

Summer 2008: Freeland Kennel Club

By: Larry Craig

August 9th and 10th was the weekend planned for the 2008 renewal of the Freeland Kennel Club trial. Picking such an early season date is always a gamble. It could be too hot for the canine contenders. Well as luck would have it, summer released its grip just a bit, and a beautiful warm, but not oppressive weekend was granted for our trial. This years trial saw our entries up quite a bit, mostly in part to Michigan pro Bruce Minard making the trek east to show us his string. Local pros and club member Robert Ecker and Art Bruno had their string ready for action too. Jimmy Wilkinson, another club member who was in attendance, worked diligently through out the trial. Rick Harp, Bill Henke, Lee Eiklor, Jim MacDuff, Mike Penn, George Crumlich, and Peter Kazic comprised an astute and energetic judging panel. Not even Sundays brush with some heavy thunder storms deterred them. Everyone who ran dogs knew they were given an opportunity to win. Now here are those winners.

Saturday began with cool temperatures for the open shooting dogs. Unfortunately, no dogs in the prime early braces could take advantage of the better conditions. As the day progressed it got warmer and much drier. Despite the challenging conditions, a veteran dog named Taz scorched the dusty ground on route to a convincing win. Taz had two finds where he showed straight up style on both ends, along with a nice back. Phil Gould, Taz's owner missed his brace but did make it in time for the announcements, and was obviously pleased with the win. A close second was another veteran winner in Ecker's string named Urban's Brilliance. Jake, as he is called ran as a bye dog at the end of the large twenty seven dog stake. He was allowed

to hunt the course, picking off two dandy stylish finds. He was very animated going and never waivered in the heat. Third place went to Jimmy Wilkinson's little dog Poison Ivy. Her catchy call name is Itch. She was a pleasure to watch as she hunted and handled willingly around the course.

Fifteen derbies were brought to the line next. Literally after the dust settled the judges had not seen sufficient birdwork to satisfy the requirements for placements. So a callback was the logical answer. Several dogs ran including Grand Heritage Motion, Field Farm Clyde, and Windy Hills Shiloh in Ecker's string along with Cash from the Minard camp. But the top ground performance belonged to a diminutive setter owned by Rick Harp and handled by Ecker. Lucy as she is called burned the ground with fire and desire and showed poker straight style in the call back to win the blue. The red ribbon went to Bruce Cooper's setter male named Moe. He ran big, hard, and with a smooth gate in the initial series. In the callback he impressed with perfect manners and breathtaking style on point. Finally the yellow ribbon was awarded to Clyde also under the direction of Ecker. He is a class dog on the ground with the same flash and dash of his father, Taz. He was also polished on his bird in the callback.

Sunday was the premier Peter Ecker memorial amature shooting dog classic. Pete was a long time club member and a real doer. Club secretary, field trial chairman, lunch cook, bird planter, whatever it took to get the job done, pete was willing to do it. His love of birddogs, horses, and field trials was always evident, and he instilled and fostered that passion in many new trailers, who in turn are now passing the sport on. Pete was always a setter man, but he would certainly enjoyed the winning performance of Foxy Fire

this day. With a new owner, Doug Harris, and a first time handler, Lee Eiklor, the excitement level was high as she was turned loose in the first brace. It was hard to tell Lee and Foxy hadn't ever done this before together, as their rapport was uncanny. Two limb finds were handled to perfection and a strong finish capped her winning performance. Her name will now be engraved on the rotating trophy for all to admire. Second place went to another pointer. This one a male, owned and handled by Bill Wolf. Jack has won on these grounds and knows the lay of the land here. He easily ran to the front and nailed two quail for his partner. He is young and strong and looks like he'll be a competitor for awhile. A setter rounded out the placements. Pinehill Morgan is a handsome dog on point and runs with a high cracking tail. He was able to dig up two birds for his effort. So ends the 2008 Freeland trial with hopes of seeing everyone back here again next year for good dogs, good friends, and good fun!