

The National Championship

Red Water Rex, Famed Pointer Dog, Owned by E. B. Alexander and W. T. Pruitt, Wins Title in 1969 Renewal



RED WATER REX, celebrated white and liver pointer dog, seven years of age, appeared on Tuesday of the second week of competition in the 1969 National Championship and chalked up eight finds and a back to capture the crown. Rex is owned by E. B. Alexander and W. T. Pruitt of Jackson, Miss., and was handled by Dexter Hoyle Eaton. He is no stranger to fame for he has been a colorful and successful contender since his Derby season, but his three-hour performance to gain this prized title must be ranked as the pinnacle of his competitive career. There was an outpouring of Rex's rooters to witness his bid and the gifted pointer did not disappoint his admirers.

There were others in the field which had their fans, but most felt that Red Water Rex had come closest to what is looked for in the National Championship in the starting list of 47, 42 pointers and five English setters.

This was the 70th actual running of the National Championship, which had its inaugural event back in 1896. Four times in the 74-year-old history of the stake, no trial was run (1897, 1938, 1944 and 1965). But of the seventy times that the title has been awarded, 37 pointers have won 47 times and twenty setters have won 23 times. It wasn't always thus, for in the early years of the National, setters dominated the competition. Indeed, it was not until 1909 that a pointer was able to dent the armor of setter supremacy, Manitoba Rap being the first of his breed to annex the title. Setters have had their difficulties in later years, however, and the last English setter to win the National Championship was Mississippi Zev, which accomplished the feat in 1946.

As chronicled in the preceding issue, the 1969 National Championship began on Monday, February 17, and basking in the good fortune of suitable weather, the decision was announced on Saturday, March 1. There were two full weeks of running—only one morning heat was aborted because of rain—and the fact that there was one withdrawal from the starting field enabled completion of the stake with only one Sunday intervening. As is known to major circuit followers, there is never any running of the National on Sunday. Most participants were glad that the event did not have to be prolonged into the third week.

The scene of the National was, of course, the famed Ames Plantation, northwest of Grand Junction, Tenn., and no field trial center is better known than the hospitable west Tennessee community. Fans from all parts of the country congregate here during the National and the prestige the stake has gained is well deserved. There is no doubt that it has exercised an inestimable influence on the entire bird dog game, and that winners of the National Championship have wielded great influence on the breed.

Field trialers taxed accommodations in surrounding towns as they came this year with high expectations. Recent surveys and a thorough quail census had established a large bob-white population on the grounds. It was anticipated that bird-finding thrills would come thick and fast. The very first morning of competition it seemed that the hopes of all would be realized, but then strangely birds were at a premium, particularly on the afternoon course. It has always been held that these two three-hour arrangements provided quite uniform opportunities, but you couldn't tell any handler who ran the afternoon course this year that there was little difference between the two. What's more, the popularity of the morning course seemed justified. Not that there aren't birds on the afternoon arrangement—they definitely are there—but no dog had any luck finding them this year. Ascribe it to what you will—bird activity, peculiar, frustrating behavior, scenting conditions, different patterns and types of cover—the fact remains that too few of the birds known to be on the grounds were found by the dogs. A sufficient number of bevy locations were identified, and these well distributed over the three-hour routes, but daily bird scores were far too meager to afford the kind of action one likes to witness in the National Championship. Generally speaking, bird-finding opportunities are better in the late afternoon, but it didn't work that way this year. Indeed, there were nearly twice as many individually identified bevy locations on the morning course than on the afternoon acreage.

Dr. Ralph Dimmick, U-T game biologist, was as

confounded as Plantation personnel at the low bird scores. But studies undertaken here two years ago and game management practices instituted after 1965 will be continued and hold hope for the future.

This year's event was under the management of Reuben H. Scott, president of the National Field Trial Champion Association, former manager of Ames Plantation, and James M. Bryan, secretary-treasurer, and present manager of the Plantation. The latter is of pivotal importance in the trial operations. An executive with vast abilities, endowed with a prodigious capacity for work, which includes a genius for organization, "Mr. Jimmy" kept everything moving with precision and smoothness, though he was more perturbed than any one because of bird-finding difficulties.

Assisting his father in many ways was young Charlie Frank Bryan, who took over the marshalling duties in 1967 and has a gift for keeping order in even the largest galleries—and they have them here at the Ames place. . . .

liam V. Garnier, W. A. [Dick] Dumas, Ernest A. Williams II, and Joe H. Hurdle. Secretary Bryan reported that the incumbent officers were re-elected, and Hamlet Yarbrough Jr. of Red Banks, Miss., was enrolled as a member of the NFTCA.

The eligibility clause was kept much as it has been since 1967—to qualify, a dog must have two first-place Open All-Age wins in stakes of an hour or longer in trials of clubs which have been in existence prior to January 1, 1966. It is necessary that such qualifying wins be in trials recognized by the AMERICAN FIELD and recorded in the permanent files of the *Field Dog Stud Book*.

Ernest Williams II was instructed to prepare a resolution to be spread on the records of the Association paying tribute to the late Dr. Thomas Benton King and the contributions he made to the success of the NFTCA.

THE NEW CHAMPION AND OTHERS

The National Championship is the quest for the ideal shooting dog—not just a comfortable gun dog, but one with class—the ability to do it all in thrilling fashion, with a swiftness and accuracy that defy the ordinary dog. Sometimes a close approach to the ideal is witnessed; again, performances may fall short, yet it may safely be taken for granted that the dog which carries off the title has acquitted himself in befitting style, exhibiting the pace, range, bird-finding ability, character and style of a true



FINALE OF THE 1969 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Front, left to right, Tommy Olive, scout; Red Water Rex; D. Hoyle Eaton, handler. Backing: Judges W. A. [Dick] Dumas and Walter H. Wimmer. Trio: Judge Joe H. Hurdle, President R. H. Scott, Vice-President John W. Morris. Duo: James M. Bryan, Secretary, and Dr. W. V. Garnier, National Championship associate.

There were a few minor route changes in the two traditional three-hour routes and other improvements are planned for next year's renewal. Despite rain before the trial, and some during it, the footing was not too wet and muddy; there is always some of the latter on the morning course, with the footing better generally for the afternoon.

A trio of notables judged this National Championship—W. A. [Dick] Dumas of El Dorado, Ark., Joe H. Hurdle of Holly Springs, Miss., and Walter H. Wimmer of Rockville, Ind. These men are well aware of the huge responsibility entailed in judging the National Championship. The effect of decisions rendered here is widespread indeed. Dick Dumas has officiated since 1960; this was Joe Hurdle's third National, and the first for Walter Wimmer. The latter has patronized the stake and attended its annual runnings for a great many years—a third of a century—and he is imbued with its ideals. All three judges have officiated at innumerable trials over a term of years, but here at Grand Junction they apply the Amesian Standard as the yardstick by which performances are evaluated.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual business meeting of the National Field Trial Champion Association took place in the manor house on the Ames Plantation at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, February 23. In attendance were Reuben H. Scott, president; Dr. John W. Morris, vice-president; James M. Bryan, secretary-treasurer, and Dr. Wil-

champion, plus the power and drive and extraordinary endurance considered essential endowments of the top-flight bird dog.

The eligibility requirement is intended to bring dogs which have demonstrated their excellence—two first-place wins in hour stakes (or longer) in the Open All-Age category are necessary for qualification. So it is assumed that the dogs competing here are good ones. And the three-hour test for all contenders is most exacting. Yet, undeniably, the best dog must have his share of good luck and the breaks, for when a trial extends over two weeks' time, there are bound to be differences in opportunity. Theoretically, all these factors are taken into consideration, but it is a virtual impossibility to weigh all of them precisely.

Red Water Rex was selected as the best of the lot. He acquitted himself in a manner that elated his admirers. His performance was indubitably pleasing to his fond owners, who witnessed it. Rex's feat of eight finds was a significant achievement. But most amazing to some was the manner in which the dog ran the three hours. Some doubting Thomases questioned his ability to do it, remembering Rex's operation, but Rex accomplished it to the satisfaction of these astute judges.

It is not pretended that it was a great and strong three-hour race. But it was an exhibition that Hoyle Eaton managed intelligently, skillfully. Rex did not have energy to burn through the entire three hours, but his handler, with a complete comprehension of

the dog's capabilities and resources, piloted him most effectively.

Red Water Rex ran smartly, with speed and purpose, sustaining this well over the first half of the marathon effort. Eaton let him extend himself on intelligent casts, completed purposefully, and Rex appealed strongly. The dog's handling response was highly admirable; he wanted to please. And Hoyle Eaton, knowing what is looked for at Grand Junction, deported himself in a manner that enabled the dog to show to advantage. Rex, for all his running, and he did considerable early, was hunting in the interests of the gun, as his responsiveness made clear. The dog's initial find was highly meritorious and he went on to contact game regularly to prove the consistency of his searching. Not all the work was crystalline in its clarity, but no incidents detracted from the dog's efforts. True, Rex, a noted stylist, did not show all his vaunted loftiness on point, but he was stanch and positive and location was invariably exact. Eight finds and a back—it was the magic total for Red Water Rex, exceeded only by John Hogan Boy and Johnnie O.

Red Water Rex has had a colorful career, one not without its difficulties. Rex was a veritable sensation as a Derby and in his first all-age year won the Purina Top Dog Award. In his second all-age year, the dog suffered from spinal trouble, not a malignancy, perhaps a sort of abscess, on his spinal vertebrae. Drs. Horn and Horlein of Auburn were entrusted with the dog and Dr. Horlein did the surgery that cleared up the spinal condition. Rex was out of

ner-up laurels in the prestigious Continental Championship. Capturing the title in this National Championship certainly is a climax to a series of good wins this season.

But it might be well to enumerate all of the placements credited to the Alexander-Pruitt color-bearer:

1st Mississippi Amateur Association Amateur Puppy (S)	1963
1st North Mississippi Amateur Puppy (S)	1963
3d Missouri State Association Open Puppy (S) ..	1963
1st Arkansas Association Open Derby (F)	1963
1st Wildlife Association, Tennessee Open Derby (1 Hr. Heats) (F)	1963
3d Hobart Ames Open Derby (1 Hr. Heats) (F) ..	1963
1st Pelican State Open Derby (1 Hr. Heats) (F)	1963
Runner-Up National Derby Championship (1½ Hr. Heats) (S)	1964
Winner Continental Open Championship (1 Hr. Qualifying Heats; 1 Hr.-50 minute Finals) (S) ..	1965
Winner Missouri Open Championship (1½ Hr. Heats) (S)	1965
1st Border International Open All-Age (F) ...	1965
3d Northern States Open All-Age (F)	1965
Winner Continental Open Championship (1 Hr. Qualifying Heats; 1 Hr.-50 Minute Finals) (S)	1966
1st Northern States Open All-Age (F)	1967
Runner-Up United States Open Chicken Championship (1 Hr. Heats) (F)	1967



RED WATER REX
Winner of the National Championship

competition for two years. The aftermath of such an experience is bound to leave a dog less powerful, less strong than originally, but time is the great healer. Messrs. Alexander and Pruitt contemplated retiring the dog, for they appreciated how valuable he would be as a sire and did not want to endanger him. But Hoyle Eaton pleaded to take Rex to Canada and the dog began to wax strong again. His handler will tell you that he has been gaining strength each passing month. "He has not been showing the extreme loftiness that hallmarked his points," said Hoyle Eaton, "and when he is worked extra hard being conditioned for such a stake as the National, it naturally has its affects. But it has been noticeable to me that his back and side muscles have been getting stronger week by week."

Speaking of style on point, Hobart Ames never cottoned to the twelve-o'clock tail; he was of the old school and the ramrod tail had the greatest appeal for him. Character, intensity, rigidity and positiveness on point are the prime essentials, although modernly the lofty poseurs are in highest favor. Red Water Rex displayed a pointing style on most of his finds that would have been well regarded by the father of the Amesian Standard. . . .

Red Water Rex for all familiar with the vicissitudes of his career must command warmest admiration for the dog surmounted all difficulties and this season he began with a triumph in the Saskatchewan Chicken Championship, followed this with a victory in the Southwestern Championship of the Arkansas Association, and in January gained run-

Winner Saskatchewan Chicken Championship (1 Hr. Heats) (F)	1968
Winner Southwestern Championship (1 Hr. Qualifying Heats; 2 Hr. Finals) (F)	1968
Runner-Up Continental Open Championship (1 Hr. Qualifying Heats; 1 Hr.-50 Minute Finals) (S)	1969

Red Water Rex's ancestry is a combination of lines popular with pointer breeders. He was whelped January 17, 1962, and here's a look at three generations of his pedigree:

TINY WAHOO (Sire)	Satilla Wahoo Pete	Satilla Sam
	Bobby Jane	Fisher's Wahoo Mary Cannoneer Pat's Lady Jane
SEA ISLAND GALE (Dam)	Major Lexington Boy	Lexington's Atomic Boy
	Stanley's Candy	McMahon's Village Sue Greenwood Boy Boy's Louisiana Lady

Tiny Wahoo was one of Dr. P. T. Kilman's favorites, and the dog competed in the National a few years ago. Tiny's bloodlines nicked well with those of Rex's dam, and Gale's genealogy (she's a full sister) shows the relationship to last year's National Champion, Riggins White Knight, also handled by Eaton. The Booneville, Miss., handler certainly knows the strengths and idiosyncrasies of these dogs. He is able to mold their tremendous nervous energy with surpassing skill. Red Water Rex has a trait similar to some of the great performers of earlier years—he will whine or bark to express eagerness to relocate when handler does not

immediately flush game in front of his point. They say John Proctor did it and others right down to Pandemonium, of Clyde Morton and Francis Frazier fame.

What about the close challengers to Rex? There were several which made stout bids. In fact, John Hogan Boy and Johnnie O in the very first heat of the stake set a mark that stayed toward the top—Boy with nine beves, a single and a back; Johnny with eight beves, a single and a back.

Indeed, as a heat and awfully tight race, that first brace of the stake provided the most excitement of the entire trial. Johnny O got off to the faster start in the way of bird-finding, but John Hogan Boy came on and it was mighty close at the finish. John Hogan Boy edged his brace mate by a find. Boy, famed for his sculpturesque attitudes on game, is owned by W. P. Hogan (who came to Grand Junction) and A. J. Knight and Ernest Allen has charge of him, having piloted him to significant placements. When Boy won the Southwestern Championship in November, 1966, the veteran Herman Smith opined that here was a dog that could be awfully tough in the National, and this year the now aging John Hogan Boy almost made it.

No less is true of Johnny O, Mark Wakefield's bird-finding pointer. Johnny O's regular pilot is Paul Walker, but because of the illness of his parents, Walker was unable to be present and Bob Lamb handled Johnny. A season or two ago, Paul Walker, who won this stake in 1960 and 1961, predicted: "Johnny O may not be ready this year (1967), but he's the type of dog that can win at Grand Junction." As was the case with John Hogan Boy, Johnny O had a narrow miss. After that first rip-snorting heat, with only an exception here and there, the races were a letdown. Sugarshack, as she invariably does, gave a commendable exhibition. "Judy," Frank Stout's favorite, handled by Bob Lamb, was undeniably one of the contenders. Gunsmoke's Yon Way which has bid strongly in previous years—few who witnessed her 1967 performance will soon forget all the highlights—performed creditably for handler Howard Kirk. She is owned by Roger M. Kyes of Bloomfield Hills, Mich. "Tiny" was making her presence felt right up until the end of the three hours, when a final unproductive was damaging to her cause. On the last morning of the trial, Royal Storm for more than an hour thrilled a huge gallery with excellent, exciting work.

The account of the running is exhaustive and readers may enjoy making their own analyses from the description of the work.

BALANCE OF RUNNING

Saturday, February 22, the weather seemed to be improving over the conditions of the morning. There was just a misty drizzle and light fog when the field trial party assembled at the afternoon starting place. Temperatures were in the high 40s. It was decided to go and the judges ordered the cast off of the dogs at 1:42. To enlarge on what appeared in the March 1 issue concerning this last brace of the first week's running. . . .

Air Control—Pineland Kate.—There was some concern on the part of Murray Fleming whether to put Kate down again. She had been ill earlier in the week and the 35-to-40 minute jaunt in the forenoon was not calculated to do her a lot of good. But, sportingly, Kate was sent away. She was not at her best, though giving it a good try, and Moreland took her up after twenty minutes. The mist ceased and it was not a bad afternoon to run—many would prefer it to a bright, sunny one. At thirty minutes on cedar hill, Grubb called point for "Bud." The birds flushed of their own volition, but the dog stayed and was steady for the shot. Thereafter, though his fond owner, William W. Till of Upper Sandusky, O., was on hand, Bud did not really put his heart into his hunting. There was little pattern to his effort, the dog wandering from sight at intervals, gone eight and ten minutes, then returned to the course. At an hour and forty minutes, Bud pointed above church on rim of ravine; Grubb could not raise game. He gave Bud ample time to work it out, to no avail, and then took the dog up at 3:30.

Traditionally there is no running on Sunday. As will sometimes happen, weather conditions seemed just right on the Sabbath. For the start of the second week of running, Monday was lightly overcast, calm winds, moderate temperatures—in the 40s. Eight beves were accounted for in the forenoon three hours.

Highway Lynn—Satilla Virginia Lady.—The dogs were released at 7:57. Galleries the second week usually fall from the large numbers of the initial running days. Lynn's owner, Bill Ball of Danville, Ky., was riding, as was Dr. F. M. Phillippi of Brewton, Ala., Lady's owner. She, as is well known, won the National Championship in 1967. The responsibilities of motherhood weighed on Lady at the outset—she's the dam of five three-month-old puppies from another mating of National Champions—and Lady was outshone by the footwork of Lynn in