

Crufts Rally inter regional Judges Report

Rachel Bradley

I hope everyone enjoyed this year's Inter-Regional Rally competition as much as I did. It was lovely to see the variety of breeds in the parade and the Team Banners all added to the spectacle. It was lovely to look up from the middle of the ring after lunch and see so many people enthusiastically supporting Rally. (It was lovely to hear you as well!)

Congratulations to South & South West on your win - I understand you took the lead in Level 2 and no one could catch you, although Wales tried very hard in Levels 5 and 6. Some super teamwork both in your consistent performances and also your camaraderie.

No one could miss the Midlands with their "Banner of the Day" and you were not to be denied 2nd place, your first dog in the standard for the whole day – Well done!

All the teams should be very proud of themselves, you shared the placings amongst yourselves and what an honour to be selected to represent your area. I hope you all made some lovely memories.

I have some big thank-yous to make.

Firstly, to Crufts and Our Dogs for supporting Rally and giving us our day on the green carpet (or do we now say astro-turf?). Thank you to Sue Garner the Event Organiser and to Richard Kebble and Steve Rutter the Obedience Ring Chief Stewards.

Finally, my very grateful thanks to my amazing Ring Party who have trained hard over the last few months to make sure the day went smoothly. Any judge is only as good as their team and if I am judged on mine then I'm well happy! Thank you to Tony Lewenz for writing down all my decisions. Claire Price for deciphering them and getting the scores out so quickly and Kate Wykes for keeping the scoreboard updated so the teams could see the results. Flo Williams for running the Collecting Ring and ensuring the right competitor was on the line at the right time. Leanne Ward for delivering them to the ring and John Wykes for ensuring their safe exit. Becky Collier was a whizz with the stopwatch - not a single SWE! ("Stop Watch Error" for those new to Rally). John, Kate and Leanne did a fantastic job getting the courses laid accurately and quickly - I think they did one turnaround in 3 minutes.

It was an honour to judge the teams selected to represent their Regions and my ring report follows:

Level 1

I was very impressed with the lack of tight leads and general quietness of commands at this Level. This is the entry level and some of the dogs were distracted with the atmosphere but you all kept your calm. A very good standard with all teams obtaining the equivalent of a Qualifying score and with 5th to 7th place within a whisker of each other. However, it is a competition and the points are allocated on places so in place order:

1st - Midlands represented by Marie Miller and Yogi (Stormlake Jester), GSD. Final score 206, time 1:13.81-A stylish round performed by a happy and enthusiastic dog who didn't give me much to mark – congratulations.

2nd - South & South West represented by Fiona Bull & Inca (Tawney Hill Velvet), Cocker Spaniel. Final Score 203, time 1:17:63 -Losing a few marks for extra commands early in the round paid dividends as the round progressed -your Sit Stand exercise was clear. It was very easy for me to see the change of pace with the change in tail speed. A tidy round – well done.

3rd – South East & East Anglia represented by Emese Luckhurst & Badger (Bertley Blackbird), Pembroke Corgi. Final Score 201, time 1:20.50 - Excellent work with one expensive hover-sit. A couple of ACs with some positioning errors in the bonus - a pleasure to judge.

4th – Scotland represented by Megan Watson & Charlie's A Darling), CKCS. Final Score 195, time 0:58.69 - Enthusiastic round from both handler and dog, loved Charlie's attitude. Some little errors caused by rushing, taking your time will help you to even greater success at the higher levels. Well done.

5th – Wales represented by Leah Davies & Maggie (Maggington Maloney), Labrador. Final Score 188, time 1:32.19 - Well done to Leah for stepping in from Reserve to the Level 1 slot at such late notice. A very nicely handled round. Maggie was a little distracted but you calmly gave her time to think and reconnect with you. Expertly handled and only just off an Excellent equivalent - a good job Leah.

6th – Northern represented by Anne Pratt & Scooby (Scooby Do Be Do Be Do), Crossbreed. Final Score 187, time 1:42.32 - Scooby was quite distracted at the beginning of the round, his largest point loss came from the pace change and he seemed to lose a little motivation as the round progressed but still a good effort. Calmly handled by Anne – well done.

7th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Nikki McAlister & Cogan (Cheeky Chap at Dreamriver), Crossbreed. Final Score 186, time 1:24.32 - Cogan was another who was a little overawed by the atmosphere at the beginning of the round but settled into some nice work in the middle unfortunately he was distracted again towards the end. Happy dog, nicely handled.

Level 2

The Level 2 course was nested within the Level 1 course which was expanded to include some more advanced exercises, although the one causing the most point losses was the Call Front Forward Left shared with Level 1. The left spiral and left turns also caused a few errors with large circles or dogs not completing the turn effectively. The top 3 places were decided on time and I was very pleased that the top 6 dogs in this class all scored the equivalent of an Excellent score. The South & South West team's strong performance in this Level sealed their well-earned win.

1st - Scotland represented by Pam Cuthbert and Mozzie (Maccadale Mozzie), BC. Final score 196, time 1:28.25 - Super, neat accurate round from this enthusiastic dog. A few points lost for the happy commentary at the beginning with a few more minor point losses. Congratulations on your win.

2nd - Midlands represented by Maureen Grindey & Maisie (Vicmars Step Out), Standard Poodle. Final Score 196, time 1:30:12 - An accurate round with a few minor errors – well done on your place.

3rd – South & South West represented by Rowena Steady & Toes (Tooralie's Just The Tonic), Shetland Sheepdog. Final Score 196, time 1:41.81 - The top 3 in this class were all on the same

points and places were only on time. A super round from Toes with just a few niggly errors - very neat spiral exercise! Congratulations.

4th – South & South West represented by Wendy Baxter & Mylo (Dialynne Quintus), Beagle. Final Score 195, time 1:38.75 - A nice round but take care to ensure that you don't leave him behind when moving off. I marked very little in the 2nd half of the round and it was lovely to see him enjoy himself as he settled into his work.

5th – South East & East Anglia represented by Debbie DeuG) RL1-Ex), Norwegian Buhund. Final Score 194, time 1:41.18 - Fizz turned in another really good round with just a few positioning errors, tighten up those lefts as you progress up into the higher Levels.

6th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Jacqui Bracchi & Fudge (A Paw Of Fudge Is Just Enough), Crossbreed. Final Score 190, time 1:21.81 - Fudge worked nicely, with some costly errors on the Call Front and Moving Sidestep exercises but presenting a good picture – well done!

7th – Northern represented by Mrinalini Owen & Svetlana (Svetlana Shining Moon), Samoyed. Final Score 187, time 1:34.81 - The first couple of signs didn't go well with large circles on the Spiral but settled into her work with just a couple of attention issues. Nice round from an enthusiastic dog.

8th - Northern represented by Joyce Moorefield & Max (Marsh Mister), GSD. Final score 182, time 1:34.12 - A couple of costly errors with the step on the Left Pivot and then Max sitting up in the Sit Down Walk Around otherwise a tidy round. Well done!

9th - South East & East Anglia represented by Alison Ruyter & Ida (Resi's Practical Joke), Crossbreed. Final Score 181, time 1:33.31 - Steady round but Ida was a little distracted and required a few additional commands, unfortunately Ida knocked the bonus sign so that immediately lost you 5 on the bonus – take care not to get so close.

10th – Midlands represented by Gemma Easton & Binky (Freak On A Leash), WSD. Final Score 177, time 1:29.07 - A steady round but some significant positioning errors and a couple of costly exercises completed incorrectly kept you further down the scoreboard today. Take care with your Call Front Forward and Moving Sidestep exercises to ensure that they fully meet the exercise description.

11th – Wales represented by Donna Black & Eve (Seahaven Parish Bell), NSDTR. Final Score 177, time 1:45.50 - Another handler stepping up at the last moment so working out of Level and the majority of your point losses reflected this. Eve worked nicely, although she was a little distracted and was getting ahead of you on occasions, resulting in positioning errors at the statics. Well done on achieving a qualifying equivalent score.

12th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Carol Lewin & Colby (Choxxstart Colby), Bearded Collie. Final Score 171, time 1:31.34 - Colby was keen to get on with his work and this led to some positioning errors which, when combined with your extra step on the Pivot and

problems with the bonus, left you just under a Qualifying equivalent score today.

13th – Wales represented by Rachel Marshall & Merlin (Dolpena Magic Storm of Bernannan), BMD. Final Score 154, time 2:51.75 - It's always a pleasure to see the larger breeds competing in different activities, a very good start but Merlin lost interest towards the end, calmly handled.

14th – Scotland represented by Sarah Kremeyer & Thor (Stockibears Caramel Mist), GSD. Final Score 146, time 1:56.34 - Thor was very distracted today, such a shame as I know how much training all the teams and handlers put in.

Level 3

Level 3 is a big step up from Level 2 as the dogs now work off-lead and new, more advanced, exercises are introduced. However, the exercise causing the most problems today was the Call Front Forward Right from the Level 1 Sign Set.

1st - South & South West represented by Cyd Griffin & Kirin (Krazy Kirin at Heikym), BC. Final Score 195, time 1:39:37 - A few small positioning errors otherwise a super round from Kirin – congratulations.

2nd - Northern represented by Janet Thickbroom & Dasher (Jays Dashing White Sergeant), BC. Final Score 185, time 1:40:32 - Promising round with a few positioning errors but a Failure to Sit on the Call Front exercise combined with losing 10 on the bonus meant you had to be content with 2nd place today.

3rd – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man & IOM represented by Adrian Dornford-Smith & Lita (Int Ch, Ir Sh Ch Fivenineplus Puntillitas Ir Jnr Ch, CW"16, 11, CJW"11, AW(B), RL2-Ex), Spanish Water Dog. Final Score 180, time 1:52.88 - Lita worked very nicely with a just a few positioning and attention errors. A clear bonus gave her this well-deserved place.

4th – Scotland represented by Scotland represented by Karyn Tomson & Bailey (Bailey Bongolight), Crossbreed. Final Score 179, time 2:05:00 - A steady round with a few unfortunate mistakes, Bailey got confused on the recall part of the Angled Recall exercise. Be careful not to go without your dog, especially on Call Front Forward exercises. A clear bonus moved you into a qualifying equivalent score – well done.

5th – Midlands represented by Sue Lang & Kete (Chelmarsh All The Way), Shetland Sheepdog. Final Score 173, time 1:48.75 - Kete works nicely but some misunderstandings leading to some extra downs were expensive, especially on the Straight Figure 8 where you split the cones, luckily this only lost you 10 today rather than the usual NQ. Even with this you were only just outside a qualifying equivalent score.

6th – Wales represented by Jackie Travers-Spencer & Phoebe (Mewn Lap Y Duwiau), Crossbreed. Final Score 167, time 2:00:50 - Another of the Welsh Team working out of Level which is a hard enough challenge without adding the Crufts atmosphere into the equation. Some positioning errors but be careful to make sure Phoebe is with you when you take off,

especially in the Moving Down exercise. A creditable performance, well done for stepping up!

7th – South East & East Anglia represented by Maryliese Happel & Gigi (Dukeson Hoosier Adagio), Shetland Sheepdog. Final Score 167, time 2:15.28 - Some minor errors in the first half of the round but Gigi seemed to run out of steam with most of the errors in the second half. Well done on your clear bonus.

Level 4

Again Level 4 was nested within the Level 3 course with the Serpentine making way for the jump, which I on the long side of the course to give you the best chance and was pleased only 1 dog missed the jump. Two handlers did break the line so something to watch in your training. Again, I was surprised to see the Call Front Forward exercise causing so many problems and wonder if those Crufts nerves were to blame?

1st – Northern represented by Ruth Bryant & Bod (Icabod Glory), WSD. Final Score 199, time 1:48.00 - Smashing round! Very little to mark with just a couple of additional commands and positioning errors. Make sure that you go past your dog on this bonus exercise. A well-deserved win!

2nd – South East & East Anglia represented by Frances Killeen & Keena (Keena Than Mustard), Lurcher. Final Score 193, time 1:56.37 - A super round from Keena but unfortunately a couple of errors on the multiple sign stations meant you could not catch the leader despite your clear bonus.

3rd – Scotland represented by Amy Jackson & Jess (In A Minute Jess), Crossbreed. Final Score 183, time 1:43.75 - Lovely round from an enthusiastic Jess. You just need to pay a little more attention to your moving side step and pivots. A double check to make sure that your dog in back in Heel for the forward exercises will tidy you up for the higher scores. Well done on your clear bonus.

4th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Ingrid Jellie & Brooke (Glencooley One More Time), BC. Final Score 180, time 1:38.44 - A nice round. Be careful when moving off as you left Brooke behind on a few occasions although she got in front on the pace changes. Fourth on time – well done!

5th – South & South West represented by Janet Auton & Finn (Mr Finnly's Surprise), Labrador. Final Score 180, time 1:56.68 - A shame Finn missed the jump but otherwise a nice round with just a few errors.

6th – Wales represented by Yvonne Davies & Squiggle (Fech Fach Lass), Crossbreed. Final Score 173, time 1:35.75 - Squiggle was another of the Welsh team working up a Level today. This didn't stint her enthusiasm but there were some costly errors, be careful to stay inside the line at the jump. Well done on your clear bonus.

7th - Midlands represented by Sarah Hanson & Holly (Hiding In Holly), Springer Spaniel. Final Score 137, time 2:08.62 - Holly was very distracted today but her tail never stopped wagging.

Level 5

Generally, a good standard at this Level with only 1 dog missing the jump. The Back Up at Heel caused a few problems both here and in Level 6.

1st – Wales represented by Chrissie Harrison & Jake (Jacob Osbourne of Neath), WSD. Final Score 199, time 1:20.43 - Super round and the only Excellent equivalent at this level today. Just a few areas for attention with some commentary from Jakey and he didn't settle on the pace changes. You had the only clear Bonus at this Level. Congratulations.

2nd - South & South West represented by Kathy Williams & Dido (Ame Magnanime Didierde Titan), Beauceron. Final Score 189, time 1:45.07 - Stunning at Heel, especially with such a large lad and some good handling from you on the Jump. A few minor positioning errors but another lovely round to judge.

3rd - Midlands represented by Julia Skipp & China (She's The One), BC. Final Score 189, time 1:45.25 - Just a fraction of second between you and 2nd place - China put in a lovely round with just a few positioning errors. Well done!

4th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Liz Gibbons and Breeschey (Auchencairn Mona Glen), Cairn Terrier. Final Score 182, time 1:52.50 - A joy to judge this little firecracker who was a well-deserved 4th. Breeschey was a little over-keen to get on with the Retrieve, missed the jump and there were a few some early positioning errors but a very nice round and the last of the qualifying equivalents today.

5th – Northern represented by Hannah Butters & Tally (Kites Fortune), Labrador. Final Score 178, time 1:34.81 - Most points lost on positioning and turns but you were only just under a qualifying equivalent score. Gained the extra point for your Region on time. Well done!

6th – South East & East Anglia represented by Bryony Colyer & Cully (Peathill Caol Ila), Hungarian Vizla. Final Score 178, time 1:42.13. - Drew on points with the Northern Team. A few niggly errors added up but the costly bonus meant you could not claw them back. Steady performance from Cully.

7th – Scotland represented by Janet Young & Cairn (Fallowfen's Silver Cairn), NSDTR. Final Score 170, time 1:39.62 - Happy worker losing points mainly for positioning errors with a couple of missed statics. Cairn's keenness for the Retrieve, as you'd expect from her breed, left you with no Bonus boost today - enjoy her enthusiasm to work.

Level 6

I nested the Level 6 course within the Level 5 with the additional complexity added by the Stand-Down-Sit at a distance and the Directed Send over Jump. I was very impressed with the very high standard of work at this Level today, a pleasure to judge these experienced teams who showed our sport at its best. My top 4 placings all scored 190 or above.

1st – Wales, represented by Katy Girdler & Tyler (Gwynion Sinead For Pashamatts), BC. Final

Score 203, time 1:38.57 - One word – Wow! At one point I thought you were heading for 210 but even a couple of issues with the 360 Left and the Jump still left you with a convincing win. Congratulations!

2nd – South & South West represented by Ruth Allingham & Amber (Allanabru Awesome in Amber), Miniature Pinscher. Final Score 199, time 1:41.87 - Cracking round from Amber, very little to mark after the first sign with some hesitation on the send out for the Retrieve. Congratulations to this smashing little dog.

3rd – South East & East Anglia represented by Chris Clements & Bailey-Boo (Mountlochan Chanonry Lad AW(G), CD Ex, RL6-Ex), BC. Final Score 195, time 1:48.82. - Super round from this Veteran of the Rally Circuit with just a few niggly errors. Well done.

4th – Midlands represented by Joanne Syson & Merlin (Midnight Bullet), Border Terrier. Final Score 190, time 1:57.81 - A lovely neat round with just the errors on the pivot and jump moving you down the places - but Merlin needs to talk to you about the butterfingers moment of the retrieve!

5th – Scotland represented by Sally Sanford & Lace (Erikachen Lasadoir), NSDTR. Final Score 186, time 1:49.82 - Nice jaunty attitude and tidy work from Lace but the jump was your most expensive exercise today, once she had moved there wasn't the room to retrieve it. Lovely work through the pace changes.

6th – Northern represented by Chris Schwarz & Dusty (Pendledean Pretty Woman), Miniature Schnauzer. Final Score 184, time 1:46.31 - Dusty always works so smart but a number of small error, especially in her transitions, counted against you today. One of only 2 to get a Clear Bonus at the Level – Well done!

7th – Northern Ireland & Isle of Man represented by Linda Nicol & Rafa (Shinehill Snow Sport), Golden Retriever. Final Score 178, time 2:12:82 - Steady round, but remember that Rally requires a moving start, calmly handled when the jump exercise didn't go as planned. Well done.