

# Peoria pooch fares well in 1st national race

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Miniature Peoria pooch Kahlua had an eventful Labor Day weekend.

In addition to flying on a plane, she competed in a national race for speedy Chihuahuas in San Diego in front of thousands of fans.

The 3-year-old racing extraordinaire finished in the middle of the pack in the fourth annual PetCo Unleashed National Chihuahua Races Aug. 31 at PetCo Park. The race featured 15 finalists from around the country, who each won regional races, like Kahlua, to earn a spot in the national race.

Pet parents Tiffany DiGiacinto and Scott Harris said they were proud Kahlua managed a top-10 finish in her first national race, despite some confusion at the start of the race.

"We were told the start would be announced via microphone, but that didn't happen," DiGiacinto said. "As a result,

most of the competitors did not hear the announcer start the race. Had the announcer clearly and loudly announced the start of the race, who knows where Kahlua might have finished.

"Although Kahlua didn't place in the top four spots, we are pleased with her performance and could not be prouder of our little champion."

DiGiacinto said the world of Chihuahua racing has not seen the last of Kahlua.

"We're so thankful that PetCo produces this event annually and are already looking ahead to next year's regional contest with high hopes," she said. "If all goes well, we'll be back at PetCo Park competing for the national title in 2009."

The winner of the race was a little dog named Tiger from Bakersfield, Calif., who won the national championship in 2006.

Second place was awarded to a 1-year-old

male dog named Piccolo from The Woodlands, Texas.

For a video of the race and information about Kahlua, visit <http://teamkahlua.wordpress.com>.

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Three-year-old Chihuahua Kahlua, left photo, poses for a picture after completing her first national championship race at PetCo Park in San Diego last weekend. Proud pet parents Scott Harris and Tiffany DiGiacinto of Peoria hold Kahlua, who placed in the top 10.

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