



SBT Endurance Trail Australia

by Katrina Coulson



Alarm goes off at 5am! I definitely don't do early starts. But Deacon and I were heading off to compete in an Endurance Test in Keysborough held by the American Staffordshire Terrier Club of Victoria. It was forecast to be an average winters day in July and the weatherman kept his promise.

At the event I met up with our training buddies Belinda O'Shea and Frankie. Belinda & I had been training our dogs together for 6 weeks prior to this event so to have the fitness level to obtain an Endurance Champion title. We had been completing sessions of up to 10 k's towards the end of the training. Both of our dogs had a good level of fitness prior to commencing the training. Other than increasing their fitness and muscle, the training was to also accustom their pads to the distance. As we didn't want them to become sore during the test. Also to get used to running beside our bikes and with another dog closely behind. A few days prior both Frankie & Deacon had also obtained a certificate from our vets confirming their fitness to take part.





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The Endurance Test itself is over a distance of 20kms and is split into three sections, the first being eight kilometres. The second and third are six kilometres. There is a break of 15 minutes between the first and second sections and 20 minutes between the second and third sections. All this was carefully watched over by our judge Michael Stuart. The dog's fitness and condition is monitored by a team of vets who examine each dog during the breaks. A speed of 10mks per hour must be maintained for the duration and we had Graeme Ward as our pace setter (thanks Graeme for keeping us on track!)

So Deacon & Frankie passed their pre-test vet assessment and were cleared to the next stage being the willingness test. This had me more concerned that the Endurance test itself.

Deacon isn't known for his high level of obedience. However being a Willingness test he was MORE than willing. Phew..... lets get ready to RUN! We had 2 hours of running ahead of us so lets do this.

There was all up 17 or so dogs entered from all different breeds. Frankie & Deacon were the only Staffordshire Bull Terriers competing and we were up the front of the line. Which was great for Belinda & I as we could chat (haha) and support each other during a long 2hours.

Well it was time to commence the test and off we all went. It was so lovely that we had spectators there to cheer everyone one and we left the start with cheers even at that horrendous hour of a Sunday morning!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Oh whoops smile everyone as we came around the first corner to find Event Photographer Kellie Jayne there to capture everyones departure. Thanks Kellie for the great shots of the event.

