

*From Placenta-less Birth To Best In Sweepstakes & Reserve Winners Bitch at The National Specialty...*

# Pippa's Story

## *CH HeartSpot's See What You Can Do Pippa*

*By Cathy Sadler*

Spontaneous, that's how we described our last minute trip to the National. In a rented minivan, fully packed, we were on the road for a fifteen-hour drive from Philadelphia to St. Louis. The journey was documented on Facebook and before we knew it the St. Louis Arch was there to greet and welcome us to a fun week. The thought of an adventure on the road with the dogs for a full week was instant euphoria. Time to meet new Dal friends and enjoy the event.

Monday morning began with Sweeps. The day started with the usual preshow routine. We had our lucky show lead. Pippa was 17 mos. old, and in particularly good spirits. She seemed to know this show was different. The Purina Event Center was bustling with the anticipation of the start of the National, and the show week was about to begin. The entries were gathering outside of the Sweepstakes ring. The excitement was building.

As I looked down at Pippa standing waiting for our turn to go into the ring, I could not help but think of her as I first saw her, the day she was born. She was a shriveled, dehydrated 6 oz. puppy who was fighting to live even before she was born. She had a most difficult start in life and in some ways that defined her, and the two of us, as we became a team, long before reaching the show ring.

Pippa's story begins with the breeding of Lacey (GCH Karefree's Shadow Lace Cabernet CD RE CGC TDI TD FD) & Jack (GCH Topspot Jack of Hearts RN CGC TDI). The best of buddies and dog show companions, they were bred. Lacey's pregnancy progressed normally.

In anticipation of the upcoming litter I was looking forward to using a canine

contraction and fetal monitoring service called Whelpwise. Peace of mind for me as a breeder and helpful to our veterinarian. Whelpwise monitored Lacey daily. Her sessions were sent by telephone transmission to where they analyze the data. An abnormal session would trigger a phone call to our personal Veterinarian. Lacey was doing great.

Dogs by nature do not give an indication of contractions or early labor. They are well into the event before they let us know. The monitor can inform you if your bitch is in labor long before she will give you any outward signs.

The fetal ultrasound locates and checks each puppy in utero by the sounds of puppy heartbeats. The location of each puppy is marked with a permanent Sharpie on the bitch's belly. Sure enough 8 little green marks on Lacey's tummy, just as her 4 wk. pregnancy ultrasound had predicted. Everyone was healthy and progressing normally with only days to go.

Lacey's session the morning before the puppies were due was normal with no contractions, however something had dramatically changed. Two of her puppies had drastically lower heart rates. We knew the location of the puppies because of the Sharpie marks on Lacey's tummy. The sound from their little hearts was different. They did not have the usual galloping horse sounds. They were slow, faint and very labored. Lacey on the other hand was playful. She was begging me to throw her tennis ball. No one would have ever expected her puppies were not as active as she was. By all outward signs everything looked great. But things were not good for two of her puppies.



*Reserve Winners Bitch 2013 National. Cathy Sadler owner handler*

*CH HeartSpot's See What You Can Do Pippa*

*GCH Karefree's Shadow Lace Cabernet CD RE CGC TDI TD FD x GCH Topspot Jack of Hearts RN CGC TDI  
Breeders Cathy Sadler & Nancy A. Reiter*

*Pippa..continued from page ...*

Our Repro veterinarian, Melissa Goodman, DVM was waiting for us at her office to evaluate the change in puppy status. The two puppy's heart rates had continued to drop during the day, while the other puppies remained within normal range. After much discussion, we had a decision to make. Lacey looked as though she was a day or two away from a delivery on her own. By then we would surely have two stillborn puppies. The other option was to do a C-section and hope the two puppies in peril might survive.

The final decision was what was best for both Lacey and her puppies. Her leash left my hands as she was taken into surgery. I sat there alone for what seemed like an eternity before the veterinarian came out smiling. The word EIGHT was the sweetest word in the dictionary at that moment. We had eight healthy puppies and Lacey did great.

When the puppies came out of surgery in the incubator there were two small puppies, one much smaller than the others. She was only 6 oz. When this tiny puppy was removed during surgery she had no viable placenta. It was dried around her. She had to be resuscitated. It was at that time our veterinarian said to her assistant, "See What You Can Do With This One Janet", which later became part of Pippa's registered name. All puppies were numbered. The littlest one carried the number #6.

After a quick tube-feeding lesson we left for home with a box of puppies. Half way through the night I was overwhelmed and so was Lacey. Luckily the drive to help was stronger than the fear of failure and we all made it through the night. There were eight wiggly puppies squeaking simultaneously for a meal. We were up every two hours around the clock until Lacey could produce enough milk. The next few days seemed endless.

As time progressed puppy #6 began to weaken. She dropped down to under 5 oz. She would latch on, nurse and fall off, but apparently was not strong enough to extract milk. Smart-phone photos to our Repro veterinarian revealed her weakened

state without the need to expose her to an office visit. Several changes regarding her care were suggested and then we just crossed our fingers and hoped for the best. #6 was so withered and curled.

I felt helpless. I said goodbye to her, put her in a heated box and left the room to catch my breath. When I got the strength to return to the kitchen expecting a dead puppy, the box where she was laying was empty. I thought for sure Lacey had disposed of her for me. I counted the remaining puppies that were all actively nursing and there in the lineup was little #6 latched on getting her share. It seemed like a miracle.



*So very tiny..*

Little #6, now Pippa, never knew she was small. She had to ride a wave of larger puppies to get her share. It took about three weeks for her to double her weight. That day was a time for celebration. We could all breathe again. I never thought she would make it to the show ring. As she grew and the new homes were being finalized, the plan was to have her stay until it was safe for her to leave, time for extra nurturing. When that time came she had that look on her face that said, "don't look for a new home for me, I'm already home"

In many ways I still see Pippa as a shriveled, dehydrated, dying, 5 oz. puppy.

Somewhere between then and now she has caught up and surprised everyone who has witnessed her progress.

As we entered the Sweepstakes ring at the DCA National with not much anticipation, just the joy of being there, Pippa put it all together and surprised everyone, but mostly me. The emotion of what we had been through together was present.

She looked up at me as if to say, "you've

done so much for me so far but most of all you believed in me. I'll take it from here. Your job is finished. Just hang on to my lead around this big ring. I can do the rest." With that she took her first step into the ring and blossomed before my eyes.

Pippa ended the week at the National with Best in Sweepstakes, and Reserve Winner's Bitch giving her a three point major. She also joined her mother Lacey with a second place win in the Brace Class.

Pippa has come a long way since her first days. I could not



*She didn't know she was small..*

be more proud of her take-no-prisoner's attitude as she made her way around the ring at the Purina Event Center. She showed her little heart out.

*Good Girl Pippa!*