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Atlantic Field
Events 2012



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My (long) summary...



Tests and trial for Pointing Breeds
Upper Stewiacke Nova Scotia
September 21 - 23, 2012
Submitted by: Karen Walsh

In brief - the things I've learned



A pontiac sunfire has a surprising amount of cargo space - it can hold 175 quail!



Remember...mother nature can not be predicted, but September is normally hurricane season...



Just because you don't hear back about the rosettes, and the city they were being made in was flooded, does not mean the rosettes aren't coming. They will make it!

The Events

When I was asked if I would write an article for GSPaws about our field events in the Maritimes, my first thought was, “boy, do I have a story for you”! Needless to say, that while the tests ran very smoothly on the day, there were a few bumps in the road getting there. I am sure all organizing committees have their own story to tell, but here is ours...

Where it all started...

It all started for me when I went to Nova Scotia to introduce my puppy to birds. I was addicted the first time out and so was my pup. That's where I heard talk of a new club forming for pointing breeds with an emphasis on field trials and tests, among other activities. Rather than wait for a new club to form and go through sanction matches, we decided to approach our parent clubs to hold the tests and trials. That's when the Irish Setter Club of Canada, Vizsla Canada, and the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of Canada joined together to hold a trial with three stakes (puppy, derby and shooting dog) and four tests (FDJ and FD levels). The first events of their kind in the Maritimes.

The planning..

The leader of our endeavor was Barb Deg of ISCC and having the most knowledge and experience in the field, she was the planner of the events. First, we had to select the dates - September 21,22,23 were chosen because we didn't anticipate conflicting events (oh boy). Then, we had to select grounds - that was fairly easy, we would approach our trainer and ask if we could use his grounds, but since

there was no water there, we would not offer FDX (no one was really ready for FDX anyway). Next, came time to select judges. Hmm... well this one wasn't quite as easy... we needed judges that could judge trials and tests. No problem there, anyone who can judge FDX can judge a trial, if they are comfortable doing so, but these were cover trials in dense woods, so a little different. The call was made for judge suggestions, and the emails went out. We got three judges who accepted the invitation: Jack Dafoe (tests), Gilbert Tremblay (tests and trial) and Ray Rowan (tests and trial). Okay, so now the problem - we need to figure out how to get these guys here. We wanted to keep the entry fees low to encourage people to enter and to be on par with local American Field trial and NAVHDA test entries, and it was clear that the judges would have to be flown in. There wouldn't be enough money from the entries to cover the costs, and having a shortfall for our parent clubs was not an option, so we started to fundraise.

While all this was going on, we also had to decide on birds. I know a lot of people reading this would ask themselves why we chose quail. Well, for a couple of reasons...the biggest reason was that the Province of Nova Scotia does not allow the release of chukar. Secondly, we needed to order the birds from Ontario and have them flown in, which doubles the cost, so pheasant were going to be too expensive. The entry fees would not cover the costs. Quail seemed to be the only option and we just prayed the weather would hold (oh boy) and the birds would fly.

The weeks leading up to the events...

We were so worried that we wouldn't have enough money fundraised to fly the judges in and that no one would enter the events. Luck smiled on us and with a lot of hard work from pointing breed owners, we raised enough money to buy the plane tickets and we got a great

seat sale - fantastic! In terms of the entries, the tests filled within the first couple of hours of opening. Wow! The trials also did well at first, and there were enough entries to offer championship points in shooting dog and derby and we were very close to a major. Well, by the time the trial date came, there were scratches, and our idea of no conflicting events was blown out of the water when American Field changed the date of their woodcock trials to that weekend! In the end, we had one point for shooting dog and one point for derby.

At this time, our luck had started to change a little bit for the worse. Barb had everything all ready for the birds to be flown to Halifax. All she needed was someone with a truck to help pick up the birds and take them to the holding pen on the test grounds. Well, here come in some of the geographic issues, as many of us are 2-3 hours away... Needless to say, no one was available to pick up the birds. So, Barb headed out to the Halifax Airport in her pontiac sunfire, ready to pick up 175 quail and hoping the boxes will fit in her car. But when she got there, there were no birds. Apparently, there were two bird orders shipped and the airport cargo personnel gave all the birds to the first order! Oh boy!! How can you have pointing events without birds? So, the shippers contacted the driver that accidentally got our birds, only to find out that they were on their way to New Brunswick! Barb got in her car and barreled down the Trans Canada Highway, intercepted the driver at the Nova Scotia - New Brunswick border and had him pull over so she could pack 175 quail into her sunfire and deliver them safely to the grounds.

We also had some hiccups with getting a bbq, porta potty and various other challenges, but really, the only thing that would jeopardize the event (other than no birds) would be the weather. Well, the town closest to the grounds had to be evacuated due to flooding the week

before the tests. This was also the spot where we ordered our rosettes and so we were quite concerned when we didn't hear back from the company, but it turns out that there was a miscommunication and the rosettes were fine!

The events...

Well, now it was test/trial weekend, we were worried about the birds being able to fly. No luck here, because the weather was terrible!! The only way it could have been worse was if it had been cold because we had a downpour! Over 100mm of rain fell and the roads were washed out on the way to the grounds. We thought we would be trapped in Upper Stewiacke!! But although the birds were wet, they flew quite well. Sadly, there were a lot of birds caught - not good for training. Overall, though, the majority (like 90%) of the dogs qualified in the test on Saturday and Sunday, even with the dogs running on wet quail. What a testament to the quality of the dogs running that so many qualified! The sun shone on our Sunday afternoon tests and the dogs did fantastic! All in all, despite some of the roadblocks, we did really well and it is so fantastic that nearly everyone qualified. Offering four tests in one weekend was a choice we made based on expected entries and because of that, a lot of people finished their titles in the weekend. Fantastic! Overall, there were 11 new titles on the weekend, and 13 entries per test for a total of 15 dogs entered. To our parent clubs - thank you for sponsoring the tests!

So in the end, everything went well. We are still waiting on the P&L statement, but we are confident we covered our costs. Already, there is talk of more field events in future. I would say this is success!

A collection of photos...



Rosette for the GSP with the top qualifying score - FDJ



The weather cleared on Sunday after 100 mm of rain



Waiting to hear the scores...



Working the field...



Judge Jack Dafoe with one of the 175 quail



Judge Ray Rowan reading the results



BBQ Lunch



Test Secretary, Barb Deg, with Judges Jack Dafoe, Gilbert Tremblay and Ray Rowan



Did I mention it was wet?