

Region 14 Amateur Shooting Dog Championship

By AUSTIN TURLEY

WERE fortunate to host the Region 14 Amateur Shooting Dog Championship over the grounds of the Buffalo Creek Drainage, north of Circle, Mont. As Sean Kelly from Alberta, Canada stated: "We were serenaded each morning by the cackle of pheasant."

Everything came together in order to have a great trial and the opportunity to win it in any brace drawn. The weather was on its best behavior, with daytime highs in the 60s and nighttime lows in the 40s. There was a slight breeze that was to the dogs' advantage; one could not have asked for more. The grounds have recovered from the sweet clover of two years ago, some of the CRP is undergoing renovation along with program requirements. Birds, I do not think anyone will ride away thinking there was anything less than great bird numbers; pheasant numbers were the highest we have seen in 6 or 7 years, pairs of Huns were abundant, sharptail were everywhere. Sometimes where you would want them, and sometimes where folks were hoping not to find any more.

Once again we were welcomed graciously by the landowners of the area. Leading that contingent was Shannon Nygard. Shannon opened her home to our trialers, as has been her norm. She, along with other region members Jeanette Hiese and Brenda Ochosky, headed up the plentiful cocktail and dinner festivities each evening. Dave Pearson, last year's winner, hosted the banquet Friday evening and the Region did Saturday evening. Thank you to both of them. Landowners Sue and McKenna Brown, owners of the Bar B Q Ranch, attended the Saturday dinner; we were delighted to have them. Shannon was assisted by Sierra Juliano. Sierra also rode with us Sunday morning and what a delight it was to have her young perspective for all of us. She is an upbeat young lady. Purina was a generous host again. Without their support holding a trial such as this would be much more complicated to say the least. We appreciate the continued support of Purina.

Our judging duo was Travis Gellhaus and John McIltrout, and a team they were. Travis and John were attentive to every entry. You knew when you loosed your dog under them that they were going to watch and give your dog an opportunity to win the trial. Both of these men train and compete on wild birds themselves; they understood what each dog was up against. Travis needs no introduction but

let me add that Travis has competed over these grounds and won the Montana Open Shooting Dog Championship here with Heaven's Elhew Taggert. Travis understood our grounds and knew what he wanted to see. John McIltrout is a falconer from Broadview, Mont. John trains dogs for falconers across the northwest and competes in the Big Sky Field Trial Club. John moved here about six years ago from Florida where he competed in horseback trialing. John has judged the Region 10 Amateur All-Age Championship and Pacific Northwest Open Shooting Dog Championship in Idaho. It was evident John and Travis were on the same page in what they were looking for.

Mike Robbins and Dustin Duesenberry of Utah made the drive to attend, as did Scott Wilson, Dennis and Bonnie Hidalgo of Colorado. We thank them for their participation and camaraderie. Throughout our region we were well represented. Jason LaFrance made the drive down from Edmonton, Alberta. Manette Jones and Sean Kelly also came from Alberta. Sean brought dogs for his fellow countrymen Paul Falkowsky and Jim Eunson. From Saskatchewan we saw Jeanette Heise, Brenda Ochosky, Dawn Feist and Sheldon Rodgers. Sheldon was first to jump up and man the grill on Friday evening. We had strong support from across Montana helping to put on this trial as well as competing: Glenn Conover, Dave Noell, John Junnila, Shannon Nygard, Amanda Drysdale and Mike Protz, Larry McMullen (also a falconer), Brad McCardle, and Michelle and Austin Turley. Coming up from Georgia, delivering dogs to local trainer Justin Wiseman, were his brother Quintin, Tasha Love and Mike Wisener. Tasha, Mike and Justin each handed dogs in our companion stakes.

THE WINNERS

Touch's Match Point was acquired from Wright Kennels in Indiana in the spring of 2012. He is a son of Miller's Happy Jack out of B C Angelina, and a littermate brother to the 2013 Continental Champion, Touch's Game Point.

"Bob's" early development was under the capable guidance of young Isaiah Todd. Isaiah gave him and his siblings their daily walks on the North Dakota prairies as nine- to fifteen-week old puppies. Ike Todd took over the process from there. Bob came back to North Dakota as barely a year old dog at which time he and his siblings were broke for their Derby year. This is Bob's second

championship placement, having earned a runner-up in the Montana Open Shooting Dog Championship in 2012. Bob was the 2012 Big Sky Field Trial Club Dog of the Year and the Region 14 Shooting Dog Derby of the Year — 2012.

Manteo's Mattie Blaylock is a seven-year-old Irish setter which has competed on both the open and amateur shooting dog circuits. She has placements from the South to the Canadian prairies, winning the 2012 Region 14 Shooting Dog of the Year Award. Mattie comes from Dr. Roger Boser who, along with the late Ned LeGrande, has been instrumental in the red setter resurgence. Mattie is out of Home Page and by Aiken, both direct descendants of Bearcat, the winningest *FDSB* dog of all time. According to Paul, "Mattie now looks forward to retirement and many days hunting afield."

THE RUNNING

Against The Wind Joey (Sean Kelly) was stepping in to represent his mother, Lone Mountain Magique, which won this stake in 2007 and 2010. Dottie (Manette Jones) was fresh off of a litter of young pups; she was itching to stretch her legs, you might say. Dottie did not navigate the turn back to the first treerows and was soon counted out. Joey was a bit unsure of himself crossing the first field, which has been recently burned due to the aforementioned crop work. Joey established point. Handler flushed the area thoroughly only to result in an unproductive. Once in the treerows Joey was found standing, the first of many pheasant we were to encounter this weekend. Sean worked hard to produce the bird and was able to finally put the wily rooster to flight. Released from his piece of work Joey was soon again on point not far down the treerow. Handler encouraged the dog forward with the whistle. Upon Joey's movement a sharptail was put to flight.

Wasatch Lucky Storm (Dustin Dusenberry) and Jobar's Big Sky Belle (John Junnila) started at the end of course No. 1's first set of treerows. While waiting to break away at the first gate crossing numerous sharptail were seen leaving. When loosed Storm headed east down the treerows and Belle to the south toward the first gate crossing. Upon reaching the gate Belle was standing, a bird in the air. Junnila walked in to fire, more birds left, creating too much temptation for the young dog. At the second gate crossing into the second set of treerows Storm was standing, a



Championship Winners. Front (l-r): Michelle Turley with Touch's Match Point and Sean Kelly with Manteo's Mattie Blaylock. Middle: Austin Turley, Shannon Nygard, Sierra Juliano, Travis Gellhaus, judge; Dave Noell, Jason LaFrance, Justin Wiseman, Mike Robbins. Back: Mike Wisener, Brad McCardle, John McClintrot, judge; Dustin Dusenberry and Larry McMullen.

herd of all but feral horses charged in to tangle with the handlers, scouts and gallery in general. Storm took this unbelievably well, birds being flushed in front of him while marshal and scouts attempted to fend off the herd. Not a minute later, going down the ensuing set of treerows Storm had a second find, without the commotion of horses. Storm apparently found this work to be too simple. He proceeded to add his own excitement to the work, thus ending the second brace not halfway through the first course.

Circle Grit N Grace (Shannon Nygard) and Prairie Rebel (Glenn Conover) started well going toward the airplane hangar. Rebel pointed then moved on. Negotiating the first turn, which involves crossing the airstrip, Rebel was standing. While riding to the find Rebel moved up, bird in the air. Grace continued on up the long hill, showing well at times. As we reached the top of the hill and began to make the bend things became hectic, birds were in the air. Shannon fired over Grace, thus ending our first morning.

A pair of red setters — Manteo's Mattie Blaylock (handled by Sean Kelly for owner Paul Falkowsky) and Jordin (Bonnie Hidalgo) — began the afternoon. As the gallery was crossing the water obstacle of the breakaway Mattie had a pheasant find with impeccable manners. Heading up the hill to the

south Jordin was holding the front. Mattie made a lateral move slightly to the rear quickly to have a stop to flush. Handler fired and took her on. Catching the front Mattie was again on point, Jordan backing. We were not five minutes into this hour and all knew we were watching a bird-finding display. Proceeding east through the rolling hills Jordin worked the upper ridge and Mattie the lower, Mattie standing again. An unproductive ensued. Upon trying to gain the front, popping up and down through the hills, Sean was calling point, birds in the air, Mattie standing nicely once again. We were barely a third of the way through the hour and it was evident Sean was content with this amount of bird work. We headed north down the two track, both dogs working the short grass to our east. Here Jordin had a stop to flush, all in order. Upon turning east again through the CRP Mattie was once again seen standing, Sean reluctant to call point. Jordin was heading up the hill due on course and spotted the action to our side; she proceeded to check out the situation to the dislike of her handler. Mattie then moved on and proceeded to make a nice move across the valley while we rode down the ridge. She was soon standing. Sean was again reluctant to flush but Mattie was insistent that this was the place. Sean was making a vigorous attempt when he finally got a chicken in the air. We continued east preparing to make the turn to the north,

most in the gallery realizing we were not going to negotiate this turn without more birds. Mattie disappeared over the ridge, soon to be found on point, all in order. Released with minutes remaining, Mattie finished hunting to the front.

Trotting Home (Jason LaFrance) and Circle Rock Solid (Nygard). This was Shannon's debut with her newly acquired "Rick". Both dogs started strong, each needing a bit of guidance to keep them on track. At the hill going into the corner crossing Trotting Home was standing, Rick backing. Nothing was produced. Dogs were taken on and birds left behind the gallery. Heading west through the gently rolling hills both dogs were making strong swings through the country. We had made the first twenty minutes with no bird work and now we headed south into the mile long treerows. Both dogs chose the second treerow. As the gallery rode birds were lifting all along the first treerow bordering the grain field. Point was called, birds were seen. Here Trotting Home was found standing and fired over, Rick backing. Released, both dogs went strong to the front. Exiting the treerows and turning east both dogs had difficulty with the corner. Trotting Home finished ahead and Nygard called for the tracker.

The final brace of the day gave us Jango Fett (Austin Turley) and Firefly's Hot Tip (Dennis Hidalgo). Both dogs started nicely, Tip hunting the rolling cover to the front, Jango swinging wide

and crossing well to the fore. Riding along Jango was seen standing on the edge of the wheat field. Upon riding to the call of point Jango corrected and went on. Both handlers got their dogs to the four corner crossing and went on. Jango was seen going to the front, not to be seen again. Tip proceeded on course across the short grass and into the treerows. Point was called for Tip at the end of the treerows, nothing produced, handler picking up.

Full Force Buck (D. Hidalgo) and Touch's Match Point (Turley). Seconds into the heat a rooster pheasant exited stage left, both dogs ahead, Buck the larger, making a nice move. Point was soon called for Match Point with Buck backing. Match Point quickly corrected and both dogs began to roll through the short cover. Buck did not negotiate the first turn but rather headed on toward the treerows of course No. 3 where he was found standing but out of time. Match Point made the turn and was seen reaching to dingo tree and taking the field edge across the front. Match Point was soon heading west through the first set of treerows past the Hooper residence. A rooster pheasant was seen in the air. Upon reaching the spot Match Point was found standing nicely, style impeccable, all in order. Exiting the treerows heading to the gate Match Point chose to veer right along the treerows perpendicular to course. He was soon standing, another pheasant produced, all in order. Crossing through the gate Match Point rolled through the country; each ridge we crossed he was spotted well to the front. As we topped the last ridge before the second set of treerows he took the field edge to its end, rounding the field and heading back to us on the treerows. Point was called and a long ride ensued, during which Match Point corrected and moved on about fifty yards, decisively styling up again. Hat in the air, as handler approached flight of Huns was called. Birds were not seen by the judiciary. Turley walked in to flush, another pair of Huns leaving, all in order. Heading east Match Point continued strong to the front, always coming around on his own. The final turn was made and Match Point finished going away at time.

Virgil Cain (Scott Wilson) and Magic City Sunrise (Dave Noell). Minutes into the brace Virgil was standing to the front. This was also noticed by Sunrise which proceeded to try and get a better look at the situation. Virgil shortly after corrected and went on. Crossing the airstrip the crop dusting plane proceeded to sack out the gallery horses in a way seldom seen. One galleryite was heard to come up with a name for our flying nemesis, and it was not the Red Barron,

although it was colorful. Virgil ran the course strongly up the hill. Cresting the hill birds were in the air. Point was soon called for Virgil, no birds produced. Sent on, he proceeded to swing again, point called. No birds could be produced. Handler elected to continue on. Once again heading south Virgil was pointed on top of the hill, birds produced, all in order. Heading west along Death Valley Virgil went low down to the tree planting. He was found standing in heavy cover, pheasant produced. As gallery attempted to leave the area pheasant and sharptail were convinced it was time to exit from numerous locations. Virgil continued on, making the turn near the dead hay bale, a rooster was in the air and Virgil was exuberant.

Elhew Upland Aya (Robbins) and Railita (Turley) started strong, heading toward the airstrip. Nearing the turn at the grain bins point was called for Railita. A long flushing attempt ensued and nothing was produced. Aya was running strong. Railita did not appear to be feeling well but continued on. Both dogs grabbed the treerow, taking it strongly. Point was called for Aya, Railita backing. Nothing was produced. Aya soon had a stop to flush, all in order. Railita was running stronger now and rimming the treerows, soon to be seen on point, sharptail precisely located. Both dogs running the treerows again, Railita dove into the trees, Aya continuing on. Point was called for Railita, birds produced and dog fired over. Both dogs continued on. Turley soon elected to pick up. Aya finished well down course.

Elhew Upland Wild Rose (Robbins) and Gin And Tonic Livewire (Dave Noell) started well. As we climbed the first hill toward the turn to the east Rose was running strongly to the front. Upon turning east through the rolling hills Gin spun decisively and pointed. Birds were well located, all in order. Rose headed east was giving handler difficulty and was soon harnessed. Exiting the rolling hills Gin chose to work the cut alfalfa bottom. She pointed in short green alfalfa. Handler, not wanting to flush, blew the whistle, the dog inched forward, whistle blown again, dog moving forward and birds put to air.

The 11th and final brace: Upland Elhew Dakota (Robbins) and Pride's Southern Attitude (Wilson) headed east along what would normally be the finish of brace No. 4, handlers attempting to keep their dogs separate. Soon, Robbins elected to pick up Dakota, and Attitude was seen standing. No birds could be produced and the dog was sent on. Soon after Attitude was standing nicely again, handler whistled her up and birds lifted.

Circle, Mont., May 3

Judges: Travis Gellhaus and John McIltrout
REGION 14 AMATEUR SHOOTING DOG
CHAMPIONSHIP [One-Hour Heats] — 22 Entries
 Winner—TOUCH'S MATCH POINT, 1628382, pointer male, by Miller's Happy Jack—B C Angelina. Austin Turley, owner and handler.
 Runner-Up—MANTEO'S MATTIE BLAYLOCK, 1587094, Irish setter female, by Aiken—Home Page. Paul Falkowsky, owner; Sean Kelly, handler.

BIG SKY CLUB'S STAKES

The club's companion stakes began immediately following the conclusion of the Championship. Placing first in the Open All-Age was Prairie Rambling Samson with a strong ground race for owner-handler Brad McCardle. Second, also placed on ground race, was Prairie Grouse Tucker, owned by Larry McMullen, handled by John McIltrout. Third was Upland Elhew Aya which ran in the final brace as a bye for owner-handler Mike Robbins. Aya finished her brace with a find on sharptail.

In the Open (shooting dog) Derby, Ty, for owner Jim Eunson and handler Sean Kelly, ran strong, had two finds on sharptail and a very nice limb find on pheasant, all with Derby manners. Touch's Light Air Drifter, for owner Joseph DeGross and handler Austin Turley, had one pheasant find and a good race. Placed third on race was Callie for owner-handler Sheldon Rodgers.

All three placements in the Open (all-age) Derby — Prairie Grouse Tucker for owner Larry McMullen and handler John McIltrout; Ty for owner Jim Eunson and handler Sean Kelly, and Bad Prairie Storm Warning for owners Doug and Heather Miller of Greenville, S. C., and handler Justin Wiseman — were on ground race.

Judges: Jason LaFrance and Glen Conover
OPEN ALL-AGE — 6 Pointers and 1 Setter

- 1st—PRAIRIE RAMBLING SAMSON, 1620889, pointer male, by Prairie Crude—Rambling Away. Brad McCardle, owner and handler.
- 2d—PRAIRIE GROUSE TUCKER, 1644040, setter male, by Prairie Grouse Dexter—Bethany's Stella. Larry McMullen, owner; John McIltrout, handler.
- 3d—UPLAND ELHEW AYA, 1609184, pointer female, by Elhew Fibber McGee—Elhew Ruby. Mike Robbins, owner and handler.

Judges: John Junnila and Austin Turley
OPEN DERBY — 5 Pointers and 1 Setter

- 1st—PRAIRIE GROUSE TUCKER, 1644040, setter male, by Prairie Grouse Dexter—Bethany's Stella. Larry McMullen, owner; John McIltrout, handler.
- 2d—KOOTENAY RIVER TY, 1642058, pointer male, by Erin's Stoney River—Gambler's Fancy Addition. Jim Emerson, owner; Sean Kelly, handler.
- 3d—BAD PRAIRIE STORM WARNING, 1648306, pointer male, by Bad Prairie Dust Storm—Phantom's Go Girl. Doug & Heather Miller, owners; Justin Wiseman, handler.

Judges: David Noell and Brad McCardle
OPEN DERBY — 9 Pointers and 1 Setter

- 1st—KOOTENAY RIVER TY, 1642058, pointer male, by Erin's Stoney River—Gambler's Fancy Addition. Jim Emerson, owner; Sean Kelly, handler.
- 2d—TOUCH'S LIGHT AIR DRIFTER, 1646496, pointer male, by Touch's White Out—D W Tootsie Roll. Dr. J. M. Degross, owner; Austin Turley, handler.
- 3d—JURNEE'S CALLAWAY, 1642083, pointer female, by Flatland's Tuff Anuff—Windy Point's Angel. Sheldon Rogers, owner and handler.