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## On the Cover

### 13 Gamblers for the Absolute Beginner

For many teams, Gamblers runs are scary. We want to help you change that so that you learn to love Gamblers classes! If you're gamble-phobic, here's a guide to help you strategize and plan your handling. By Claire Duder DVM

### 23 Calm in the Crate

Many trainers put in the hours to train their dog to go into a crate happily and wait until he's released, but they don't spend time training behavior *in* a crate. The crate should be a safe place where a dog is off the clock and can relax. By Stacey Manzo

### 25 Practically Training: Timing Is (Almost) Everything, Part 2

Are you sick of hearing instructors tell you that you are "Late! Late! Late!?" Timing is a skill that can be learned, and just a bit of improvement can make a big difference in your dog's performance. By Sandy Rogers

### 35 Basic Handling Skills, Part 1: The Rear Cross

The rear cross is a versatile handling move and one of the three basic handling skills needed to navigate our dog around a course. By Simone "Tig" Stephenson

## Features

- 4 **Tip of the Month** – Use a highlight video of you and your dog as part of your warm-up at a trial. By Kathy Mocharnuk
- 5 **Editorializing: Perspective** – What do we have for you this month? By Brenna Fender

- 6 **Change Your Brain, Change Your Game: Part 2** – Of the 50,000 thoughts that zip through your head today, 80% (40,000) will fall into the negative spectrum. But you have the power to re-wire your brain to hold onto the positive thoughts and keep building them. By Diane Patterson

- 10 **Everyday Distance: Commitment Foundation Games** – Great obstacle commitment is a critical skill to have no matter what venue you do, whether you run with your dog or do more distance handling. By Amanda Nelson

- 21 **Backyard Dogs** – These exercises contain a wide range of handling challenges. As the sequences progress, you'll work on jump wraps, slices, serpentines, backsides, threadles, and offset backsides and threadles. By Steve Schwarz

- 29 **Team Small Dog Agility Humility: Luckier Than You Ever Thought Possible** – Ordinary life rolls along, maybe you're not doing so great, but really, you're not doing so bad. If you have a dog and can do agility, even if some things are down in the dumps, you're probably doing okay, and things could be a lot worse. By Laura Hartwick

- 33 **Canine Sports Massage** – A massage before competing has the potential to find range of motion and flexibility deficits and locate trigger points which can manifest on course as shortened strides, wider turns, weave pop-outs, and knocked bars. By Monica Bush

- 42 **Making You the Focus of Your Puppy's Attention: Choose Me, Part 2** – If your pup is ready for more challenges, it's time to try the Choose Me game off leash as well as to increase the difficulty of the distractions. By Stacy Winkler

- 44 **Power Paws Drills: It's a Wrap!** – There are so many handling options in these drills! And there are lots of wraps, including places where you will want to skip a wrap and go the long way around for a better approach to the next line. By Nancy Gyes

- 49 **The 25% Solution: Sequences for Small Spaces** – These exercises, which fit in a 40ft. x 60ft. space, give you lots of opportunities to practice short, straight tunnels and backsides. You'll also learn a new method for walking and memorizing courses. By John Reid

## Cover Dog

Plop MX, MXJ, XF, TM-Gold, a 4-year-old All-American rescue owned by Lisa Topol of New York. Photo by GreatDanePhotos.