

# Agility team headed to worlds

By: Chelsea Kemp

Posted: **3:00 AM CDT Thursday, Jun. 6, 2019**

---

Diana Dafoe was born into the business of working with dogs, and after years of dedication she and her furry teammate are headed to the largest agility event of their lives.

The team will be setting out to the Netherlands along with about 30 other dogs to compete in the European Open World Agility Event in Arnhem, from July 25-28. Dafoe will be staying an extra week to sneak in some sightseeing.

The path to Worlds has been 20 years in the making.

Dafoe and Ventress took home first place in the 12-inch regular division at this year's regionals in Prince Albert, Sask.

Their biggest achievement to date has been their recent qualification for the Canadian Kennel Club agility team.

**78** Shares  
The qualifiers for Team Canada took place in Edmonton at the end of April.



Diana Dafoe's mini-poodle Ventress leaps over an agility obstacle course. (Submitted)

78  
Shares



Diana Dafoe and her mini-poodle Ventress celebrate competing an obstacle course. (Submitted)

"It was nerve-wracking," Dafoe said. "I was a bit nervous to begin with."

However, with each run, the team got better and they ended up in fifth place overall.

Dafoe was first introduced to a life of everything canine by her mom, who bred mini-poodles.

When her mom retired, she carried on the line.

"I've been in the dog world ever since I was born," Dafoe laughed.

Dafoe added a new aspect into the mix when she began practising agility.

As a dog breeder, she works to ensure her dogs are ready to race.

"All my puppies, I make sure that they have play drive and get socialized," Dafoe said.

Her current agility teammate is Ventress, a seven-year-old mini-poodle.

Ventress comes from a distinguished line of dogs eager to conquer agility — her mother was Dafoe's previous teammate before she retired and Ventress took her place.

Ventress has been doing agility from the moment she was born, Dafoe said.

Dafoe's furry friend is "a blast" on the course, full of energy and always listening for directions.

While Ventress may be tiny, sometimes she can have the fastest time out of all the dogs in agility competitions.

78  
Shares

Dafoe lives on a farm in Lenore littered with tunnels, jumps and other agility equipment her husband helped build. The duo trains almost every day and goes for long walks in the summer to maintain their competitive edge.

It can be difficult to train over the winter, but Dafoe found a way.

The agility master and some of her friends rent a farm south of Brandon and try to get out once a week for two 1/2 practices.

It can be helpful as a group working together because they can share tips and provide feedback aiding in perfecting each other's course runs.

Dafoe said the best courses are challenging without being impossible, where one can run fast but also find some twists and turns along the way.



Diana Dafoe's mini-poodle Ventress conquers an agility obstacle course. (Submitted)

"It's really fun to do with your dog. There's not any better feeling than when everything clicks and you're like a real team trying to navigate the course in front of you," Dafoe said.

Dafoe even took up interval training to ensure she could, for the most part, keep up with Ventress when they run a course.

Ventress responds almost intuitively to verbal commands, enabling Dafoe to more effectively run the course with her.

However, Ventress can be sassy, Dafoe chuckled, explaining how if she is late to a mark, her tiny teammate will bark and let her know.

"She'll bark, she's giving me feedback," Dafoe laughed. "You'll hear her telling me every time I'm late."

An essential component to the team's success in the ring has been the support of their family. Dafoe said that for the past couple of years, family vacations have consisted of going to agility competitions across the country, Ventress a

78  
Shares

constant at her side.

"I couldn't ask for a better teammate," Dafoe said.

» [ckemp@brandonsun.com](mailto:ckemp@brandonsun.com)

» Twitter: [@The\\_ChelseaKemp](https://twitter.com/The_ChelseaKemp)

---

**We need your support!**

**Local journalism needs your support!**

As we navigate through unprecedented times, our journalists are working harder than ever to bring you the latest local updates to keep you safe and informed.

Now, more than ever, we need your support.

Starting at \$12.42/month you can access your Brandon Sun online and full access to all content as it appears on our website.

or call circulation directly at (204) 727-0527.

Your pledge helps to ensure we provide the news that matters most to your community!

**78**  
Shares