

# HERSELT TRIALS 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## Novice Judge: Nick Sutcliffe

Thank you to Krist'1 Bal for managing the Novice Stake, and to the Club for authorising the results valid for future Belgium and the Netherlands trials.

Today I was assisted by Marijke Ramaekers who I have seen handling her Jazz, representing the standard I was looking for today.

I am grateful for the availability of Provinciaal Groendomein Hertberg, where the terrain was mainly pine forest, interspersed by tracks for dog-walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The latter presented challenges for some, but not all competitors, so there was an element of "luck of the draw".

### Results

At 9:10, Ann had walked the first line from the north-east outskirts of Hertberg forest, back to the northern part, stopping short of the main road, Diestsewede (N19).

At 9:40, Joop started with Mo, handling at a steady pace along the edge of pasture following a track into the forest. They continued along the forest edge with confidence to a concrete road, turning right without hesitation. At Vareendonk they left the road into the forest, but came to a dead end, before back tracking a little. They stumbled to an impasse among some farm buildings, without asking for help.



Unfortunately Ann had never walked along this road, so Joop's confidence in Mo had been misplaced. There was little chance of them recovering Ann's route, so Marijke offered to take them back to the point where they should have turned right into the forest, 0.3km for the start.

I took a short cut to the N19 at Herberg Mie Maan where Krist'l gave me a lift to the meet, to walk the second competitors to their start. This provided a view of Joop and Mo approaching on their final straight. They continued the line well, and stopped at Ann. 50 minutes after starting. However, Joop could not resist stamping on the leash to prevent Mo wandering, so forfeited the opportunity to be awarded the identification trophy.

At 10:30, Eveline put Nikita on her 30 minute cold line, walked by Robert. Nikita showed more drive than Mo, dismissed the first track to the left correctly and immediately took the next left and efficiently turned the next right.

However, before I could catch up, they stopped and returned to the "cross-roads". Unfortunately Eveline took the wrong choice, and didn't look back, and made another turn while off the correct line. Marijke had not yet returned from line 1, and Miram kindly ran after her Aunt, to bring them back. Eveline cast Nikita beyond where she last owned the line and she recovered, though without the drive of her start.

Although Nikita wanted to take the next left, she was immediately confronted by a couple walking a collie, which unsettled Eveline. Eveline took Nikita forward instead, and Nikita wanted to please, so they again had to be called back. The collie having gone, Nikita regained the line walked by Robert. Time was getting short, so Marijke took over, while I took a short cut to the start of line 3. In doing so, I was pleased to see Nikita pulling Eveline along the correct line, taking the correct right turn in front of me, so making it worthwhile following. However, before the final turn, Nikita drifted "off piste", possibly on deer or another dog-walker. They meandered around a pond, across which could be seen Robert at the end of the line. I could not accept this had resulted from wind scent, but since they were approaching a point where line 3 had been walked, Robert drew Eveline's attention, to which they responded, Nikita wind-scented Robert and greeted him with an excellent identification, 42 minutes after starting.

At 11:15, although Paul was at the start of line 3 with Ruby, perhaps due to a language barrier, he did not put on her harness. We wasted 2 minutes while the harness was fitted. Fitting the harness did not have the desired effect, and Ruby started with reluctance, and Paul did not show any enthusiasm. There was no drive, seen with the previous two competitors for the first 200 metres, as though "out for a walk". However the momentum accumulated and they took a right turn where I thought the line should go. Ruby came back, and appeared to find scent on the right side of the track ahead.

Marijke then appeared walking down the track where I thought the line should go, from where she had been waiting from the end of line 2, wondering why we hadn't joined her!

We continued straight on, to the next "cross-roads", not really knowing that the René had made a detour this far. I suggested Paul lift his hound to the next cross-roads to see if she could regain the line there. It was quite possible that Ruby found René's scent along this route, but at the cross-roads turned right as though "heal-lining" the line on our map. Eventually Paul chose the correct direction and momentum was restored. . . so much so that they passed the next left turn we had on our map. However Ruby swiftly took the next left and left again to regain the original plan. They approached the N19 with less confidence, but Ruby took a positive right parallel with the road where René came in view. Unfortunately Ruby sped past René and when Paul brought her back was reluctant, and could not be coaxed to give René any acknowledgement. This was 36 minutes after the first flag.

There René explained that he had missed the first right turn, and had taken the route we followed. Likewise he missed the left turn later and recovered the line just as Ruby did! This was the first line René had walked at trials, and when realising his mistake correctly did not go back on his tracks, and made good a 1.6 km line that Ruby had followed.

Meanwhile at 11:50, Joop had walked line 4 to the east of the N19. Janine was ready with Quintin by 12:20. They made a smart start, making good progress on the first bend off to the right. However they took a premature left turn, without a check. They took the next left turn and followed this track round to the right. Janine did not look back, trusting her hound. Progress was fast along a sandy path, with their first check at the next “cross-roads”. They continued straight, with little time lost. Upon meeting a T-junction immediately turned left and sped into the line-walker, waiting short of the N19. Joop confirmed that the identification was good, and the hound had hunted the last 300 metres in 10 minutes after starting. However, apart for the first 0.5km, they were inside the line on our map. Joop was able to confirm landmarks showing he had walked the whole 1.6km, whereas Marijke estimated that Janine had only covered 0.9km.

## **Conclusions**

I could not accept that Quintin had been following “wind-scent”, but there is no denying he found his quarry, recognising him without running past. This trumped Nikita's, in that Quintin hunted in on the correct line, so the **Best Identification** trophy was awarded to Janine Beeuwkens & René Den Uijl's **Quintin of Gentle Giants**.

“On paper” I thought line 1 would be the easiest, with less foil by the public than lines 2 & 3, and the turn choices of line 4. Earlier in the day there was more moisture, which became arid towards line 4.

Because they went wrong early on, and needed help to get to the end, I didn't feel able to award Mo a place or Certificate of Merit. Having said that they covered more ground than the others today. Mo never showed the drive of others, perhaps a symptom of her age. I understand she has come to Joop rather late in life, without any previous training. The best handling I saw today was from Joop, he trusted his hound and provided sympathy when realising Mo had run out of scent, who never ceased to try where Joop cast her. The rapport between **Joop Makkinje and Mo** convinced me they deserved the **Best Team** trophy.

Eveline and Nikita would not have completed their line without help. They were presented with more challenges than others, and despite the mistakes, Nikita was pleased to see her line-walker. Today's performance wasn't enough to convince me she was ready to promoted to the Junior Stake, so I awarded a **Certificate of Merit** to Eveline Been's **Loamy Lane's Nikita**.

This leaves two hounds that got to the end of their line with minimal assistance, with very different performances, which I would like to see training for Junior lines at their next trials.

Before then, Paul needs to gain more confidence in Ruby, and she needs to be trained to identify her line-walker.

Both these attributes were seen with Janine and Quintin. Admittedly they didn't have the same challenges as others, and Quintin could have been hunting something else, but he showed me the will to drive forward, that makes the difference from just being lucky . . . Hence

**1<sup>st</sup>: Janine Beeuwkens & René Den Uijl's Quintin of Gentle Giants.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Paul Lacroix's Priceless Ruby**