

Arizona International Film Festival

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Wiener Takes All: A Documentary



When there's nothing good on TV, people start to organize dachshund races.

But as seen in director Shane MacDougall's *Wiener Takes All: A Documentary*, the world of competitive dachshund racing is a surprisingly

heated subculture that probably takes itself more seriously than it should. MacDougall follows the dachshund racing circuit while uncovering an array of controversies, allegations of fixed races, and even dachshund steroid abuse. "Dachshund" and "steroids" may have been used in the same sentence before, but the context was probably something along the lines of "Steroids made Jose Canseco's biceps swell up to the size of a dachshund." When people start doping up their dachshunds to win races that pay virtually no money, it's probably time to turn the TV back on.

Whether or not they indulge in Creatine shakes or take HGH injections, the dachshund is a pint-sized breed that's capable of more athleticism than their curiously-shaped bodies may let on. Though their stubby legs only hoist them a mere three inches off the ground, dachshunds are one of the fastest small breeds around: at full sprint, these little dogs can move at an astonishing 30 feet per second. Unfortunately their golf ball-sized brains may prevent some dachshunds from grasping the concept of racing, as a few wieners in each race prefer to run in circles or take a quick nap.

Though some dachshunds aren't so serious about their racing careers, MacDougall (not a dachshund racer himself) introduces us to a few owners who might be a little *too* serious. He avoids presenting the owners in a condescending manner, but he does leave us to wonder about some of their quirks. Before this movie, I had no idea that you could drape yourself from head to toe in dachshund print clothing, and I never thought I'd hear the word "lawsuit" used with regards to wiener dog racing.

There's a Tucson connection to the dachshund circuit, too, as this is one of 11 cities that play host to semifinal races. MacDougall takes us to the 2006 Tucson Semifinals where we meet a miniature dachshund named Vinny Barbarino. Vinny and his owner have dreams of representing Tucson in the national competition, but does he have the speed, agility, and ability to concentrate for more than 6 seconds? Before the race, Vinny's



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owner explains the surprising amount of time it takes to train a dachshund to run in a straight line for 40 feet. Next time you're at Reid Park or the 6th Avenue Dog Park, you may see Vinny preparing to be the fastest wiener dog in the country. Make us proud, Vinny.

Though watching Vinny and other little dachshunds perform for thousands of screaming fans may be adorable, does this sport do more harm than good? With interviews from vets, AKC directors, and animal activists, MacDougall is sure to present the dark side of the dachshund races. Will dachshund racing lead to massive overbreeding, as is the case with greyhounds? Does training for the races put an unnecessary physical strain on the dogs? It seems that at every turn a dachshund has to pull out of a race due to an injury. There are no easy answers when it comes to competitive dachshund racing.

I've got two dachshunds of my own, and I've never looked at one of them and thought, "I bet my dachshund is faster than your dachshund." I'm just happy when they don't pull used Kleenex out of the trash can. There's a reason why the dachshund is the fifth most popular breed of dog in the country, and it's not because they're the fastest runners or the most skilled badger-hunters (though they almost certainly are). It's because they're loyal, loving little companions who want for nothing more than to please their owners. In this case, that includes traveling the country to put on silly costumes and run in dachshund races. MacDougall's film never loses sight of why people with dachshunds are the luckiest dog owners around – because these dogs will do anything it takes to put a smile on our faces. *Wiener Takes All* is a great little film that does the same thing.

This is one of many can't-miss documentaries at the 2008 festival.

***Wiener Takes All: A Documentary* is playing on Thursday, April 24th at 7:30 p.m. at La Placita.**



Visit the Official Site -- <http://www.wienertakesall.com/>

Posted by azfilmfest at [12:14 PM](#)



1 comments:

[Mia](#) said...

Everyone should go to Wiener Takes All!
You will have a doaaone aood time!