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News

Levittown Dog, Owner Set Sights on All Star Championships

By Jaime L. Tomeo

When Levittown resident Karen Lechner was researching where to purchase a puppy nearly a decade ago she knew exactly what she was looking for - a dog she could compete with in both agility and obedience trials.



Karen Lechner's Black Labrador Retriever, Twist, shows off her competition skills.

That's when her now 9-year-old Yellow Labrador Retriever came into her life.

"I always knew if we got a dog, he would have to be trained or I wouldn't be able to take him anywhere," Lechner, who works for an orthopedic surgeon, explained. "Since I did not know anything when I got Cody, I decided I would take obedience classes with him. From there we found our way into the exciting world of agility."

After winning multiple awards and prestigious titles, Cody has semi-retired from the dog show arena. He now competes in a preferred class for older dogs. Her thirst for canine competition not yet quenched, Lechner found Twist, a black Labrador Retriever from Rhumblin Labrador Retrievers in Mattituck three years ago. Twist was 8 weeks old when she joined Lechner, her husband Mark and Cody.

"Her American
Kennel Club

registered name is Rhumblin's Twist of Fate," Lechner explained. "We decided on the call name Twist for two reasons; first, because she is like a tornado. Secondly, when we were looking for a dog my husband wanted a large, yellow male. After the litter was temperament tested it was clear she was the right dog for me, so home she came - a small black female, thus the name Twist of Fate."



Lechner's Yellow Labrador Retriever Cody, now 9, went on to win the AKC MACH (Master Agility Championship), only the sixth Labrador Retriever in the country to earn this prestigious title.

Twist has competed in numerous shows, already receiving five titles, placing first and second in multiple shows and working toward even more. She is on her way to the Fourth All-Star Obedience, Agility and Rally Championships, which will be held in Pennsylvania on Aug. 5-7. The prestigious tournament will feature the best-trained dogs in North America. Twist and 300 other dogs will be vying for top honors.

"She loves training and competing," Lechner said. "She is very intense, focused, agile and fast. In training she gets lots of rewards and at the end of the run. At a trial she gets her jackpot cookies, which makes her very happy."

Twist doesn't take her competitive edge home with her at night. Lechner said she is a wonderful family dog.

"She has never met a person or a dog she did not like. She is extremely affectionate and loves to snuggle."

She has a plethora of canine friends in the Levittown area. Rory, one of Twist's brothers, Holly, her King Charles Spaniel cousin in Wantagh, Barney, a Dalmatian and Maggie, a Dalmatian Pointer mix are a few friends she enjoys her downtime with.

For more information about the American Kennel Club and their dog shows, visit www.ack.org.



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