

AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship
Hobart Ames Plantation, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Winner: Piney Run Lily
As reported by David Webb

Several years ago as part of a responsibility for working with a forest products group, I attended a meeting in Memphis. The keynote speaker was an individual who was the timber products manager for the Hobart Ames Plantation in Grand Junction, Tennessee. His presentation focused on the forest management of the land at the Plantation. He discussed forestry and ecological research continually taking place at Ames. Also he informed the group of the harvesting of timber products – utility poles from the 3,500 acres of loblolly pine and railroad cross-ties and lumber from 8,500 acres of upland hardwoods.

However he emphatically stressed all of the forest management was done to maintain and improve the population of bobwhite quail – all about the birds. Over the years research projects have been conducted to determine if the habitat would sustain the quail population throughout the year for the National Championship – including several other field trials – without adding to the quail population. It was determined that with the various ground predators – coyotes, raccoons, skunks, etc. – plus hawks, to maintain enough quail for the trial was difficult. Currently there is a supervised predator management program in-place.

In 2002 the Plantation Management initiated a habitat program that included providing “feed strip” plots in which coveys of 20 birds each were planted in 160 locations; in 2014 – during the month of September – the number of coveys was increased to 300 (12 week old birds) placed into known wild covey locations. At this time it appears that this number of quail planted in the fall of each year is sufficient to maintain a population for the use of running field trials on the 6,000 acres – use for field trials – on the Plantation.

The history of the Ames Plantation for use as field trial grounds is unprecedented. The first National Championship for Bird Dogs was held near West Point, Mississippi in 1896. Later the event was moved to grounds south of Grand Junction, Tennessee near Rogers Springs, Tennessee; finally to the Ames Plantation, which since 1915 has become the “hallowed” field trial grounds for running the National Championship. Details of the history of this National Championship have been described in the book written by William F. Brown and Nash Buckingham with several other books updating this National event. At one time, not only did the English setters and pointers breeds compete, but also other pointing dog breeds competed – Gordon setters and Irish setters.

It should be considered that the grounds at the Ames Plantation are undoubtedly the ultimate on which to run a field trial for pointing dogs. The quail population appears now to be sustainable, because of predator management program and the habitat feed plot program with birds put in wild covey locations. Pointing dog handlers, who competed on the grounds, have indicated “it takes a dog with bird-sense to hunt the Plantation”. It also is an area in which a handler can “show” the performance of the pointing dog. It is an understatement to say these are “hallowed” grounds for a field trial. The care that is taken to provide habitat to sustain quail is worthy of note. Pointing dogs must perform at their best to win on these grounds.

The AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship was given permission to hold the 2016 event on the Ames Plantation. This was the second time that AKC held this event at the Plantation; the first being in 2012. The efforts of Ken Blackman, Field Trial Chairman and Field Trial Secretary, Trish James are recognized for their contribution and hard work to put on this event. The sponsors for this event were: Purina – the official dog food sponsor, Garmin/Tri-Tronics Inc., SportDOG, and Dogs Unlimited. Jesse Chapman and Jim House gave their undivided attention to the 77 pointing dogs from seven different pointing dog breeds.** This was a high-quality group of field trial dogs competing in this Championship. Reviewing the list of dogs on the brace sheets, it is noted many are Champions and National Champions within their respective breed. It was a high-caliber stake with placements and performances reflecting the “best-of-the-best” pointing dogs in this AKC event.

The winner of the AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship came from brace No. 10, Piney Run Lily handled by Ben Lorenson for owner Martha Greenlee of Baskerville, Virginia. Lily is an eight-year old, white/orange Brittany sired by Piney Run Art with the dam being Maxwell’s Southern Hospitality. Lily was one of 24 Brittanyans that competed. Throughout the one hour running of the event she was forward catching “the eye” of the judges, who watched her performance. Those of us who own, hunt, and compete with Brittanyans can be proud of Lily’s win at this AKC Championship event and of all the pointing dog breeds – “it was a Brittany that won.”

Dates: February 29, 2016 through no later than March 12

Judges: Jesse Chapman and Jim House

AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship (One Hour Heats)

77 Pointing Dogs**

Winner --- Piney Run Lily, Brittany female, owned by Martha Greenlee; handler Ben Lorenson.

2nd Place --- NFC/NAFC/FC Westweim Get Your Gun Ms. Oakley (aka Annie), Weimaraner female, owned by Cydney Hanson & Frank Sommer; handled by Diane Vater.

3rd Place --- NAFC/AFC Snowy River’s Full Strut (aka Strut) GSP male, owned by Mark Verdoom and handled Chase Verdoom.

4th Place --- 2x/NFC/FC Erbenhof SNS Boggie Woogle Bo (aka Bo) Weimaraner male, owned by Duane and Kate Yoder and handled by Diane Vater.

** Note there were seven pointing breeds that competed in this event

24 – Brittanyans

5 – English Setters

13 – German Shorthair Pointers

4 – Irish Setters

11 – Pointers

12 – Vizsla

8 – Weimaraner