

TRAINING FOR FIELD TRIALS

appearance of the dog is unimportant as this is a performance test not a beauty contest. Ability to take commands is also considered and some pups will take a line. But don't worry if your pup is incapable of doing so, 95% of all the puppies aren't either so don't sweat it. The main thing is to enjoy your self. One more thing, these are flushing dog not pointers...pointing or slowing up on a flush is unforgivable.

One piece of advice that was given to me years ago is to watch your dog with a critical eye, then watch as many of the other dogs as you can. See what competition you're up against and place your dog where you think he should be. Keep in mind that judges are a lot closer to the action than you and they may see things different but when the placements are handed out you're not so surprised or even worse devastated.

Open All Age

The Open All Age is a little more complicated and less forgiving but It's not impossible and believe me, a lot more exiting.

I'll give you a breakdown of how it's set up and how it unfolds.

A large field is required of about 60 to 100 acres is used. In Sudbury we use an old abandon prison farm and we have over 5,000 acres to choose from. Two or three courses are laid out with flags similar to the puppy stake but much longer. At the starting point



there is a gunner at the flag line and two additional gunners are positioned on either side of him 75 to 100 ft. apart. In order to save time two dogs run simultaneously and this is called a "Brace". The flag line separates the two and the dog on the right is responsible for his beat and likewise for the dog on the left. Behind each dog are there respective handlers and behind the handler is a judge, there are two. There is also, positioned behind

each judge a shagger (the best seat in the house). His responsibility is to carry shot birds that have been retrieved by the dogs. The judge will hand the birds to him. Behind the centre gun is the gallery, spectators, who walk directly behind in a close group and are kept huddled together by the field marshal. Spectators are right in the thick of it and close to the action.



One pheasant is planted at approximately every flag and a half, one on the right and then farther up, one on the left and so on. By the time the bird planter is off the field most of the birds are moving around and the judges instruct the