

# National Open Shooting Dog Championship

## *Awsum Country Girl Named Winner*

By DWIGHT SMITH

**A**WSUM COUNTRY GIRL, three-year-old pointer female owned by Bill and Muriel Primm of Cream Ridge, N. J., and Bill and Margie Ricci of Powhatan, Va., and handled by George Tracy, was crowned the 2014 National Open Shooting Dog Champion. The youthful "Zeva" had several strong challengers but in the end she was named champion.

The 2014 Championship drew a starting field of 59 qualified pointers and setters, with 14 handlers, all pros except for Brent Cox, from ten different states. Owners represented at least 19 states. The broad spectrum of the shooting dog fraternity was well represented.

Weather during the eight days of running ranged from too hot to too cold. From perfect weather for field trials to rain, but that is the way it goes.

Sedgefields Plantation is the premier shooting dog grounds in the United States without a doubt, maybe the best field trial grounds in the United States period. While continuous course field trial grounds continue to disappear and quail likewise, Sedgefields just gets better. For some reason, unknown to us, quail seem to thrive on that piece of ground in Bullock County, Alabama.

Readers might think that when finds are addressed in this report that this reporter is indicating a single quail. Not so. At least 85 percent of the finds were on coveys, usually large coveys. Whatever they are doing to make the intriguing game bird abundant on Sedgefields is paying off. Bill Lee, Jason Howard and their staff are on the right track.

Sedgefields owners are Raymond and Kathryn Harbert. They generously share Sedgefields Plantation with hundreds of field trialers for two major trials, the National Open Shooting Dog Championship and the National Amateur Free-for-All Championship. A list of improvements on the field trial grounds are found elsewhere in this report. It is sufficient, I think, to say that each year a good thing just gets better. Mrs. Harbert rode in the gallery one day.

Jason Howard is plantation manager. He is a busy man, but takes time to attend the event, always, it seems, in a good mood. Bill Lee is in charge of quail hunting at Sedgefields and as one can tell from this report, he is getting the job done. Bill and his likeable son, Harrison, marshalled the trial with some help from Johnny Capps. Seems they know about every inch of the acreage. Harrison Lee,

an expert horseman, was a man for all seasons.

Horses and tack were taken care of by a crew of plantation employees. They gave their full attention to tending the animals, which is an important part of a horseback trial.

The community of Union Springs has been acknowledged for its interest in field trials for years. Their interest does not diminish.

Additional financial aid is needed by the directors of the Championship. Hembree Furniture, Phillips Seed and Feed, Gibson's Home Center, Ameri-First Bank and May Distributing Company stepped forward to become sponsors of the National Open Shooting Dog Championship along with Plantation Supply, Sedgefields Plantation and Purina. Purina representative Jim Smith rode several days. He is always pleasant.

Due to illness and illness in their families, Johnny Atkinson and Bobby Fox were unable to judge as was advertised. Mack Hilliard, well-known pro trainer from North Carolina, and Brian Peterson of Cecil, Ala., filled in for them joined by Dr. Joe Maddox in rendering the decision. The judging panel was knowledgeable and attentive but did have some differences in opinions.

The 2014 National Open Shooting Dog Championship was a great bird dog field trial. As Herb Holmes used to say, "It don't get any better than this." Action came fast and galleries were large. At times two entries would be on point in different locations at the same time so this reporter might have missed some of the bird work. If so, I apologize. However, the judges got it right, and that is what counts.

### THE WINNER AND OTHERS

Awsum Country Girl was three years and two weeks old when she was named the 2014 National Open Shooting Dog Champion. To date she has 18 placements, most in Open Derby stakes. She qualified for this renewal with her runner-up placements at the Northeastern and the Keystone Championships.

Girl had an impressive Derby year, winning the Forty-Ninth National Shooting Dog Futurity and the Forty-Ninth United States Quail Shooting Dog Futurity, and then being named the 2012-2013 Purina Open Shooting Dog Derby of the Year.

Girl's performance at Sedgefields awed spectators in the gallery with her ground work and bird work. Her

performance is detailed in the running part of this report; however, parts of her performance need to be noted.

She had eleven pieces of bird work, all handled correctly, a back and a great shooting dog ground effort. She and Tracy seemed to have an understanding — he lets her go bird hunting. It seemed at one point, at about 75 minutes, that Tracy thought she had enough bird work, so he directed his scout, Mike Tracy, to release her after her ninth find, on the edge of a big hay field. She went down the field edge for about five minutes, jumped into the cover and was found on point again. This was repeated again just before the 90-minute mark with another find near the Stone line. One could not help feel as George Tracy flushed the last two coveys, he was praying quail were where Girl said they were. They were.

Needless to say, George Tracy handled the Ricci and Primm female as well as it could be done. Tracy has handled dogs for awhile and has piloted them to about 177 championships. It is hard to say anything good about him that has not been said. Suffice to say that he owns just about every handling record there is to be had in the shooting dog fraternity.

Tracy has handled three consecutive National Open Shooting Dog Championships: Sugarknoll Storm Warning, High Drive Rocky, and now Awsum Country Girl. In 2003, at Shell Creek Plantation, he handled Calico's Lap Dancer for his first National win.

Jack Herriage, Dean Lord and George Tracy have handled the winner four times in this Championship. Mike Tracy scouted Girl and Billy Kerr, George and Mary Tracy's grandson, rode the front.

Awsum Country Girl was bred by Littlewing's Kennels. Her sire was Phillips High Line, which was killed while still being campaigned, and her dam was Littlewing's Flying Dutchess. Bill Ricci went to Littlewing's Kennels in New Jersey and selected one of the female puppies from the mating, which turned out to be the 2014 National Shooting Dog Champion. Ricci owned Phillips High Line. Girl was a stud puppy from the mating.

Bill Ricci was in charge of Girl's early development. Bill gives Frankie Henderson credit for helping bring the early talents of Girl to the fore. Ricci and Henderson work dogs nearly every day on a lease they have near Powhatan, Va.

One of Girl's traits is that sometimes she will stand on her back legs when called to be sure she goes with her handler, according to Bill Ricci. He added that the white and liver female is a pleasure to work.

At the end of Girl's Derby year, Bill and Muriel Primm became partners with Bill and Margie Ricci in the ownership of Girl. The Primms feel fortunate to have been able to be included in the ownership.

Grouse Woods Skeeter set the standard for the stake in the eighth brace and might have been the contender closest to the champion. Skeeter's ninety minutes are detailed later. He was handled by Matt Basilone who had made his first trip to Sedgefields but he handled Larry Craig's setter like he had grown up on the plantation.

The smooth-footed setter had five finds, all coming after the 43-minute mark and all handled well. His style and manners around game were outstanding. The ground work, style and pattern were just about what one looks for in shooting dogs. He had lots of admirers and supporters in the gallery, especially those who rode every day.

Cox's Arc Fault got everyone excited with his bird-finding and his fast moving gait. He was handled by his likeable and capable owner Brent Cox. Fault had eleven finds and flew through the countryside at breakneck speed. At times he was to the side, but man, oh man, he is a bird-hunting, bird-handling machine. Several riders had him in the winner's circle for much of the event.

Erin's War Creek had his admirers also with his performance in the 28th brace. Creek had a very strong ground race, taking in big chunks of country that had George Tracy asking his scout for assistance on several occasions. Creek had at least seven pieces of bird work, all handled to perfection.

Sedge Surfer, War Creek's bracedmate, also impressed, and some followers of each dog's performance felt like he might be in contention, and he was. His race was about the same as Creek and with plenty of bird work.

Great River Ice left a very favorable impression with his ten finds and general application. He and Mike Tracy seem to read each other's minds. One find was a stop to flush.

#### THE RUNNING

The first brace — Touch's Light Air

Drifter (DeGross) and Erin's Silver Wings (G. Tracy) — got off to a late start due to an accident or illness that happened to one of DeGross' dogs. The judges waited 20 minutes and were getting ready to turn Wings loose by himself just as DeGross and his scout drove up. The start was at 8:22. A fine mist was falling; a good day to go bird hunting. Drifter and Wings reached to the limits of the fields before Hardaway Road. They were gathered up and directed toward the mossy oaks. Both applied themselves well, Wings reaching more. Tracy had to ride to get Wings to make the turn toward the big lake. Two coveys were ridden up before the big lake.

Wings scored first along the roadway to the Harbert house at 39. Tracy got everything together and went to the front

knew he was getting the job done. Five minutes later he did it again. Same performance, great style and intensity. Now Tracy had to believe the three-year-old pointer was getting it done. Drifter had another unproductive, Wings backing while DeGross tried to flush. Wings' last find came at 85. Tracy flushed hurriedly then sent Wings on to a strong finish. Wings had seven finds, Drifter three. We were off to a good start.

The rain had moved on and the sun appeared bringing welcoming rays of warmth. Temperatures were near 55°.

Ridge Creek Cody (Kinkelaar) went right, was gone a long time, checked in again and decided to go to other locations like the rain did. Jeanette Tracy pointed out Chiseled in Stone standing in deep cover, the McHugh pointer almost hidden in the high cover, a beautiful sight but Tracy couldn't raise feathers, fin or fur and Stone was charged with an unproductive at 15. Stone went right into the open fields along the Joe Varner line, taking in big acreage in the open country. She made game in the burned combine field, decided not to point and moved into the high cover toward the Cattle Ranch Road.

Just across the Cattle Ranch Road, near the Charlie Jackson crossing, Mike Tracy found Stone standing in heavy cover. Jeanette flushed quail, shot and rubbed the well made pointer showing her pleasure at what Stone had done. Four minutes later Mike found Stone standing again. Jeanette flushed a pair of quail, shot, all

in order. Stone had the course to herself now and she took advantage of it as far as range was concerned but was unable to connect with game. In the big fields along the Stone line, Stone made game again but no quail. Stone had three game contacts, all good.

Covey Rise's Offlee Amazin (Kinkelaar) and Jayhawk (Hailey) broke away at 1:30 behind the field trial barn, temperature about 60°. Both pointer males were eager to hunt, racing across the hay fields to the tall pines. Amazin went left, Hawk went right and 9 minutes later Hailey's scout called point for Hawk. A beautiful picture, the white and black pointer standing stylishly just outside a thicket. Everything was good for flush and shot. At 17 Amazin was found pointing far to the right in the pines, Hawk backing. Everything was handled correctly. Marshal Johnny Capps got everyone back on course, headed them



**AWSUM COUNTRY GIRL**  
Winner of the National Open Shooting Dog Championship

across the dam to the country toward Highway 29. DeGross flushed a big covey in front of Drifter, all in order at flush. Two minutes later, Drifter pointed again, with high head, quail pinned just right. Mike Tracy called point for Wings along the side of a weed field to the left of the course, good work and a well deserved find at the end of a long cast. At 50 DeGross called point again; a large covey was flushed from the remnants of a cut pine tree. Wings was found standing at 56, looking like a portrait, all ingredients of a memorable moment, something to remember when one needs a pleasant thought. The Linder pointer was finding game but he was also rolling through the country with appealing style and range.

Mike Tracy called point at 75 indicating far ahead and there Wings was again on point near the edge of a weed field. Tracy flushed, shot and smiled like he

toward Town Creek and Dan's mountain where action came fast on the hillside of Dan's mountain, Hawk with a find at 32, Amazin with one at 34. Hawk became bullish, keeping Hailey and company busy. Hawk had another find but his response wasn't good and Hailey put a harness on him.

Amazin applied himself well but not at extended range. At 53 he was standing in a sedge grass field, did not look right, so Kinkelaar took him by the collar and moved him on. Amazin made some good casts along the Avant line, was found pointing, his best find, at 52. In the fields, beyond the hog traps, Kinkelaar sent Amazin toward Smith ditch, the white and liver pointer reaching the far edges of the fields. He disappeared into the pines and was not returned until near the end of the grace period. Seven pieces of bird work, four by Amazin, three by Hawk.

Skies were dark when pointers Maple Valley Cowgirl (J. Tracy) and Perkins Happy Tobe Here (Perkins) started. It was only 3:15 but one had the feeling it was about sunset. Later in the evening a hard rain came. This course carried Here and Girl toward Turkey Hill and ending at Sedgefields Road near the Stone line. Happy had a find at 8, quail lifting as Perkins rode to him, Happy holding his ground. Then he had an unproductive on Turkey Hill. Across Sedgefields Road, Happy had another find at 45. Girl's ground work was strong and forward, if not extreme in range. She had a find at 45, perfect around game, she was. They finished their time at Sedgefields Road near the Stone line. Four coveys this brace, three for Happy, one by Girl.

Hot Topic (Kinkelaar) and High Drive Rocky (G. Tracy) were away at 7:55 under cloudy skies and warm temperatures. Bill Sand, Topic's owner, was mounted to watch his pointer champion. Rocky was the 2013 National Open Shooting Dog Champion. The pointers sped away, were rounded up and headed across Hardaway Road to start toward the mossy oaks, both full of energy, both applying themselves well and both out of pocket at the turn toward the Big Lake. Judge Hilliard reported that Rocky had a find at 10, all in order, but Rocky never made the turn toward the dam of the Big Lake.

Kinkelaar got Topic across the dam, had an unproductive at 27, then a find well to the front along the lake's shore line. Topic was applying herself to the countryside before reaching Highway 29 country, not minding the cover. The Sand female had another find at 59, not as appealing on point as she usually is, but quail located well and behaving at

flush. Topic's ground work at the hour mark was just as strong and appealing as it was at five minutes. She never slowed or gave into the cover and rough under footing. At 70, just past the North Coke barn road, Jack Herriage, scouting for Kinkelaar, found Topic on point again — manners to spare. For the next 15 minutes Topic was in pocket part of the time, out of pocket part of the time. Her last find, north of the Coke barn site, came at 87. By the time Kinkelaar finished flushing, time had expired.

Five finds this brace, four by Topic, one by Rocky.

Cassique's Blue Ridge (Ray) and Great River Class (G. Tracy), fleet females, were started at the Coke barn. Ray Jeffers had been on hand to serve refreshments, enjoyed by all. Ridge drew blood first, pointing on the edge of planted pines at 8. Great class, good manners is the best way to describe this find. Tracy called point at 15, the gallery rode to find both dogs standing. Both handlers shot at flush and this reporter gave them credit for a divided find.

Both dogs had another find before 20, then Tracy called point for Class, showing her standing on a long edge of a mowed field. Ridge came in, didn't back properly and was taken up. Class had finds at 24 and 28, just past the burned combine field, handled them correctly, ran the country satisfactorily and was heeled by George Tracy to the triangle area. In the big fields in the triangle area, Tracy encouraged Class to reach to the edges. In most cases she did. The Sanchez pointer female was bird hunting. She had her radar on, proved by finds at 43, 52 and 59. Just before the chicken dump a single quail lifted and flew over Class' head. She failed to stop. Tracy rode to pick her up.

This brace produced two finds by Blue Ridge, seven by Class in 65 minutes. The also had two divided finds.

Another big lunch was served in the clubhouse, great desserts. Temperatures stayed about the same all day, the threat of rain always present.

Conecuh's Pressure Test (Ray) and Bullerina (M. Tracy) were loosed from behind the field trial barn at 12:55. Bullerina was on point at 3 but had a wreck. Dennis Hood, one of Bullerina's owners, was in the gallery. Needless to say he was disappointed. Tony Gibson was in the gallery to watch Doug Ray handle Becky Gibson's setter. Ray sent the fleet-footed longhair across the big hay field toward Town Creek then rode to the south side of Dan's mountain to find Test on point in heavy cover. He displayed the kind of manners one would expect from a Ray trained dog.

Five minutes later Test was on point again, same story. In the open country, along the Avant line, Test didn't reach as far as some might have desired but he hunted and it paid off with a find near the hog trap. Test finished crossing the open country toward Smith's ditch going away. This brace found four coveys, three by Test, one by Bullerina.

Max Jack's Butch (Herriage) and Grouse Woods Skeeter (Basilone) were released across Sedgefields Road from Bill Lee's driveway. Temperature was in the 50s with cloudy skies and a soft wind. Butch went right, took the edge of a green field and faded from sight. Skeeter went straight ahead toward the south duck pond and was gone also for a few minutes. Handlers rounded up the pointer and setter and sent them toward Mote crossing, on toward Turkey Hill. Both dogs hunted the Turkey Hill area but the usually abundant quail population wasn't home today. Sedgefields Road was crossed again toward north duck pond, each applying themselves well in the big mowed fields. Butch had an unproductive at 20, was sent to hunt the tall pine country before Bill Lee's house.

Skeeter had his first find in the tall pines at 43, impressing everyone with his intensity and style. Meanwhile Herriage's scout called point to the rear of the gallery. Judges Hilliard and Peterson reported the stand was fruitless. Butch then had another find, handled it well but became bullish and was taken up.

Skeeter was reaching the far hills in the area before Town Creek when Shawn Kinkelaar went to look for him and found him pointing. Larry Craig, Skeeter's owner, was in the gallery, said there must have been 50 quail in that covey. Manners at flush and shot were excellent. By this time Skeeter had settled into a near perfect ground pattern, always to the front, always hunting the right places. Before the Stone line Skeeter had a second properly handled find, then on a sedge covered hillside 8 minutes later, he scored again with his third find. The Stone line was hunted, Skeeter not slowing at all in the muddy fields.

Sedgefields Road was crossed again and marshal Harrison Lee directed the field trial party toward the railroad country. In the railroad country, Skeeter was found pointing in a newly land cleared area at 75. Now he had everyone's attention both on the ground and pointing game. The Craig setter had his final find at 75, not far from Dykes Oak, all good. Basilone decided to give Skeeter his head and the setter responded by reaching at free will, was

found on point at 80, but no game could be raised so Skeeter was charged with an unproductive. Released toward Benny Jackson dove fields, Skeeter faded out of sight. At time, Kinkelaar and Basilone were out trying to round Skeeter up when he popped out to the front — good performance. Seven coveys — two by Butch, five by Skeeter.

Nonami's Bobby Jones (Pearce) and Enhancement Southern Bell (M. Tracy). A light rain was falling just before breakaway, stopping just a few minutes before Judge Maddox said, "Turn them loose." Temperatures were in the high 40s but the weatherman was calling for colder temperatures by nightfall.

Becky Blanton was riding to watch Mike Tracy handle Southern Bell. They were released at 7:55 a. m. Pearce and Tracy encouraged each pointer to hunt the edges then rode to gather them up before crossing Hardaway Road. Bell had an unproductive at 12, just across Hardaway Road. Just after the road crossing Tracy called point for Bell, flushed hurriedly and got to the front with Jones and Pearce. Then Bell had another find, then had another unproductive, and was taken up. Jones hunted to the side at times, had an unproductive, wasn't pleasing Pearce and was taken up at 46. Not much action this brace.

The rain moved out of the area before the next pair was released at 9:55. Jeff and Donna Ruth were riding for Avalon Creek. Brent Cox's sons and wife were riding to support Brent and Cox's Arc Fault.

Both dogs were fast and pretty moving, full of energy for the task at hand. The underfooting was wet and muddy. Creek had an unproductive at 8, caught Cox and Fault at the front, backed Fault at 20, then another fruitless stand at 24 and was taken up. Fault hunted fast and didn't really slow up during the 90 minutes. His first find came at 20 near the Joe Varner line, which Creek backed, then another at 29 in a thicket before the burned combine field. Fault had a find at 40 near the cattle ranch line. Fault turned to the right, was brought on by scout Johnny Capps and had another find before Maypole's house. Fault went left before the chicken dump, was out of pocket for awhile, then found on point by Johnny Capps. The judges rode, reporting all in order. Cox gathered

everything up and headed to the front, and had a point on the way, all in order.

Across Hardaway Road, down the power line and across the bridge, Cox stayed off his horse about as much as he stayed on, flushing for Fault. Fault's first was strong enough. He had 11 pieces of bird work without a mistake on game; Creek had one.

A minus 10° weather change from before lunch until starting time for the afternoon braces took place, but no rain.

Ranch Hand (Moore) and Snow Thrill (Rice) were released behind the field trial barn, Hand going straightaway across the hay fields, as Thrill went right and grabbed an edge to hunt. Rice called point at 9, Thrill standing just inside heavy cover. Young Tommy Rice flushed a covey. They got up just two or three at

pointing, probably Thrill's best find, and then at 80 there was a repeat of the last find. Past the hog traps along Sedgefields Road, Thrill had No. 7, all handled with excellent manners. One would like to have seen a little more range in Thrill's footwork but she did what she was born to do — point game.

Seven coveys, all found and handled by Snow Thrill. There was a report that Ranch Hand had a find to the front but it wasn't observed by this reporter.

Moonlite Magic (G. Tracy) and Max Jack's Tot (Herriage). The gallery and judges took a short break, some asking Ray Jeffers for coffee due to the cold wind. Magic's owners Bill and Muriel Primm were mounted. The pointer females were released at 2:30 and directed toward the south duck pond then on to Turkey Hill. Tot faded from sight, not to be returned during this brace.

Magic appealed with her range, class and application. Tracy called point on Turkey Hill, tried to flush, couldn't and asked Magic to relocate. The Primm pointer moved up about 20 feet and quail flew. She stopped and Tracy shot. Judge Peterson talked to Tracy and Magic was put in a roading harness.

Miller's Armed and Dangerous (Ray) and Twice the Ice (Shepard) left the line at 7:55, temperature in the 30s and a chill factor of about 16°. The underfooting was still

muddy, standing water everywhere. Dangerous had two unproductives before the turn toward the big lake and was taken up. Ice had one find, seemed to hunt his own way, had two unproductives and was taken up. This brace ended at 30. Only one covey was pointed, that by Ice.

Awsum Country Girl (G. Tracy) and Wild Covey Coldfront (Hailey). Bill and Muriel Primm were mounted to watch George Tracy handle Girl. They were going to be pleased at what they saw, even if the weather was unpleasant. Away at 9:05 going west from the Coke barn site. Both pointers sped away, disappearing in the sedge. Hailey rode ahead to find Front standing in a bicolor patch. This stand was fruitless. About the time Hailey and the judges started to the front, at 13, Tracy was on the ground flushing. A covey exploded into the air, going in all different directions. Girl stood her ground as one quail nearly hit



The winner, Awsum Country Girl, is posed by George Tracy, joined by, from left: Judge Mack Hilliard, Judge Joe Maddox, Bill and Muriel Primm, Bill Ricci, Mary Tracy, Mark McClain, Mike Tracy and Billy Kerr.

a time tempting Thrill, but Thrill withstood the temptation as Rice shot.

Marshal Capps directed the gallery and handlers toward Town Creek, both pointers out front for awhile. Then Hand was gone, seen once or twice, but picked up before 40. Thrill pointed near the gallery path just before the turn from Town Creek. Rice dismounted, picked up some feathers, took Thrill by the collar and carried him on. Before Dan's mountain Thrill had a second piece of bird work, then past Dan's mountain at 45 Rice flushed another covey in front of the white and liver pointer. Thrill's ground work was not to the extreme that some would prefer but he was hunting and producing game. The cover was heavy and a strong wind was blowing. The busy moving female had her fifth find near Bill Lee's driveway, again everything in order, another nice piece of bird work. Near the hour, in the hardwood stand, Rice's scout found Thrill



From left: Mr. and Mrs. Larry Craig and Matt Basillone.

her head as he flew by. Front and Girl made big swings to the right, were brought on and both went ahead. Point was called for each by scouts at 25. Tracy produced a covey and shot, all in order. Hailey couldn't produce for Front and was charged with an unproductive. Tracy and Hailey gathered their dogs up and sent them across open country toward the Varner line.

Girl was standing ahead near a plum thicket. Tracy turned his cap backward and crashed into the thick cover, quail flew. He shot, then fought the brush to get back to the still styled-up pointer. Meanwhile Front had a find far to the left, all in order according to Judge Hilliard. Everyone was getting excited, forgetting about the cold weather.

In the open country before the Cattle Ranch Road, Girl and Front filled the country with huge casts, were rounded up and sent toward the triangle area, an area that challenges a dog to reach to the far edges but to hunt the cover to find game. Girl did just that. At 43 Mike Tracy found Girl on point along a ditch bank. Meanwhile across the big field on the other edge Hailey's gunshot was heard just minutes after George Tracy's. Both dogs handled their finds well.

Action happened just before reaching the chicken dump at 65. Girl had three pieces of bird work, all good. The one at Maypole's house was probably the best one and it was a covey that hadn't been found before in this trial.

Girl and Front were rounded up and headed across Hardaway Road at the chicken dump, directed down the power line and across the bridge over Town Creek. Near the Stone line Front had his fifth find, standing on a sedge-covered hillside, all well at flush. Four minutes later Tracy was off his horse flushing for Girl. Quail flew, Tracy shot and Girl didn't move a hair on her body until Tracy took her by the collar to move her on.

Hailey hunted the cover with Front. Tracy sent Girl down the edge of a mowed field. Did he want more bird

work? Probably not but 7 minutes later he was off his horse for the ninth time. Girl had handled nine coveys without a bobble; 5 minutes later he shot again. Front had come into the area on this find, failed to back and was taken up.

Tracy instructed Mike Tracy to send Girl toward the open country along the Stone line. With 9 minutes left Girl disappeared into the cover ahead to be found on point for the eleventh time and for the eleventh time she handled everything just right. Tracy released Girl, blew his whistle and she sped toward the Stone line then crossed Sedgewilds Road and reached the creek at about the same time Judge Hilliard called pickup.

What an hour we had just witnessed — an outstanding shooting dog race, with eleven pieces of bird work and a back; it was worth the trip. Front had four finds before he was taken up. This brace produced 15 coveys.

After lunch, C S Black Market (Ray) and Carol's Elhew Goldie (Herriage), were released at 12:58, off in cold weather, gray skies and wet underfooting, a large gallery mounted to watch two popular handlers work. Market went right into the big hay fields and wasn't around much. Ray asked for his tracker before 30. Goldie was a handful in the early minutes but then settled down to the business at hand. She made some extremely big casts, taking in the bottoms along Town Creek. Her first bird work was on Dan's mountain at 35, a good find in heavy cover and handled well. Virgil Moore, Herriage's scout, found Goldie on point before the Warhoop Trouble Doc tree, good work. No. 3 came at the mossy oaks near the Avant line, again handled perfectly.

At 59 Herriage sent Goldie down the edge of a mowed field. She jumped into cover and was gone for awhile. Virgil Moore found her standing again, this time in a plowed fire lane. Herriage made the long ride to her, flushed quail and shot. He sent the big white and orange pointer female down the fence-line toward Sedgewilds Road, not to be returned under judgment.

This brace produced five coveys, all by Carol's Elhew Goldie. One covey reported by Judge Maddox not observed by this reporter.

Salty Dog Playmaker (Moore) and Calico's Dyno Mite (G. Tracy) were released across Sedgewilds Road from Bill Lee's house toward the south duck pond. The pointers made two or three casts that carried them to Mote Crossing and on to Turkey Hill. Along the ridge of Turkey Hill, Mite pointed, indicated game in a pine thicket. No game was flushed, Mite charged with an unpro-

ductive. While Mite was on point and Tracy was trying to flush, Playmaker came into the area, slowed and passed the pointing Mite. Playmaker was taken up. Tracy piloted Mite across the big fields before the ladies restroom and then took him up. No game this brace.

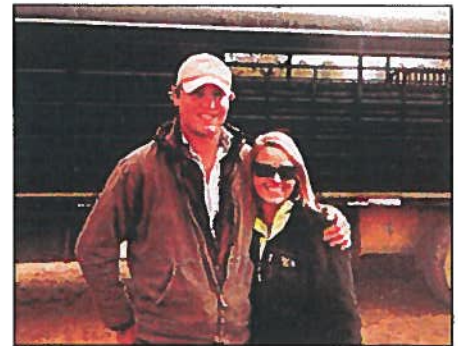
The ground was covered with frost at the breakaway but the skies were blue and some moisture had gone into the ground. The weather had a better outlook for today.

Wild Covey Heatwave (Hailey) and Ward's Danhawk (Williams) were away at 7:58. Ron Ward, owner of Danhawk, was in the gallery. The pair of pointers raced away and by 8 Hawk was on point and Heatwave was backing. Everything that happened was good. Hawk and Dan were restarted across Hardaway Road, both searching the country before the mossy oaks. Then the turn was made toward the big lake. Hawk's second find came at 20 just before the big lake, again all in order. Heatwave showed signs of being headstrong early in the brace but by 30 he had settled down to hunt and had four finds spaced from 40 until the end of the brace. His range improved with time and before the end of the brace he impressed with his footwork. Hawk had four finds, including the one discussed earlier.

This brace produced seven coveys, four by Hawk and three by Heatwave.

Kathryn Harbert had joined the gallery for the first brace at about the midway point of the brace. She was very gracious during the break between the two braces, talking to everyone. As Bill Lee says, "She is the salt of the earth."

Sliced Bread (Perkins) and Heritage (M. Tracy) were started at 9:55 at the Coke barn site. Heritage had an unproductive on the breakaway cast. Mike Tracy hurried to catch up with Bread and Perkins. Everybody got gathered up before the big bottoms and headed toward the Joe Varner line. Heritage had bird work at 10, 15 and 20 but wasn't pleasing Mike Tracy and was taken up.



Billy Kerr and Lauren Renfro, the grandson of George Tracy and granddaughter of Joe Hicks.



**Plantation Manager Jason Howard.**



**From left: Charlie Jackson, Virgil Moore and Jack Herriage.**

Perkins took Bread up at 45. Three coveys this brace, all by Heritage.

Gin Creek Onyx (Herriage) and Palara (M. Tracy). Dr. Jim and Mrs. Mills were mounted to watch Jack Herriage pilot Onyx. The Mills have supported major shooting dog stakes for many years. Released behind the barn, Onyx and Palara raced to the edge of the big hay fields. Palara pointed, Onyx came in and backed, then both pointers moved on. Gin was gone a lot early, off to the right but being seen often enough not to be counted out of judgment.

Palara hunted at a more moderate range. Jack Herriage asked for his tracker at about the hour mark. Palara had a find at 25 off the hillside near Dan's mountain, stylish and displaying good manners, then he made some good casts and ended up near Bill Lee's driveway with his second find, handled well. Near the Avant line the Sal Morelli pointer made several good casts, was gathered up and sent toward the hog traps. He was taken up shortly afterward.

This brace produced two coveys, both pointed by Palara.

Sugarknoll War Paint (G. Tracy) and Superstition's Magic Man (Moore). Ray Jeffers provided refreshments for everyone before the breakaway at 2:20. The weather was about perfect to be outside and enjoy God's creation. Paint went to the right, Man went to the left and then the front. Both pointers appeared in the country before Turkey Hill, filling the real estate but responding to their handlers also. Man had a find on Turkey Hill. Virgil Moore flushed, cautioning Man as quail flew and he shot.

Paint pointed a covey in the small pines before the north duck pond, a beautiful sight. A few minutes later Moore's gun was heard. Judge Maddox reported everything was in order after the flush. Excellent find for Man.

Paint had his second find at 50.

Man, he is a beautiful sight on game, mannerly too. It was reported by one of the judges that Man had another find, all in order. Paint and Man were taken up at the Sedgefields Road crossing near the railroad country.

Three coveys were found by Man, two by Paint.

Elhew G Force (Ray) and Great River Ice (M. Tracy). A large gallery gathered for the 8:00 a. m. breakaway. Two well-known shooting dog champions to be handled by two young handlers, who are the sons of Hall of Fame fathers. Brian Sanchez represented of the Sanchez family, owners of Ice. Tim Moore was scouting for Ray. Moore owns Force.

Released, they raced toward the Fork Church, Force wheeled and pointed at 5. Ice backed. Everything was in order for the flush. Nice start on a nice day. Before crossing Hardaway Road, Ice pointed in the open mowed field. Force backed Ice. Ice's stand turned out to be an unproductive. Across Hardaway Road Ice and Force were ridden for to make the turn toward the big lake, were rounded up and sent forward. Just before the lake, at 20, Tracy called point for Ice. Nice find for the white and orange pointer.

Tracy hurried to the front to catch Force and Doug Ray, both dogs ranging forward, searching the countryside for game. In the area of the big lake, below the dam, Ice had a stop to flush. Tracy then hurried to the front. The gallery was excited, marshal Lee asking them to stay behind the judges.

Force went left before the big lake dam and was not returned until after the grace period. Ice hunted the hill country, with heavy cover, about as well as it could be done, showing up often enough and mixing in three finds, all with style and manners. At 60 Ice had five finds, a back, an unproductive and a stop to flush. One had to wonder what the next

30 minutes would hold.

The turn was made toward the coke barn site, temperatures rising, excitement too. Ice answered the question of what was to come with his sixth find at 70, again all in order. The area before the Coke barn is made up of small fields and hillsides covered in sedge grass. Ice could be seen far ahead in cover and then seen running the edge of a field. He was going where quail were, proven by the fact he had three finds in the last 30 minutes. The judges cantered to the top of a hill so they could see Ice's finish. What they saw was Ice fading away in the brown sedge. A good finish it was.

The first brace on the sixth day had been a good one. One had to wonder what would have happened if Elhew G Force hadn't gotten lost. This brace had 12 covey finds. Nine by Ice, with a back and an unproductive, including a stop to flush. G Force had three finds before being taken up.

The gallery wasn't drinking Ray Jeffers' coffee at the Coke barn site today. They were asking for something cold. The previous brace had everyone excited.

Klee's Handsome Hank (M. Tracy) and Oklahoma Credit Card (Moore) began at 9:55 from the Coke barn site. Mike Tracy called point at 8 for Hank. He is named right. He is handsome, especially on point, and mannerly too. The country near the Joe Varner line was inviting to Hank. He ran the edges. Card chose to hunt the cover keeping Moore busy trying to stay in touch with him. Hank had finds at 19 and 25 before crossing the cattle ranch road. Dogs were watered, saddles adjusted and scouts consulted before sending Hank and Card into the triangle area.

At 40 Tracy called point. When the gallery arrived both dogs were standing about 30 yards apart. Tracy flushed and shot, so did Moore. Quail lifted in front

of each dog. Two separate coveys. Card had another find at the big plum thicket near the Cattle Ranch line. He handled it well. Moore sent Card on and when Moore went to his horse he flushed a quail that flew over Card's head. Card stopped to flight. Something not seen a lot anymore.

Both Card and Hank hunted the area before Mapole's house. Card's searching paid off at 60 with a find near the old homestead. Before the chicken dump Hank and Card were taken up. This brace produced seven coveys — four by Hawk, three by Card.

Deep Red Black Diamond (Perkins) and Calico's Touch of Class (G. Tracy) were away at 1:00 under sunny skies and drying out underfooting. A nice day to ride horses and be outside.

George Tracy called point at 10 near the north duck pond but couldn't flush game so Class was charged with an unproductive. Diamond had a find at 15 just before Town Creek, all in order at flush. Both dogs hunted the country along the creek bottoms and on to the slopes of Dan's mountain. Perkins called point and pointed out Diamond standing on Dan's mountain. He and Judge Maddox started riding to the stylish pointer and all of a sudden Diamond moved into the covey of quail.

Class hunted attractively, selecting the right objects but she couldn't find game in the hour and was up at 80. Two coveys for this pair, both by Diamond.

Stormin Steely Dan (Herriage) and Westerly Bonnie Blue Shadow (M. Tracy) started north of the south duck pond going to Turkey Hill. Mr. and Mrs. Turner Reuter, owners of Blue, were riding. Dan tried to find game. It seemed that quail vanished because none were found for the first 45 minutes so Herriage took Dan up. Mike Tracy kept trying to find game but as they say "they ain't moving today." However, Blue had some undefined bird work at 60 and was taken up. One covey this brace.

The gallery's numbers dropped to about 25 for the seventh day of the trial. The weather was pleasant and the underfooting was drying out from the days of heavy rain.

Skydancer Dancing Bell (Kinkelaar) and Octavio (M. Tracy) were started at the usual place but both were picked up before the dam of the big lake at about 30 minutes. Octavia pointed at 10. Tracy showed a dead quail to Judge Maddox who told Tracy to continue. He was not charged with an unproductive. Bell had a find at 28, made a slight mistake at flush and was taken up. Tracy took Octavia up before the dam of the big lake.

A short break was taken at the Coke

barn site before releasing this pair of Land Line (Shepard) and Not'ta Snow Balls Chance (Perkins). Temperatures were climbing and the skies were Carolina blue. Not a good day, they say, to go bird hunting. Land Line was found pointing at 15, did not please Shepard and was taken up. Chance's owner, Rex Garner, was riding to watch Perkins handle the recently named runner-up in the Atlantic Coast Championship.

Near the Joe Varner line, Chance had a find, all in order at flush, but his ground work didn't please Stacy Perkins and he was taken up at the Cattle Ranch Road. One covey this brace, by Chance.

Temperatures rose and the skies got bluer, not a good day to hunt. The morning brace didn't find game and chances of it being a good day were not good.

Conecuh Station's Fadeaway (Hamm) and Heaven's Elwh Taggart (DeGross) were started at 12:56 and both were standing by 12:58. One handler called the flight of quail but neither Judge Maddox nor Marshal Capps observed them. DeGross tried to flush but didn't raise any feathers, fin or fur. Shortly after Taggart had another unproductive and was up. Fadeaway had one find but was taken up at 30.

Serious Investment (M. Tracy) and Cassique's Low Rider (Ray) broke away at the gateway to the south duck pond and raced through the pines into the green fields then on the Mote's crossing and Turkey Hill. Greg Strausbaugh was riding to watch Mike Tracy handle his champion pointer. Across Sedgefields Road, Investment had a find at 30, a find near Bill Lee's house, an unproductive at 50 and was taken up. Rider had 60 minutes of a running, hunting ground effort with a good find at 30. Rider was harnessed at the hour mark but had impressed with his outstanding foot work.

Two coveys for this pair. Where had the quail gone?

Erin's War Creek (G. Tracy) and Sedge Surfer (Ray). Allen Lender was mounted to watch this brace. He is the owns Erin's War Creek and three other entries. War Creek and Surfer had both made strong bids for the title a year ago. There was an anticipation of another outstanding performance and no one was disappointed in the performance of these two fine pointers.

They began at the usual breakaway place for the No. 1 course at 7:50 a. m. A larger than expected gallery was mounted to watch this brace. Creek drew first blood with a find at 8 before the Hardaway Road crossing. Tracy flushed a single, an odd situation for this time of day because most bird work was on coveys. The Hardaway crossing was made,

both dogs having to be ridden for to make the turn toward the big lake. Before the turn Judge Peterson reported that Surfer had a find at 15 just off the plantation roadway.

Ray and Tracy called point, flushed and shot at about 20 before reaching the lake shoreline. Dogs were credited with a divided find and then at 25 both were on point, side by side, credited with another divided find. Past the road to the lake dam Creek had a good piece of bird work, standing in sedge, barely visible, all in order at shot. Surfer had an unproductive at 45, but as they say, it was a pretty unproductive, then at 50 he compensated by pointing a covey in the wooded area past the dam, an outstanding piece of work, but he did have to relocate as he did on an earlier find, handling the work the way it is supposed to be done.

Creek's best find came at 65, way to the front and after a long ride Tracy flushed a covey that was located exactly where Creek said they were. Creek's next bird work came at 70 on the hillside before the left turn to the coke barn site, again a long ride to the standing pointer, a long way to the front. Surfer had the last piece of bird work at 75. He too was hunting far to the front but maybe not to the extreme as Creek.

Ground work for this pair was to the extreme for a shooting dog and on at least three occasions they were ridden for when the course made a turn or when one or the other extended a cast to the limit of a treeline, or the edge of a field. Both Creek and Surfer were strong, attractive and hard charging in their efforts on the ground to find game.

When this brace was over I asked George Tracy how many finds Creek had. He said he didn't know. I asked Tim Moore how many finds Surfer had. He said he wasn't sure but thought it was six. This reporter isn't sure either, but believes Creek had eight and Surfer had seven, all handled properly. This was the most exciting brace of the Championship and made one wonder if they had not just seen two dogs have an all-age performance.

Erin's Boxcar Willie (M. Tracy) ran as a bye, leaving from the Coke barn site. Greg Strausbaugh, one of Willie's owners, was in the gallery to encourage Willie and to help Mike Tracy keep in touch with him if needed. Willie began with a long cast on the breakaway, hunted to the front at good range and had two finds before reaching the Cattle Farm Road. Both finds were handled correctly but Mike Tracy felt like he wasn't making any money and took Willie up at the Cattle Ranch Road.

Union Springs, Ala., February 8  
Judges: Maack Hilliard, Dr. Joe Maddox and  
Brian Peterson  
NATIONAL OPEN SHOOTING DOG  
CHAMPIONSHIP [Ninety-Minute Heats] —  
58 Pointers and  
7 Setters

Winner—AWSUM COUNTRY GIRL, 1641480,  
pointer female, by Phillips High Line—  
Littlewing's Flying Duchess. Bill & Margie  
Ricci & Bill & Muriel Primm, owners; George  
Tracy, handler.

#### SOME SIDELIGHTS AT SEDFIELDS

WHEN Cecil Cole judged the National Open Shooting Dog Championship three years ago, he coined the phrase, "Every night in Union Springs, Ala., is Saturday night." His observation of the activities in Union Springs during field trials is right on the money. There was a party every night, except the last night of the Championship.

On the night of the drawing, a cocktail party was held at the Sedgfields clubhouse. As usual a full house was present. Plenty to eat and plenty to drink, too. However, the large group was mannerly during the drawing.

Monday night's gala featured a dinner with town folks coming out to make field trialers welcome; the same procedure followed on Tuesday evening.

Wednesday night's party was hosted by Plantation Supply and what a party it was. Barbeque, potato salad, slaw and several kinds of desserts.

Thursday evening's steak dinner was hosted by Allen Linder, the owner of High Drive Rocky, the winner of the 2013 National Open Shooting Dog Championship. It was a really nice affair, so nice that the entry's owner was heard to say he wasn't sure he

could afford to win the Championship if he had to top the meal hosted by Allen Linder.

On Friday night Tony and Becky Gibson arranged a party at the Union Springs Country Club. The entire town showed up to eat and enjoy the music of Tag Williams. Even this reporter felt compelled to dance with his wife to the music of Williams that dated back to the 1960s.

There was a blowout party on Saturday night at Tony and Becky Gibson's Conecuh Station clubhouse. Fish and wild game were the main courses of the meal.

You are correct, Cecil Cole, every night is Saturday night in Union Springs, Ala., during field trials.

Breakfast was served each day by the Union Springs Tourism Council at the Sedgfields clubhouse. Can you imagine folks in a community getting up each morning cooking breakfast at their home, using their own food, driving to the Sedgfields clubhouse and serving breakfast to a group of about 40 people before 7:00 a.m.? Yes, that's what they did. Community spirit.

Each year since Raymond and Kathryn Harbert took control of Sedgfields, improvements to the field trial courses keep happening. The most noticeable this year was the thinning of pine trees in the area around the field trial headquarters, making the possibility of starting the morning courses near the headquarters more likely.

Food, drink and socializing are a big part of the National Open Shooting Dog Championship. The food is always

excellent and the thanks for that go to the wives and members of the Championship. The group includes Becky Champion, Drs. Lindsey and Amy Roberts, Reba Jeffers and Bobbie Smith.

Every meal is planned well in advance of the time it is to be served and much thought goes into every meal. The group not only cooks and serves the meals, they clean the clubhouse, wash dishes and give any kind of advice one requests. They are a very important part of the Championship.

The directors of the National Open Shooting Dog Association are a close-knit group. We assume that the original directors worked well together because they did an excellent job of organizing the Championship. All that said, it is worthwhile to consider the way the present directors work together.

About fifteen years ago, a chosen group of directors were organized that include Dr. Jerry Champion, Dr. Joe Maddox, Ray Jeffers, Dr. Lindsey Roberts, and this reporter. There have been others to join the directors, but for various reasons dropped out. Champion, Maddox, Jeffers and Roberts have all worked very hard to make this Championship one of the best field trials in the field trial world, and I believe they have succeeded. Bill Lee serves as a consultant.

It has been a pleasure to be a part of that group that now includes Jason Howard, Brent Cox and Don May. We have worked together for a long time, and it has been my pleasure to be a part of the group. Thank you.

D. S.

#### TEXAS OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP AND REGION 7 AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

(Special Bulletin) Inola, Okla.

Back-to-back championship trials were held at the McFarlin-Ingersoll Ranch near Inola, Okla., starting March 1. The weather was favorable the first day; however, the frigid ice and snowstorm that rolled through the mid-section of the country wreaked havoc on the remainder of the trials.

In the Texas Championship, 36 excellent dogs were entered with many fine performances. Named champion was Lester's Tom Cruise, pointer male owned by Brad Calkins of Englewood, Colo., and handled by Andy Daugherty. Whippoorwill Wild Assault, also a pointer male, won runner-up laurels for handler Larry Huffman and owners Dr. J. D. Huffman of Michigan City, Miss., and Dr. T. L. Terlep of Boston, Ga.

The Texas Derby Classic consisted of nine outstanding youngsters. Randy Anderson handled White Flyer, pointer male, to first place with a true all-age ground effort. Chris Cornman of Georgetown, Tex., owns White Flyer. Allen Vincent handled Sandridge Original Sin, also a pointer male, to second with a strong ground effort and well handled bird contact. John Beckwith and Dr. Ben Johnson own Sin. Third place honors went to Dazzling, pointer female handled by Steve Hurdle for owners Bob Walthall and Thorpe McKenzie of Tallahassee, Fla.

Judges for the Texas Championship were Doug Holmes of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Lynn Oxendine of Joplin, Mo. Charlie Collier of Corsicana, Tex., joined Doug to judge

the Texas Derby Classic.

The Region 7 Amateur All-Age Championship started in dreary weather conditions that only deteriorated. Prairie River Ike, a strong pointer male, displayed a strong ground effort and mannerly bird work to win the title. Rodney Shoemaker handled Ike, and he is owned by Rodney and the late Roger Duncan. Jim Michaletz guided his Spectre, a snappy setter male, to the runner-up spot with a fine ground effort and well handled bird contact.

Judges for the Region 7 All-Age Championship were Austin Bryant of Collinsville, Okla., and Charlie Collier of Corsicana, Tex.

Details will follow.

CONRAD PLEVNIC