaine and Sweet, United States
- Bronze: Nigel Staines and Zico, England

650

- Gold: Dave Leach and Rusty, England
- Silver: Niina-Liina Linna and Rhett, Finland
- Bronze: Linda Mecklenburg and Wonder, United States

2011 Agility Games World Champions

300

- Gold: Minako Tokuda and Win, Japan
- Silver: Ivette White and Zip, United States
- Bronze: Tracy Bennett and Cody, Wales

400

- Gold: Jessica Martin and Dice, Wildcard
- Silver: Jennifer Crank and Blaster, United States
- Bronze: Bernadette Bay and Zen, England

550

- Gold: Jeannette Hutchison and Rumble, United States
- Silver: Leslie Osborne and Fizz, England
- Bronze: Kim Cullen and Recess, Canada

650

- Gold: Dave Leach and Rusty, England
- Silver: Laura Chudleigh and Rodney, Wildcard
- Bronze: Lee Windeatt and Bold, Wildcard

2011 Agility Biathlon World Champions

300

- Gold: Daneen Fox and Masher, United States
- Silver: Anneli Hilton and Slice, Canada
- Bronze: Derek Osborne and Gizmo, Wales

400

- Gold: Jennifer Crank and Blaster, United States
- Silver: Nobuko Akiike and Kool, Japan
- Bronze: Tricia Elms and Jazz, Scotland

550

- Gold: Rosanne Demascio and Drifter, United States
- Silver: Mark Douglas and Ruby, Wales
- Bronze: Deb Rhodes and Britt, Canada

650

- Gold: Franky De Witte and Uboro, Belgium
- Silver: Ian Jackson and Bobbie, England
- Bronze: Ian Balchin and Bess, Wildcard

Congratulations to all the winners of the first World Agility Open Championships! High-resolution winners photos are available on the WAO website—www.worldagilityopen.com.

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