



**THE AMERICAN BRITTANY CLUB
2004 Pheasant Classic/Championship**

hosted by the Ringneck Brittany Club
Dave Tech Ranch, Bonesteel, South Dakota
September 18-19, 2004
by Leslie Andreas

The American Brittany Club 2004 Pheasant Classic (AKC) Championship (American Field) took place September 20to 23rd on the Dave Tech ranch near Bonesteel, South Dakota. 44 entries were drawn, with 42 actually going to the line. It followed a three day weekend trial put on by the host club, the Ringneck Brittany Club. We would like to thank the sponser Purina for all their generous donations in the form of Pro Plan dog food, both to the winners and to every entrant in the championship. Their quality product was appreciated by everyone as well as their commitment to the one hour championship stakes. Without their continued support, the sport would not be in the good shape it is today.

Judges for this event were Jerry McCoy, Des Moines, Iowa and Clint " Pete" Wilbur, Norfolk, Nebraska. Jerry is known throughout the Brittany world as the owner of Dual Ch. Magnum's Masked Man and NAFC Magnum's Lit'l Buzzsaw. Pete is a knowledgeable man who has competitive Shorthairs. It was a good experience to ride around and visit with two observant and considerate judges.

The three one hour courses are a combination of huge mowed hay meadows with grass lined ditches, tree islands, vast prairie pasture land with plum thickets and tree lined creek bottoms, all of it hilly, with an occasional man made feed strip. It is cover that is home to native pheasant, sharptail grouse and prairie chicken. The occasional Hungarian partridge and quail have been seen here, as well as wild turkey, deer and this year, several skunks. (None of the skunks were seen, exactly, but we knew they were there.) While we start out and finish up on Dave Tech's ranch, we also cross the land of Jim Selle and Bob Viktoria. We owe them a big thank you for allowing us to use and enjoy the scenery of their land. Most any view you see will be a picture post card setting, with Lake Andes and the Missouri River in the distance.

This year's trial was run under challenging conditions. The weekend trial had the most brutal conditions imaginable, 97 degree weather with winds of up to 60 mph. It was like running in a blast furnace. The first day of the pheasant championship had overcast skies, but no drop in the wind and the temperatures were still around 90 mid day. There is nothing quite like topping a hill on horseback and feeling like you are going to be blown out of the saddle. By Tuesday, the rains began in earnest, at first a welcome relief after the heat but soon creating their own problems with mud covered hills. Camp was a swamp by the end of the trial.

As amazing as it seems, the dogs managed to cope with whatever hardships Nature threw at them, with good birdwork and races seen even in the most adverse conditions.

What makes a Championship a notch above an ordinary trial? I believe it is no one thing, but the combination of many that make a trial or break a trial. And I also believe that is the premier trial on the Brittany circuit for showing an all age dog. The grounds are second to none, the birds(both wild and released) are ample in numbers and superb flyers, the judges wise in the ways of bird dogs. The professional and amateur trainers who enter know what it takes to win and bring us great dogs, a mix of young up and comers, good dogs in their prime and wise old veterans. This year's championship was a good one, with bird work of some kind in all braces except the last one. There were many splendid performances, giving the judges their choice among many that could be considered. It made four days (sometimes in rather unpleasant weather) pass all too quickly. The credit for this trial is largely due to Ken Seivert for all the hard work he puts into planning and the paperwork afterwards. The Walth brothers, Randy and Ronnie, also do a lion's share of the work, driving the dog wagon, marshalling, providing soft drinks, coffee, and cinnamon rolls at break time and whatever other odds and ends need doing. Randy released birds every evening to make sure the courses were well salted. As a club, ours is one of the smallest in membership, but we make up for it by having nearly 100 per cent participate in running the trial.

Where pheasants are concerned, South Dakota rocks! I believe that is why this trial and the weekend trial continue to be successful, despite being a bit off the beaten path, despite the small club, because we offer a trial that tests a true all age bird dog.

This event is supported mightily by the professionals from all over the country as well as by a talented and faithful bunch of amateurs. As usual, we had Chad Holman coming back from Manitoba on his way home to Illinois, Jimmy John from Kansas via summer camp in Montana, John Kline, Virginia (also after a Montana summer camp), Rob Rohner, Missouri, Al Garrow, Illinois, and for the first time Jim Berneathy, a recent resident of Oklahoma. As well, we had Ed Tillson,(N.M.) Wade Haines, (Ohio)John Cross(N.M.), Ray Trimble(Ill.), Jerry McGee(Ill),Bo Ackerman(Ga.), and Paul Pollack(N.J.) riding at one time or another. Bo had braved Hurricane Ivan to drive up with his friend Jeff Lyle, for a bit of hunting and field trialing. I think Ivan came after him for having the nerve to ignore his power.

The Winners

Diamond Hill Dan emerged from a quality field to claim his third Pheasant Championship title, his first on these grounds, although he has previously won the AAA championship here twice. His was a true all age effort, one find at 18 minutes with class and style, and an incredible race, one of those performances that was going to be tough to beat. He is truly a deserving winner. His owner Paul Pollack and his handler John Kline have every right to be proud of him. He claimed a beautiful painting of pheasants flushing to commemorate his win. Runner up honors went to Smarteye's Joker, handled by Jim John, owned by Steve Ralph. Jordan ran the first day under the most brutal conditions imaginable. He had a divided find and a stop to flush as well as a thorough hunting race. Taking third was Harling's Breton Smith with Chad Holman handling for owner Ron Harling. Bret is a young dog who dramatically found a bird seconds before his hour was up after a front running race. In fourth was Billy's Random Task, another of Holman's charges, who had a fine race and a good find. All of the above dogs ran on course one. As well as these dogs, many others put in good challenges. We all can be proud of how the Brittany met the tough conditions and handled birds and country like champion bird dogs.

The Running

Monday September 20. With extreme high winds (up to 60 mph) and scattered showers predicted, yesterday's heat is still apparent anytime the sun breaks through the cloud cover. It doesn't heat up gradually, it is immediate. We break away with a soft sprinkle of rain in our face, which soon quits.

Brace 1# The Prairie Tornado ("Twister") Ed Tillson & Gambler's Jazzin' It Up ("Jazz") Holman
At breakaway, Twister quickly took the feed lines to the left, with Jazz energetically running in the open field.

Twister showed great desire to run the draws. At 19, Jazz pointed in likely cover, with the high winds swirling scent, it took some effort to relocate and pin the bird. Everything handled correctly. Both dogs make good moves as we enter the hay meadow. Scout rode up three pheasants which scatter and land in front of the oncoming field trial party. Jazz had a stop to flush on the first one to rise at 33; he showed some desire to check out its landing place but Chad got him out of there. At 34, Twister had a stop to flush in a grassy ditch. At 35, Chad rode up a bird with Jazz stopping immediately. At 38, in a small grassy island, Twister was on point. A bird flushed as Ed approached, and another got up right in her face as Ed went to collar her away.

She continued to check out the draws, with an extended cast to the creek bottom. Her application was consistently to likely spots. She finished strongly dropping out of sight over a hill to the front. For most of the brace, Jazz's range was moderate. At 55 he had a non productive stand.

Brace 2# Tequila Joker's Jose Cuervo ("Jose") Berneathy & Shambo's Dark Shadow-

Brace 3# Lea's Running Jayhawk ("Jake") Rohner & Lane's End Bowtie Annie Holman

Both veteran trial dogs, they broke away and got right down to business. Annie made some good swings to the left, with Jake probing deep into the creek bottom. At 19, as we went through a gate, Annie pointed into likely cover right ahead of us. Chad couldn't flush a bird, even after a thorough effort to relocate. He was taking Annie out of there when a rooster popped. Annie gave a good jump before she stopped and her bid ended. Jake pointed in an intense coil position at 28, having a well executed find on a pair of sharptails. Taken on, Jake continued to make big smart moves to the front. He had a non-productive stand at 45 in a feed strip. The sun broke through the clouds and the heat came with it. Jake's last ten minutes were of a tired ten year old dog. Rob rode him to the dam to cool down this great champion but it was too late to refresh him much.

After a long break for lunch to the cafe in Fairfax, the afternoon's running resumed with a steady rain.

Brace 4 # Upland Acre's Prairie Du Chien ("Shane") Holman & Smarteye's Joker ("Jordan") John

The first action in this brace was at 12 minutes when judge McCoy's horse decided he was in a rodeo, and began bucking. Ed Tillson---gentleman that he is---switched horses with him to keep the brace going. As we entered the hay meadows (which were just like an old fashioned bird field) point was called for Shane, as he stood in the first ditch. Jordan was coming up the edge of the same ditch and also hit scent, slamming on the brakes. A divided find was recorded. A few minutes later, Shane had a nice find in a grassy ditch. Leaving the hay meadows and entering the pasture across the road, Jordan had a stop to flush on a low flying bird. Jordan ran high and wide, occassionally hanging up on scent before streaking back to the front. He thoroughly checked the creek bottoms in the latter portion of the course, a likely spot given the high winds. Shane hunted hard but didn't want to drive into the gale force head winds.

Brace 5# Kolicko's Cuervo Joker ("C.J.") Berneathy & TJ's Thunder -John

At 23, C.J. found himself in the midst of a flock of wild flushing sharptail, and wasn't quite sure what he should do about them. As a result he was picked up. There would be several spontaneous sharptail flocks flushing on their own in this brace. Thunder is a young dog, somewhat immature in his application. At about 40, he was hung up in a deep draw to the right with the scout sent to find him. We could figure out where he was by the deer that exited the draw, followed by many wild turkeys. The brace ended at 51 minutes.

Brace 6# MoDan's Believer ("Buddy") John Cross & Smokey's Magic ("Jag") Holman

Jag couldn't get going and was leashed at 25. Buddy's first half hour was erratic. When he was watered, he really picked up the pace and made some big eye popping moves. At 44, scout pointed him out standing in cover to the front. Handler displayed great confidence in his dog by riding to the find at a leisurely pace. As we approached a rooster rose, flew a few feet and set right back down. Cross dismounted, fired, went to his dog with another bird flushing directly in front of the dog.

Buddy displayed correct behavior throughout. At 49, he suffered an unproductive stand out in the open. As the gallery went past the pond, Buddy pointed without much conviction in the nearby cover. A turtle was produced.

Posted dogs for the day-The Prairie Tornado, Smarteyes Joker, MoDan's Believer

That evening we were all in for a treat, as John Kline and Paul Pollack made us a feast that was just out of this world. (Note to my husband---men can so cook.) Barbecued chicken, pork tenderloin and an assortment of salads, all of it incredibly good, followed by a tour of Paul's huge motorhome, truly a castle on wheels. (Note to my house dog, Paul has a Brittany that doesn't steal food off the counter.)

Tuesday September 20th With a soaking rain overnight, and much cooler temperatures, conditions were much improved. The winds had died down considerably too, and we ready to go under overcast skies.

Brace 7# Billy's Random Task ("Billy") Holman & Gunrunner's Lady's Man ("Lootie") Berneathy

This pair took advantage immediately of the better weather, running hard to the front. Lootie rolled to the left, while Billy checked out the ravines to the right. As we entered the hay meadows, Billy stood proudly in the first ditch. The scout called the flight of a low flying bird but this bird wasn't seen by the judges. Chad tried for another one, and was successful in flying a big one right where Billy said it was. Lootie ran a wide, wild race-the kind that wins all age stakes on the west coast, but did not contact birds during his hour. Billy was wide, forward and kind handling for his entire hour. He had a stop to flush at 58. It was an enjoyable performance.

Brace 8# Kinwashkly Dakota Molester ("Lester") Ken Seivert & Brisco Buddy Boy-Ray Trimble. Released in the hills just above the creek crossing, Brisco, an aging veteran and Lester, a young roan dog jumped into the woods. After a few warm up casts, Brisco rolled into the hills to the left of the artesian wells and disappeared from judgement. He would be found that afternoon near the breakaway point, having enjoyed a skunk encounter. Lester showed some immaturity in the early going. He got turned around backwards as we hit the shale lined canyon, and dived into the woods. He managed to show to the front on his own. At this point he began to roll to the front, taking edges in a smart manner. At 38 scout called point after Lester had taken a long cast on an edge. Ken was able to flush three birds one by one, each leaving with a loud cackle. Turned loose after this, Lester fired up on a very big move to the left. He grew stronger the longer he was down. As we dropped towards the creek, Lester was cautiously working uphill, pointing at 56. No birds were flushed and Ken sent Lester on. As we rode off, sharptail departed just over the hill. Lester hunted the bottoms well to finish up the hour.

Brace 9# Mo Kan Razzle Dazzle ("Razzie") Rohner & Breeze County Clyde-Kline

Razzie dived into the creek bottom, and was seen sparingly. She did make the left turn with us up the hill before she was gone from judgement. Clyde wasn't feeling well, but still put in a good effort. At 22, Clyde pointed. A rabbit was seen to leave first, but John put up a big rooster too. After this, Clyde bulled off to the right, encountering deer and turkeys, and John had to ride to gather him up. As we entered the home stretch of the hour, Clyde applied himself in a great fashion with a far flung forward cast down a long finger. At 57, he was obviously working a running bird in the cover leading up to the gate. He finally stopped on the edge. John couldn't produce, so Clyde was relocated. This time he pinned his bird in the thickest part of the cover. The clock ran out during this memorable piece of work.

Brace 10# Fade To Black ("Mack")- Holman & Diamond Hill Dan-Kline

Both of these dogs had won on these grounds the previous weekend, with Mack having finished his field championship winning the All Age stake in exciting fashion, and Dan having won the one hour Amateur All Age championship for a second time with owner Paul Pollack handling. Expectations were high, and they did not disappoint. Mack ran an all age race for the whole hour but did not connect with birds. Dan had a non-productive stand near the beehives at 14. Taken on, he hit the unmowed edge of the hay meadows and established point at 18. He looked just like his picture in the magazine, standing high as John flushed a well located colorful bird. John cast him away to the left, which sent him across the road and into a draw, that took him a very smooth flowing fashion to the far front. He was a true all age dog, showing to the far front, moving fast to the furthest objectives. He showed as a swift moving white dot, rambling over the hills at extreme range, yet he never was hard to move forward. There were no let ups in his hour, and his finish was strong. The bar had been raised!

Brace 11# Lane's End We Be Clean -Holman & Marjo's Red Rum ("Johnnie")Kline

Johnnie, a young dog, kept getting hung up behind. He had an encounter with a large flock of sharptails, stopping to flush as the first wave of birds departed, but breaking when a second wave got up. WeBe flashed to the front as we exited the creek crossing. He was fast but not as forward and wide as one would have liked to see as we moved across the high mowed hay fields. Just past the stock tanks, a pair of sharptails were seen to leave. Moments later, WeBe pointed where they had been. Chad fired and took him on. At 39, he had a quality find in a grassy finger. His range opened up and the rest of his race was good. He finished well forward on the creek bottom.

Brace 12# Shady's Tia Maria-Berneathy & The Time Machine ("Trip") Holman

We cast away just as a gentle rain began to fall. Both were running with animated gaits, Trip with mature hunting and Tia with spritely speed and enthusiasm. Neither had extreme range. At 10, Trip pointed on a hilltop with Tia backing, but no birds were seen. Tia pointed a lone sharptail from a great distance with good manners at 14. As we entered what is the all age course at the weekend trial, Trip pointed in a feed strip. Chad's horse decided to leave during the flushing attempt. Once that was taken care of, Trip was sent to relocate. He worked all the way up the strip fruitlessly. He dropped into a nearby draw and had a stop to flush. Five minutes later, Trip pointed with Tia again backing; the only game to move was a pair of deer.

a few minutes later, each dog would have a separate unproductive stand. Chad leashed Trip at this time. Tia had our undivided attention when we entered the weekend gun dog course with all its feed strips. As we rode through the first one, a pheasant flushed wild, Tia not involved. Soon after Tia was spotted intensely pointing. It required a relocation, and she moved into tall ragweed over Jimmy's head before establishing again. A rabbit came out, followed by a pheasant. Time had expired while this work was carried out.

Posted dogs for the day, Kinwashkly Dakota Molester, Diamond Hill Dan, Billy's Random Task.

Wednesday morning September 22, Overnight rain had turned all of the prairie into one big sloppy sea of mud. Water was standing on the ground, with slippery footing and steep hills, it could only be described as a horseback accident waiting to happen. My stopwatch battery has died, and all birdwork will have only an approximate time given.

Brace 13# Harling's Breton Smith -Holman & Cheyenne Joker's Star Buck- John

John Cross was riding to view his Buck in the light rain. Bret was credited with a stop to flush early in the hour. Bret ran well, forward with a lot of speed and good application. Somewhere he had gotten into a skunk, so we were very happy to see him at all age range. Buck was hard to keep on the course and Jimmy had his hands full for the first half hour. He improved once we crossed into the pasture for the final 15 minutes. Bret made an especially pleasing smart swing at the road crossing, coming up a draw and crossing to the front when he hit the brakes directly in front of us. No birds would be flown here. We continued on-just before time was called, Bret pointed on a hilltop. He relocated downhill and pointed again. A bird flushed far in the valley. Buck was acting birdy over the next hill and was given time to work it out, but he never did establish a stand. We all envied Randy Walth, who had a four wheeler as a dog wagon the long ride back to camp with a freshly skunked dog in the rain.

Brace 14# RuJem's Field of Feathers- McGee & Linvel's Blazing Rocket Kline

This pair didn't last long. As we came out of the creek bottom, four mule deer departed with great haste. No one saw Rocket chase them, but he vanished at the same place, same time. Co-incidence? I think not. Feather went with a bird at the steep gully and was next seen carrying same bird.

Brace 15 # Buddy Jac- Holman & Hybritten's Slick Fifty ("Boozer") Kline

Another short brace as Buddy took out a bird a few minutes into the brace. At the same time Boozer bumped one on the other side of the course, and we rode into an early lunch. On the long trip to camp we were treated to the flight of wild turkeys gliding overhead.

Brace 16# Dakota Alley Cat ("Tiger") Rohner & Farther Out Ace-Holman

Tiger fired off the line to the right and was on point at 1. He had great proud style standing with high head and tail on the edge.

Ace rolled up the same edge and failed to acknowledge Tiger's position. Tiger's manners were impeccable as a pair of noisy birds flushed wild. He carried on without a brace mate. Jerry McCoy's horse stepped in a hole with Jerry rolling off but not hurt. Tiger dropped left of the road as we turned into the hay meadow. Scout called point with a rigid Tiger pointing into a tangled thicket. The birds had an advantage here and none were produced. Taken on, Tiger made a big move at the road crossing. We had him for awhile drifting down the valley, before he faded from view. Rob was not able to show him in the grace period given after time.

Brace 17# Breton's Blazing Tough CoDee -John & Bouncing Betty-Garrow

Cast away down the always treacherous slide area, made even worse by the rains, a horse and rider (who wishes to remain nameless) disappeared from view. Our next sight was of the rider under the horse, not moving. Panic and concern turned to relief and laughter as we realized that he was unhurt, but pinned by the horse standing on the hood of his coat with a firmly planted hind hoof. Betty hustled and hunted but didn't reach out to the range required to change anything. When a wet pheasant ran out of a haystack and flushed in front of her, she stopped. The judges informed Al that she was not under consideration. Co Dee had been gone since we got to the gate at the top of the steep hill; when he reappeared he too was excused.

Brace 18# Ajax's Diamond Dyna Mite-Holman 7 Rambling Man ("Randy") Garrow

Dyna is a very fast, exciting young bitch who covered a lot of ground the first half hour. Randy rolled too, but not to the extent of his bracemate. Dyna was overrode on point, handling a good find with nice style. Randy had a non-productive going past the pond, and was then somewhat sticky. Judge Wilbur was riding with only one stirrup, having lost one somewhere, but managing just fine. Cutting the course to meet with the forward party, Randy pointed with high style along a fence. When Al had sent him to relocate, the reporter noticed a big ol' rooster hiding under her horse. The wiley bird realized he had been discovered and took wing, Al stopped the dog and fired. We travelled on to the feed strip covered portion of the regular gun dog course. Dyna had a stop to flush by the old farmstead. She was now hunting more but running less, and had a non productive on the feed strip leading to the draw. In the final minutes of the brace, Randy pointed a wet rooster by the dug out. Dyna was found on point in the draw at time. A soggy rooster rose as we rode to her.

Posted dog for the day-Harling's Breton Smith

Thursday September 23, Another day of mud after another night of hard rain. The sun was peaking out of the clouds, and the temperatures were pleasant, but the wretched high winds were back again. Before the day was through there was much towing and mud flinging as people tried to leave the rain sodden camp.

Brace 19# Gambler's Good Deal ("Billie")- Holman & TJ's Apache ("Bandit") John

Good Deal had a bad deal with a pheasant in th draw just below the second gate. Bandit rolled out well in the early going. In the hay meadows he ran rather randomly. Once across the road, he dropped into the deep valley and didn't come back under judgement.

Brace 20# Clyde's Micro Breeze ("Mike") Kline & Tequila Jack- John

While the dogs stood at breakway of course 2#, a flock of sharptail drifted overhead and landed downhill. The dogs took off in that direction at a rapid pace and spent the next five minutes in the bottom before returning to the course. When returned, Mike began applying himself well to the task at hand, checking out objectives to the front. Jack soon returned to the bottoms and was eventually counted out. Mike scored a stylish find in the cover at the right side on top of the shale hill, very pretty work. A few minutes later, a wild flush occurred in front of another stylish stand. As we were about to exit that field, point was called to the left down the fence line. Mike had to be relocated, working cautiously up the line until he again pointed. A wiley running cock bird flushed at the gate where the cover ran out. This fine piece of work was marred by a delayed chase while the handler was remounting his horse. Mike's final cast was a strong smart move. Without the delayed chase he could have been a contender.

Brace 21# Radar-Kline & Make My Day Dude-Tillson

With Bourbon(Garrow) a scratch in Brace 21# and Hi Point Diasappearing Act (Holman) a scratch in 22# their bracemates made up this new brace. Neither was inclined to perform on this day, and each handler would leash them well short of the hour.

The American Brittany Club Pheasant Classic

Judges: Jerry McCoy and Clint Wilbur (42 dogs)

Winner - NFC/AFC Diamond Hill Dan by FC Delta Dashing Pete DX x Top Gun Anna; o Paul Pollock, h John Kline

Runner-Up - FC Smarteyes-Joker by NFC/DC/AFC Tequila's Joker x Smarteyes Microbeans; o Steve Ralph, h Jim John

3rd place - Harling's Breton Smith ; o David & Paula Smith, h Chad Holman

4th place - Billy's Random Task ; o John Hall, h Chad Holman