

Breed First - Champion Earning a Combined Score (Open & Utility)



CH Cherryacres Nicklus Von Hyden CD, CDX, UD

John Cox

By John Cox

The Saint That Traded His Halo For A Clown Collar

The first Saint Bernard to earn a combined score (passing Open B and Utility at the same trial) was back on **June 29, 1963** by **Tinka Belle UD**. Keep in mind Obedience started in 1936, so this was quite an accomplishment for our breed.

Other Saints have earned combined scores since 1963, but **CH Cherryacres Nicklus Von Hyden UD** was the **first Saint Bernard champion** to earn a combined score on **June 15, 1977** at the Saint Bernard Club of America's obedience trial in Wisconsin.

Below is a story about Nicklus from the *March/April 1978 Saint Fancier*.

There are several reasons why I chose a Saint Bernard. One main attraction to me was the Saint's ability to act like a puppy during their adult years. BIG dogs are also appealing, so the Saint "fit the bill"—size, personality and a love of life. My mind was made up—I was going to get a Saint puppy! The only problem now was where do I go to get one?

Being a complete novice at the time, I had no idea of how to choose a puppy or where to find one! As most novices, the first place I looked was in the pet shops and classified ads. The temptation to buy the first puppy was overwhelming, but somehow I resisted. A visit to my vet seemed like a good idea to find out the problems of the breed before I made a decision. After a nice long chat, I wasn't sure if a Saint Bernard was the answer. I learned new words such as hip dysphasia, entropion, BAD temperament, short life span, etc. The advice I was given was to stay away from the ads and pet shops. Go a reputable kennel and get a health guarantee in writing. Also, look at the parents and grandparents of the puppy as the pup should somewhat resemble them when grown. So I was off to the kennels in the area.

After some looking, I came upon the Cherryacres Kennels in Puyallup, Washington. I saw the father-to-be, the mother-to-be, plus one of the grandparents-to-be. I was impressed and convinced I had found what I was looking for. I stopped looking and went home and waited.

On December 15, I received a letter inside a Christmas card from Mr. and Mrs. Rankin (Cherryacres) . Dated **December 13, 1969**. "Good news, but it was rough going for a while for Suzie. Whelped Saturday afternoon and during the night Sunday. The babies are handsome and doing well. She is gaining strength. Eight of them and only ONE male and a good one—he's yours, of course. Rough coated and marked like his sire, CH Cherryacres Mr. Thisbie. Wait until they have their eyes open to come out in about two weeks." I could hardly wait to see my new pup. My concern of how to choose the pup I wanted was made for me. I wanted a rough male and there was only one!

I started to learn about dog shows. I went to a few and watched both conformation and obedience. As with most novices, the obedience ring was the only one that made any sense to me. I watched the dogs go through their paces and thought I would like to give it a try. It was November and the shows were winding down in the Northwest. The last show of the year is the Whidbey Island KC show with no more in sight until January. Nicklus still had two weeks left in the 10-week class, but I was anxious to start on that CD so I asked the instructors how to enter an AKC show. The instructors suggested I wait as this may be pushing things—after all, Nicklus only had seven weeks of school and graduation was three weeks away. After some talking, we all agreed to give it a try so I entered Nick in his first show.

November 15th arrived and I was a nervous wreck. I was about to go in the ring for the very first time and was wondering what in the hell I was doing there. The time came and we entered the ring. Before I knew it, it was over and Nicklus earned his first leg with a 193 and a trophy offered by the Saint Bernard Club of Puget Sound for the Highest Scoring Saint Bernard in Trial. I was so proud of my dog! One week later, Nicklus graduated at the top of his all-breed class and got another trophy. I was hooked and there was no turning back. Nicklus completed his CD in three trials and won High Scoring Saint Bernard two of those times.

Now as I look back, it was during the Open work that a change came over Nicklus. As there were only two Saints working in Open, the spectators would crowd around the obedience ring to watch the giants jump and go through their routines. As Nicklus did his work, he would hear the crowd comment, "Isn't that cute," or "Wow" as he jumped. The thing that really got to Nicklus was the applause he would get for doing an exercise. It didn't take long for Nicklus to develop his own routine to get a response from the crowd. It really was uncanny! It was in the Open class in obedience when Nicklus decided to trade his halo for a clown collar. From then on the crowd came first and me second.

Nick would always do the work, so I thought I had better not rock the boat. I let him get away with his antics and sacrificed the high scores for a passing score. The last CDX leg came and it was on to Utility.

Nicklus was now going on two years old and starting to show some possibilities for the conformation ring. Of course, everyone thinks their own dog is beautiful, so I started to show in conformation. Nicklus placed at times—just enough to keep me encouraged.

On April 29, 1972, Nicklus completed his Utility Dog (UD) title. Well, to balance out his name, Nicklus still had to earn that America Championship. As I entered the shows, I still put Nick in obedience. The day before Nick completed the requirement for his UD title, he won a three-point major. Our best show weekend was on the Spokane-Wenatchee circuit in September 1974. At Spokane, Nicklus went from the Open Rough class to Best of Breed and on to Group II. The next day he won the points for the males and passed both Open and Utility. Finally, after too many reserves and shows to remember, Nicklus got that last point and became a Champion and rounded out his name to CH Cherryacres Nicklus Von Hyden UD (OFA 901) During this time frame it took 21 males for a 3-point major!

The only title left (during that time frame) was the Tracking Dog, but Nick did not show much incentive. I think the problem was there is not a big crowd at the tracking tests! Nick does like to put on a show for the crowds.

One of Nick's tricks to get laughs in Utility would be to saunter out to the scent articles, sniff, look at the crowd, scratch his head, and bat at the correct article with his foot. Just as the judge was about to fail him, Nick would reach down and get the article and bring it to me. He would sit in front of me with the article in his mouth and roll his eyes back as if to say, "How was that?" There were times when he would take up to three to five minutes on each article, sniffing just enough to where the judge would let him continue to work.

Nick's best routine was Directed Jumping in the Utility class. I would give him the command "Go Back" and Nick would slowly walk out looking back over his shoulder at me from time to time as he walked out. I then said, "Nicklus, sit" and he would turn around and slowly sit. The judge would indicate the jump; I would command "Nicklus, Over," pointing to the jump. He would look at the crowd, WALK over and right up to the jump, pause, back up, look at the crowd again. Then he would bow down on his elbows with his rear in the air, let out three or four barks, and then jump. Of course, the crowd would cheer and clap and this made Nick's day. He thought he was wonderful. As Nick left the ring, he loved to mingle with the crowd like some sort of celebrity. I felt like I was the straight man in Nicklus's comedy routine and the judge was merely a person to guide us and set us up for the next trick.

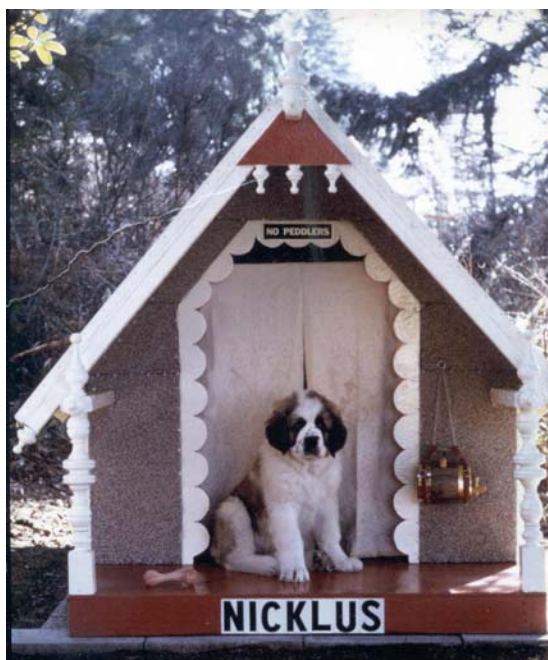
During Nick's youth he also competed in Harness Matches. After all, a Saint is a WORKING breed, so why not work with them? Nicklus has won the Saint Bernard Club of Puget Sound's Harness Match three years in a row and retired undefeated after being entered in five harness matches. In the World Championship Weight Pull, sponsored by the Newfoundland club, Nick pulled 3,300 pounds for third place. A year later, he pulled 3,500 pounds.

I feel it was just plain luck becoming the owner of Nicklus. I had a Saint Bernard with the capabilities to do both conformation and obedience. Earning the obedience titles was work at the time, but well worth the effort. Every conformation dog can earn an obedience title if its owner will stop hiding behind myths that obedience ruins a conformation dog, or that obedience takes too much time. I will admit that Nick was at his best in the obedience ring because he knew he was in control. To me, there is nothing more impressive than a Champion with an obedience title after its name. The CH shows the dog conforms to the breed standard and the obedience titles show the dog has intelligence and trainability. Don't find yourself making excuses as I did in 1970. Think of obedience as a course in good manners—something every dog needs.

Nicklus went on to sire a son and daughter who each earned UDTs and another son a CDX! The kids kept their halos, as one clown in the family is enough!!

**CH Cherryacres Nicklus V Hyden
CD, CDX, UD**

John Cox



**First Champion Saint Bernard to Earn a
Combined Score**

(Passing Open & Utility at The Same Trial)

June 15, 1977

First Saint Bernard Champion to Earn a Combined Score (passing Open & Utility at the Same Trial)

Saint Bernard National Archive's AKC Obedience/Performance Record For:

CH Cherryacres Nicklus Von Hyden UD

John Cox

CH	Titles	Date	Trial or Test	Track	NA	NB	OA	OB	UA	UB	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	UDX	HIT	A	N	S	#	M	F
1975-CH		November 15, 1970	Whidbey Island KC, WA		193.00																	
1975-CH		January 17, 1971	DFA of Oregon, OR		178.00																	
1975-CH	CD	February 28, 1971	Seattle KC, WA		194.00																	
1975-CH	CD	March 27, 1971	Washington State OTC, WA				193.00															1
1975-CH	CD	July 04, 1971	Mt Baker KC, WA				188.50						3									2
1975-CH	CDX	September 26, 1971	Peninsula DFA, WA				191.00				1											3
1975-CH	CDX	October 30, 1971	Portland KC, OR					190.00														4
1975-CH	CDX	November 21, 1971	Whidbey Island KC, WA					194.00														5
1975-CH	CDX	January 15, 1972	Portland Dog OC, OR					192.50				2			1							6
1975-CH	CDX	January 15, 1972	Portland Dog OC, OR						188.50						1							7
1975-CH	CDX	April 23, 1972	Inland Empire KA, WA						186.00													8
1975-CH	UD	April 29, 1972	Richland KC, WA						196.00				3									9
1975-CH	UD	April 30, 1972	Yakima Valley KA, WA							175.00												10
1975-CH	UD	June 11, 1972	Tacoma KC, WA							175.00				3								11
1975-CH	UD	July 09, 1972	DFA of Oregon, OR							188.00		2										12
1975-CH	UD	August 06, 1972	Seattle KC, WA				190.50															13
1975-CH	UD	September 24, 1972	Peninsula DFA, WA				185.00															14
1975-CH	UD	October 01, 1972	Washington State OTC, WA							178.50												15
1975-CH	UD	October 15, 1972	Olympia DFA, WA					190.50					3									16
1975-CH	UD	October 28, 1972	Portland KC, OR					188.00							2							17
1975-CH	UD	October 28, 1972	Portland KC, OR							183.00					2							18
1975-CH	UD	November 19, 1972	Whidbey Island KC, WA							178.00				4								19
1975-CH	UD	January 14, 1973	DFA of Oregon, OR							176.00												20
1975-CH	UD	March 24, 1973	Washington State OTC, WA					186.00														21
1975-CH	UD	April 21, 1973	Palouse Hills DF, WA					187.50							3							22
1975-CH	UD	April 21, 1973	Palouse Hills DF, WA							185.00			3		3							23
1975-CH	UD	April 22, 1973	Inland Empire KA, WA					184.50														24
1975-CH	UD	May 04, 1973	SBC of Puget Sound, WA					194.50				1										25
1975-CH	UD	June 17, 1973	Portland Dog OC, OR					187.00														26
1975-CH	UD	October 06, 1973	Willamette Valley KC, OR					187.50														27
1975-CH	UD	December 01, 1973	Portland KC, OR					194.00														28
1975-CH	UD	April 20, 1974	Palouse Hills KC, WA					193.50														29
1975-CH	UD	April 21, 1974	Inland Empire KA, WA					175.50														30
1975-CH	UD	April 27, 1974	Richland KC, WA					187.50														31
1975-CH	UD	June 02, 1974	Vancouver KC, WA					182.00														32
1975-CH	UD	June 29, 1974	SBC of Puget Sound, WA					192.00				2			4							33
1975-CH	UD	June 29, 1974	SBC of Puget Sound, WA							189.00	1				4							34
1975-CH	UD	June 30, 1974	Mt Baker KC, WA					178.00														35
1975-CH	UD	July 21, 1974	Longview Kelso KC, WA					171.00														36
1975-CH	UD	August 17, 1974	Olympic KC, WA					187.50														37
1975-CH	UD	September 15, 1974	Wenatchee KC, WA					191.00							5							38
1975-CH	UD	September 15, 1974	Wenatchee KC, WA							176.50					5							39
1975-CH	UD	September 22, 1974	Peninsula DFA, WA					194.00														40
1975-CH	UD	September 29, 1974	Washington State OTC, WA					186.50														41

CH	Titles	Date	Trial or Test	Track	NA	NB	OA	OB	UA	UB	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	UDX	HIT	A	N	S	#	M	F	
1975-CH UD		October 05, 1974	Willamette Valley KC, OR							188.00			3								42		
1975-CH UD		November 10, 1974	Spokane DTC, WA							193.50				4							43		
1975-CH UD		March 27, 1976	Washington State OTC, WA					182.00													44		
1975-CH UD		June 02, 1976	SBC of America # 3 CO					183.50						4							45		
1975-CH UD		June 04, 1976	Northern Colorado SBC, CO					185.00						4							46		
1975-CH UD		July 31, 1976	SBC of Puget Sound, WA					179.00			1										47		
1975-CH UD		March 20, 1977	Willamette Valley SBC, OR					194.50			1										48		
1975-CH UD		June 15, 1977	SBC of America # 4 WI					180.00						4	6						49		
1975-CH UD		June 15, 1977	SBC of America # 4 WI							170.00		2			6						50		
Class score averages and placement totals:					188.33	ERR	190.83	186.90	190.17	181.19	5	4	6	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	50		
Qualifying Scores:				53	0	3	0	3	31	3	13												m

Code A = All Breed Trial; N = SBC of America's Trial; S = Saint Bernard Independent Specialty
= Number of Qualifying Scores in the Classes of Open and/or Utility

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