



8th IRO Rescue Dog World Championship Budapest, Hungary 2002

The world-best rescue dogs met for their annual World Championship in the Hungarian Capital, Budapest from the 4 Jul to 7 Jul 2002. The organiser, the Hungarian Rescue Dog Federation, spared no costs and no effort to organize a superb event. It was the unanimous opinion of all participants and supporters that President Laszlo Bartok and his small group should be heartily congratulated.

Since more than one IRO organisation from any one country can be an IRO member, and since the World Championship is also open to non-members, Austria was the country the most represented country with 5 rescue dog related organisations sending a total of 21 participants in the areas of Tracking, Area Search and Rubble Search.

The opening of the event, the Parade of Nations onto Hero Square, was a complete success. That a large contingent of police would close streets in the capital city during rush hour for this event is something which is hardly imaginable in many other parts of the world. The drawing of lots took place in the covered grandstand of the stadium in the presence of the IRO Board of Directors and the assembled council of judges with a total of 95 dog handlers from 23 national organisations being assigned their starting times in no time at all.

The Obedience and Dexterity Exercises were held in the famous FTC Stadium, site of a previous WUSV World Championship as well. Both Performance Judges, Dr. Wolfgang Zörner (A) in Obedience and Otto Lanz (CH) in Dexterity concluded at the end of the competition that there had been, on average, a clear rise in the level of performance but that really outstanding performances remained rare.

The Scent Exercises for Rubble and Area Search were laid out extremely spectator-friendly:

Rubble Search took place in a concrete crushing facility which provided a visually realistic setting but the degree of difficulty of the hiding places had to be considered relatively easy due to the lack of depth. According to Judge Kurt Joss (CH), the failure of some dogs in this testing area was due to two facts: the extreme heat (up to 39° C) and to the continued reluctance of some dogs to venture far enough away from their handlers.

The Area Search testing was conducted in a former military barracks facility with Vilem Babicka (CZ) as the performance judge. This facility can also be fairly described as a relatively easy and clearly arranged area. It was especially easy for the dog handlers to divide up the area as there was only one, pre-determined asphalt lane to follow. The heat and associated conditioning problems which appear more quickly under these conditions were the main issues here as well.

Tracking: There are very few open fields in and around Budapest that have the required area for tracking exercises and it was therefore decided to hold the exercise in the forest. At the time of the decision, it was not known that the summer would be extremely hot and dry and it was also not known that the forest area around Budapest

was an area favored by small bands of Gypsies for their camps. There were therefore some stretches of forest heavily littered with refuse. These conditions led to the situation where, under the supervision of performance judge Kvetoslav Stibora (CZ), only 2 of the 13 participating dogs were able to reach the goal. Dogs that had proved themselves many times over in their respective classes failed to complete these practically unachievable tasks and the critique from the dog handlers reflected this.

Statistics Summary:

Including the reserve participants, there were a total of 105 dogs representing 14 countries registered (A, CH, CZ, D, DK, FIN, F, I, JP, KO, NL, SK, SLO und H). The diversity of breeds represented was remarkable: 25 recognized breeds as well as qualified mixed-breeds. The proportion of males to females was a surprising 50 to 55, with the advantage going to the females.