



Preparing A Rottweiler for The Ztp Test Branimir Miklobušec (Slovenia)

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Demonstration Rottweiler in Pictures: Primo vom Hause Edelstein



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Please tell us about yourself.

Thank you for letting me introduce myself in TTRM. It is really a great honor for me. My name is Branimir Miklobušec and I live in Postojna, in our small, but great, country Slovenia. In the past 18 years, I have been active in dog sport as a helper, a handler, a track layer, and a trainer. I also prepare other dogs, handlers, and myself for different trials. The most noticeable achievements in my career are laying tracks for three World Championships and being a helper in two World Championships (FCI 2006, FBBM 2008).



Please tell us about your past and present dogs.

In my family, we always have had dogs and in my young age I was always doing something with them. I started serious work with dogs when I was 20 years old and I bought my first female Rottweiler. My next dog was a female Belgian Shepherd Dog (Malinois) who became a member of the Slovenian Police squad. Next was a female German Shepherd that became

companion to a child in a wheelchair. My present dog is a Rottweiler named Diablo pod Rifnikom and I have competed with him in FCI and IFR competitions following IPO program in recent years.

What skills do you feel helpers should have to be a good training helper to help prepare a dog in protection for the ZTP?

In my opinion, a good training helper needs to have good motor coordination, he needs to be psychologically stable, and he has to be a good psychologist to motivate the dog and the handler. The helper should have the ability to read the dog's physical and mental state and to be able to cope with situations that occur in training and respond to them in

the correct way. The right timing and adapting training to each dog (responding right in different situations) often makes the difference between good and average training. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of a dog's character and qualities, the helper can adapt a training plan to each individual dog and to build the dog to pass ZTP.

What do you like to see in a Rottweiler on the field as a helper when you are preparing a dog to attempt the ZTP?

As a helper and a handler, I like to see that the dog has the main characteristics of a Rottweiler, to behave as a Rottweiler. That means a calm, confident, and courageous dog with a self-assured aloofness, self-confident, an intelligent dog of extreme hardness, high prey drive, endurance, controllability and adaptability with a strong willingness to work. Good character and mental stability are two basics that make a dog good for training and preparation for ZTP.



Do you train the routine each session once a dog is ready to enter for the test?

Each training session includes elements from the ZTP, but not in the same routine as in the ZTP. The most important thing in training is to train the dog on the level that he is in. It is important to make training with elements of the right difficulty level according to the physical and mental level of dog. And when the dog is prepared to take a test, we sometimes check how handler and the dog perform on ZTP routine.



L-R: Ales Lahajnar, Primo vom Hause Edelstein, Branimir Miklobusec

As a helper, what are the major exercises you focus on to prepare a dog for the ZTP?

Through training, a dog should develop into a real representative of the Rottweiler. I perform exercises in a way that dog develops self-confidence, hardness, and steady nerves and still preserves willingness to work. During exercises the dog

needs to be focused and concentrating on the work. With this, exercises are performed at a high pace and every exercise counts. Among exercises, I put a lot of attention to exercise "out," re-attack, and long attack.



Why do you feel helpers need to concentrate on these exercises?

I think that helpers need to concentrate on these exercises because they are often the reasons that dogs do not pass ZTP. Dogs ignore the command "out," dogs are afraid of a stick, dogs back off in the re-attack. The long attack is important because the dog needs to work on its own and at a distance: performing full grip, struggle with helper, and not to back off while attacked with a stick.

What physical condition should the dog be in for a ZTP?

The dog should be healthy and in good physical condition. Physical condition is one of the basics for good performance and execution of exercises during the ZTP. The dog should be in his best physical condition for the ZTP and be a proud representative of Rottweilers.

Should a dog be in working weight or should it be in show weight and why?

A dog should be in working weight because the ZTP presents high physical stress on a dog. The dog should be optimally prepared to withstand this and with working weight we lower the possibility of injuries.

Please tell us about conditioning exercises you recommend to get a dog ready physically for the ZTP.

The ZTP is like any other test: training should be planned in advance with a schedule for physical conditioning. Schedule is suited for each dog. Physical training builds both muscles and endurance. Training should include walking, running, and swimming. Walks are excellent for conditioning if the dog will maintain a pace and walking on different types of terrains. Running also provides a good workout as long as speed and distance are gradually achieved. Swimming is a great exercise for dogs as it allows muscle actions and increases cardiovascular endurance without stressing the skeletal system.

Physical training helps a dog boost confidence, exercise muscles, improve coordination, and increase suppleness. Training should gradually increase in intensity and length with close attention to the dog's condition and attitude along the way. A dog that is pushed too hard will quit or break down.

What condition should the dog be in mentally?

The dog needs to be in good mental condition to perform well in the ZTP. A mentally unprepared dog is not calm, is not

self-confident in the group of people, and judges have troubles measuring and checking the dog. A good indication of the dog's mental condition is his performance in the protection exercises. A dog with good mental condition makes good barking, is focused on the handler and work, and the dog shows high willingness to reach helper. A dog without good mental condition is not self-confident and exercises are not performed well.

How does the helper prepare the dog mentally for the protection aspect, especially if the ZTP is with a strange helper and strange field?

Every dog needs some preparation before taking the ZTP, especially on a strange field and with a strange helper. The main thing is to perform some training with a strange helper. The helper gives the strange helper instructions on how to perform the training. A mentally well-prepared dog needs less preparation to a new helper and field than poorly prepared dogs.

If the ZTP is on a strange field, what do you recommend handlers do prior to the test?

This is not a rare case; there is often a ZTP on a strange field. To prepare a dog for working on a strange field, the handler should perform a few obedience exercises and a few play sessions with the dog on the new field to loosen the pressure and to make dog feel more comfortable there.

Should handlers arrange to let their dog have access to the field prior to the test? If so, why do you recommend this?

Yes, because the dog can perform better if he is familiar with a field and because this lowers the pressure to a dog during the test. This additional pressure can make a difference between passing and failing the test, which is especially important for dogs that have less genetics and more learned behavior.

Is it important to work the dog in protection on the field prior to the date of the test?

Yes, in a similar way that the dog should be familiar with a field prior to the ZTP. The dog should recognize that everything on the new field is the same as on the home field. With this, he knows what is expected of him and he can maintain his capacity to function in control and in drive.

As a handler trialing a dog for a ZTP, how do you prepare the dog for the measuring and temperament portion of the test?

As with all exercises for the ZTP, these exercises are part of the training process of preparing a dog for ZTP. They need to be presented to the dog according to some training system. New things are carefully introduced to the dog and advancing in the exercise should be on the dog's terms. The dog should accept these exercises as something normal and should react in an expected manner. To better prepare the dog for the ZTP, exercises are conducted by people unknown to the dog.



What do you think are the keys to a dog/handler's success in passing a ZTP?

I think good preparation of handler and dog. If both handler and dog are physically and mentally prepared, they can pass the ZTP. The handler has to be able to handle and control the dog. Handler and helper have to teach the dog all the exercises so the dog will become strong in heart and mind and can handle the stress of doing exercises during the ZTP.