

FIELD TRIAL CORNER

By: Tim Powell

Last year the question was , to trial ,or not to trial. Judging from the turnout , and the overwhelmingly positive comments ,the U.K.C. European style trials appear to be well received here in the United States. Statements like “ It will take a truly outstanding dog to win in this format”, and “ This is the same venue that I saw in Spain last year “,coming from experienced bird dog people who have observed the trials in Europe , tells me that we are on the right track. Judging standards have been kept very high – to date NO placements have yet been awarded in the Open class ,and only 1 placement has been awarded in a Novice stake (that to a dog showing finished manners – steady to wing and shot on two outstanding finds).

We have come a long way , from the translation of the French F.C.I. rules , to the running of our first trials , now to our second field trial season . As we go forward , we anticipate more clubs forming , and sponsoring trials across the country. For the upcoming season , in addition to the National trial in South Dakota , the Big Sky Epagneul Breton Club of Montana is planning a Type (W) Wild bird trial , to be run on a large ranch in eastern Montana , April 23 / 24. This is premier Pheasant hunting country ,but also has an abundance of Huns , and Sharptail Grouse. Mr. Sandy Gunn , acclaimed international F.C.I. certified judge from Canada will officiate.

I will leave you with some insights gained from Mr. Bill Browns' book “ Field Trials” , where he quotes from a report that appeared in “The English Field “in April 1866 reporting the results of the first ever recorded bird dog field trial “ The usual aftermath of discussions followed the trials , it is quite noticeable that those who were loudest in their condemnation WERE NOT PRESENT to witness the actual running”. It seems that not much changes under the sun.. I encourage you to participate , be proactive , enjoy these competitions afield , allow the best dogs to compete., and LET THE DOGS TAKE IT FROM THERE !