

The Field Trials of 1908-09

BY A. F. HOCHWALT

To the student and the lover of that most fascinating of out door sports—field trials—it becomes at once apparent, when scrutinizing the records of the past season, that a new era has dawned in the history of the sport, for they chronicle the rise of the pointer to a position never before occupied by the short haired bird dog; in other words, the star of the pointer is in the ascendant.

The greatest gift that the field trial world has to bestow is a win in the National Championship and this season Mr. Thomas Johnson's great little pointer, Manitoba Rap, captured this most coveted of all field trial honors. This occurred at Grand Junction, Tennessee, last January, in a field of sixteen starters, the largest field, numerically, since the year of this stake's inauguration.

It is not of the pointer alone that this paper will deal, for the setter was also a large factor in the various events of the field trial year, and it must not be supposed because the pointer captured the most important honors that the days of the English setter are over. Far from it, and this coming season may witness an entire reversal in the personnel of the winners for the setters may again take their place at the head of the list.

The trials of last season began with those of the North Dakota club at Berwick, N. D., on August 24th. These trials were run on prairie chickens, as all the trials in the Northwest are. The Derby brought forth twenty-six starters composed of twenty-one English setters and five pointers. The winners were all setters; little Ione White-stone, the daughter of Count Whitestone and Countess McKinley, taking first honors. She is a wiry black, white and tan bitch, fast as a whippet and a wide, bold ranger, a veritable will-o'-the-wisp in the field. At the time she ran here it was predicted that she would cut a wide swath in the various derbies of the year, but she failed to sustain her early reputation in that respect, although she never started without making the judges look at her, for her snappy, independent way of going naturally attracted attention. It seems, however, that she could not be brought

down to handling birds as was necessary in the later derbies, and on two occasions we saw her get away on wide casts and become lost. This kind of a dog, nevertheless, is considered of the proper field trial calibre and she may develop into an all age dog of more than ordinary ability.

In the all age stake of these same trials the black and white ticked pointer dog, Spot's Rip Rap, won. Here is a dog whose career reads like a romance as dogs' careers are reckoned. Beginning as a derby about three years ago, he made a brilliant record on the prairies and was probably the most talked-of derby of 1905. His first and second all age years were nothing remarkable, in fact, considering that the dog was juggled about from one handler to another during those years it is surprising that he was not ruined entirely, for on many an occasion he was sent to a handler just a few days before the opening of a trial. Naturally this was a severe handicap, for every handler has his own method and idiosyncrasies, despite the fact that the general plan of field trial handling may be the same. Naturally this frequent change of handlers placed the dog in such a position that he was entirely at sea, for he had no master to whom he could look to for encouragement and guidance and it is quite natural to assume that no handler who has a dog for one or two trials only, is going to take the same amount of interest in him that he would if he were regularly in his string. As a result of this method of campaigning Spot's Rip Rap used his own head, did pretty much as he pleased and developed various faults, chief among which was unsteadiness to wing and shot. The dog was a natural bird finder, however, and there were few dogs in the circuit that could surpass him in this respect. This quality covered a multitude of sins, and even though Spot's Rip Rap failed to sustain the brilliant promise of his derby year, he was, to use the vernacular, not down and out by any means.

It happened that Dr. Denison sent the dog to the Pacific-Northwest in the autumn of 1907 to run in the trials of that section, and Judge D. G. MacDonnell, of Vancouver,

took Spot in charge. The Judge is an amateur, but a thorough lover of the bird dog, so to him the handling of Spot was a labor of love. Spot's Rip Rap and he became the greatest of friends and the pointer, under the Judge's



The Judge and Spot's Rip Rap

guidance, won second in the Pacific-Northwest trials, while Glee Boy, Mr. MacDonnell's own dog, was third.

Early last season Dr. Denison gave the Judge a price on Spot's Rip Rap and that gentleman journeyed all the way from Vancouver to Chicago to see the dog. Upon his arrival in the city he told the dog's owner that he would take Spot on one condition, and that was if the dog came to him when he saw him instead of going to his owner. Spot was brought in and like Argus, the dog of Ulysses, he recognized his old master at once—

"Yet by this dog no sooner seen but known
Was wise Ulysses, as he entered there
Up went the old dog's ears—as he came near
Quick rose the dog and fawned and wagged his
stern."

It was enough, and Spot's Rip Rap forthwith became the property of Judge D. G. MacDonnell, of Vancouver.

The Judge was ripe for a vacation and the way he spent it was to take Spot's Rip Rap and attend the trials. It was surprising to note how rapidly the dog improved under the Judge's care. From a ragged, woe-begone, rough coated animal he developed into a smooth, satin-finished pointer of prosperity. But Judge MacDonnell devoted his entire time to him as he was the only dog he took with him. It is said that he invariably ordered the best steaks at the hotels for his dog while he was content with the seconds, but this may be exaggeration, although it is easy to believe, when one considers the great love that the Judge has for all animals and dogs in particular. Be this as it may, the dog responded nobly to his new master and nearly every time he was started he secured a place in the stake. Just previous to the North Dakota trials he won the Championship of the Pacific coast and the week following the former event he secured third place in the all age stake of the Manitoba trials. Then the Judge and his dog went back to British Columbia where he started Spot in the Pacific-Northwest and the British Columbia trials, and won first place in the All age stakes of both events.

It was in January last that Judge MacDonnell journeyed to Mississippi and started Spot in the All age stake of the Eastern trials where he won third. At Grand Junction, the week following, he divided third with the English setter,

Tonopough in the All age stake of the U. S. trials. This race will be well remembered by those who were present on account of the heat between Spot's Rip Rap and the English setter Danfield, if for nothing else. Every handler on the circuit knew that Spot was not the most steady to wing and shot, although the Judge had done much to overcome this fault in the dog, but some handlers were prone to take advantage of the dog's weakness on the score that "all is fair in love and war"—and field trials, if I may add the last clause to a well known adage. J. M. Avent was handling Danfield, and a shrewder handler never blew whistle over a dog than he. Judge MacDonnell knew that in Avent and Danfield he had a pair of foes worthy of his steel and history began making as soon as the dogs were cast off. Both dogs were away like a flash and soon had independent bevy points. When Avent flushed his birds he shot, not once, but both barrels, and to us who sat down there on our horses among the gullies the report sounded like black powder as it reverberated among the hills and hollows like the din of battle. And battle it really was, for the Judge knew that this double shot of a heavy charge was meant to disconcert his dog, so he set his teeth grimly and resolved to be near at hand when there was more shooting. The two flushed bevies scattered in timber and the dogs were sent thither for single bird work. Then it was "Point, judge!" bang, bang! and on again a few paces, and again "Point, judge!" bang, bang! And so it continued for quite a little time and always the inevitable double. The Judge is as much of an athlete as any man in the game and perhaps much more of one than the average handler, so he usually kept near enough to his dog to prevent his breaking shot, but the excitement was too much at last and on several occasions Spot broke and chased; but the hour of retribution came before the heat was ended. It happened that both dogs cast to the right in the direction of a thicket, where Spot was the first to point. Danfield came in from behind a moment later and backed. The Judge, by good fortune, happened to be near both dogs at the time, while Avent was several hundred yards on the other side of the thicket. As Avent rode up the Judge got the word to flush the birds, when he planted himself directly in front of his own dog and fired three times with his revolver as Avent scrambled off of his horse and up to his dog as fast as his legs could carry him. This time it was not Spot's Rip Rap that was unsteady, but Danfield broke shot and chased for perhaps thirty yards before his handler could stop him. There was a merry twinkle in the Judge's eye as he returned to his horse and a laugh went up from the crowd in undisguised amusement over the episode.

The quail trials began with the Futurity at Hutsonville early in November. This stake is practically the same as any derby only that it has a different name. Here again the pointers distinguished themselves by winning second and third places. The great derby of H. R. Edwards' Master John, won first, it is true, but in this one instance there was a difference of opinion and while there was no question about his wins in the later stakes there were many that thought either Manitoba Frank or Fishel's Honest Scrap should have had the high honors in this stake. Of Master John we shall speak later when we come to discuss the work of the setters.

Fishel's Honest Scrap and Manitoba Frank are litter brothers by Fishel's Frank out of Alford's Babe. These were the first of Fishel's Frank's get to start in field trials and they give a very good indication of what we may expect of that dog as a sire, for it must be remembered that Frank is still a young dog and these two puppies of his were some of the very first that he sired. In this Futurity stake Fishel's Honest Scrap was placed second and Manitoba Frank third. Personally we preferred Frank and at the same

time this stake was run we pronounced him as the classiest derby of the season. He has all that snap, dash and fire of his illustrious sire and his manner of going to his game and flashing into his points is of that positiveness that is characteristic of the very high class field trial dog. Unfortunately the dog contracted distemper shortly after his appearance here and while he was placed third several times during the season he never really showed his true metal. The coming season will be his first all age year. He may not accomplish very much this season, for a dog in his first all age year is never at his best, but in him we see all the prerequisites of a coming national champion and we would



Fishel's Frank

not be at all surprised if he lands this coveted honor before he is five years old—perhaps much sooner.

Fishel's Honest Scrap is a dog of a different temperament; he lacks the brilliancy of his brother, but he is a level headed dog; one of those honest kind which goes along day after day in the same fashion. He is a dog that we have named a breadwinner, for he can always be depended upon as getting a place in any stake in which he starts, even though it may not be the highest. Both of these sons of Fishel's Frank will bear watching during the coming season.

It was a rather unusual occurrence to see pointers win the first three places in the All age stake of the Independent trials, but such proved to be the case. The massive liver white and tan California bred dog, Colton, won the stake, King Woolton was second and Manitoba Rap third.

Those who saw Colton in his heat in the second series will remember well how he came slashing through a large wheat stubble, going with that wide open stride of his, covering yards at every leap; rank vegetation, brushes, briars, had no terrors for him, for with his prodigious size and weight he swept all such obstacles aside like chaff. About in the middle of the field he was going his fastest while the crowd of horsemen in his wake were following along leisurely, admiring his easy way of getting over the ground. A rather sharp cross wind was blowing and the dog was boring through it with an apparent acceleration of speed at every bound when suddenly he throws up his head a little higher and sniffs the air, though not diminishing his pace, then suddenly he wheels into a semi-circle and stiffens into a rigid point. "He has 'em," is the remark passed

from rider to rider in an awed undertone. The dog's actions indicate that the birds are running, for seasoned veteran that he is, he knows it. He does not draw and potter along carefully, with nose to the ground, for fear of losing the scent, but with head aloft he makes one dash to the picket fence, fifty yards away, where he stops for a moment then over he goes and points right among the birds which flush as the dog strikes the ground. It is an exciting moment for the handler, the audience and particularly for the dog, for the birds are rising on all sides of him. His pent up nervous energy knows restraint no longer and as a bird darts from under his nose he cannot resist and takes a bunch of feathers out of the laggard's tail; but it was excusable and the experienced man saw in the whole affair a most magnificent piece of work, which it really was, and Colton won the stake on the strength of it.

King Woolton, the dog which won second, is a son of King Cyrano. He has been before the public a long time and during his varied career has annexed a number of wins among which were the Texas championship two years ago.

Manitoba Rap, third, always had that fiery, snappy way of going that is so much admired in a field trial dog and when it comes to nose there are few dogs that can surpass him. He would have gone higher in this stake but his manner of handling game was not quite finished enough, in fact, this being his first all age year he was just passing from his puppy to his matured form. In the Kentucky trials he was placed fourth, but in January with several more months of age and experience, he was beginning to show what he really was and won the All age stake of the Eastern trials which were held at New Albany, Mississippi. Only a few weeks after this he startled the world by winning the National Championship at Grand Junction, Tenn. This was a feat never accomplished by a pointer before and we doubt if there was ever a setter which won such an important stake so young. Manitoba Rap, however,



Manitoba Rap

did nothing more than what we predicted for him. A year before, when he was running in his derby form, we pronounced him the greatest young dog, pointer or setter, before the public at that time we stated that here was a dog which would bear watching. Not only is Manitoba Rap a dog with a choke bore nose but he has the dash, snap and independence, and what is more, he has the stamina to carry him along for hours. When he finished his three hour run in the Championship race he was as fresh at the end of the race as he was at the beginning and we verily believe he could have gone another three hours at the same

(To be Continued in August Number.)

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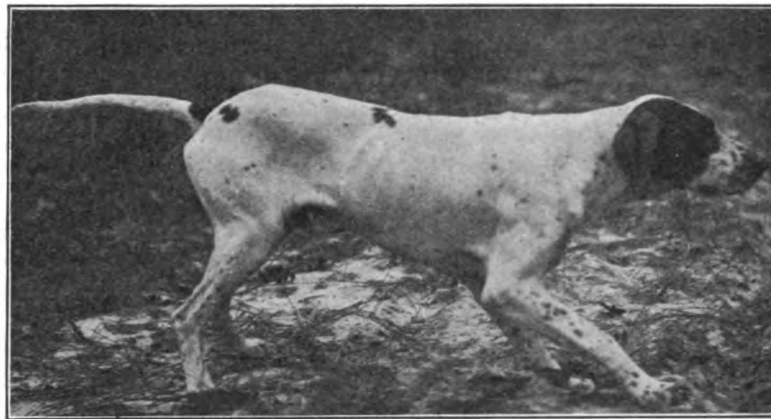
(Continued from July Number)

Alford's John, the dog that ran as Manitoba Rap's brace-mate in the championship race, also produced a remarkable heat. He also went his three hours without showing fatigue to any material extent and the young dog only beat him in snap and style which qualities Alford's John is losing since he is aging, for it must be remembered that when he ran this race he was in his ninth year, so this heat between Manitoba Rap and Alford's John was in many respects a record event, in that it brought forth the oldest and the youngest dog in the stake; Manitoba Rap, it may be said en passant, was less than three years old when he won this stake.

The All age stake of the Kentucky trials brought a new Richmond in the field in the form of a white and black ticked pointer which began making history in these trials and continued to do so until the end of the season. The dog we refer to is Masterpiece, the property of A. H. Ball, of New York. Masterpiece was not an unknown dog by any means, at this time for he was regularly campaigned during his derby year two years before with fair success and the

likely to make history this year. He began his field trial career by dividing third in the Derby of the U. S. trials last January a year ago and at that time promptly created a favorable impression. Last September he won the All age stake of the Manitoba trials, then on account of sickness was not started again until in North Carolina where he was placed several times and finished the season by dividing third in the Subscription stake of the Eastern trials at New Albany, Mississippi, last January. This stake is an endurance test in that each heat in the first series is of two hours' duration. Gilt Edge proved to be a game, intelligent, hard working pointer and we are fully convinced that he can go any route, therefore he should be good championship material for next season, for in addition to his great endurance he possesses bird sense to a very high degree.

Before dismissing the pointers we must say something about the winner of the Eastern Derby at New Albany last January. This event was won by a rather plain looking liver and white dog called Mark; a dog plebeian in appearance and plain in name, but he was a hard working dog, possessing little style it is true, although he had a wonder-



year just previous to the last he ran through his first all age year without making much of an impression, however. With the running of the Kentucky All age stake the real Masterpiece, such as his former handler, the late David E. Rose, said he would be, began to assert himself. In a field of thirty starters he ran a most brilliant race and won first. The trouble with Masterpiece the previous year was that he seemed to be unable to handle game, but in the Kentucky trials he demonstrated that he had the nose and knew how to use it. His style on point is sensational, for he throws himself into all kinds of grotesque attitudes just as he happens to be when he catches scent of game. He is staunch as the proverbial rock and nothing can take him off of game when he finds it. His victory here was only the first of a brilliant all age year, for from Kentucky he went to North Carolina to the Continental trials, and in a field of thirty-two starters again won first; the week following he won first in the All age stake of the Pointer Club of America and in January he won second in the All age stake of the U. S. trials. In Masterpiece Mr. Ball has a dog that should prove a great boon to pointer breeders, for he has great individuality and possesses a combination of Jingo and Rip Rap blood that should be perpetuated.

Gilt Edge is another pointer of last season which is very

ful nose and knew how to use it. Nobody had heard of this dog previous to the Kentucky trials where he was started, but failed to create much of an impression. In the Eastern trials his bird finding ability quickly attracted the attention of the judges, and when Master John was lost in the second series of the derby Mark was the logical winner of the stake as he stood next to John in the order of merit. And so he was declared the winner. His breeding is given in the records as by Jack out of Lady Coleman. Jack is a name just as plain as Mark and therefore indicates nothing, although we understand he is very well bred, going back to Rip Rap and Jingo on both sides of his pedigree.

And now while the pointers are making all this history during the past season what have the setters been doing?

We made note of the fact that little Ione Whitestone won the Derby of the North Dakota trials, but a week later the tables were turned and Miss Queenie, from the string of H. R. Edwards, took the high honors.

Unquestionably the most remarkable derby of the year was Master John, another of the Edwards string. We did think there was some question of his winning the Futurity, but he clearly won the Independent Derby, and also those of the Kentucky and Continental trials. In the Eastern event he was unfortunate in becoming lost in the second se-

ries which threw him out of the race and in the United States Derby, a week later after running a most remarkable first heat which lasted one hour and twenty-seven minutes and which practically placed him head and shoulders over anything else in the stake he was put down in the second series the next day, and after making one long, splendid cast, disappeared among the gullies and was seen no more during that heat. The dog had practically won the stake in the first series and but for an unfortunate rule, he would probably not have been put down again, for it was conceded by everybody that he had won the stake easily when down the first time. Master John handled more like an all age dog than any derby we ever saw. He was wide, fast and as staunch on point as any four-year-old. This is what lost him both the Eastern and the U. S. derbies, for it was no doubt because of the fact that he got on birds in that close country that he was not found. Most young dogs would leave a point after standing a fair length of time without having their handler come to their relief; not so with Master John; he would hold the point until the end of doom and it was his very staunchness that lost him the two derbies after he had them practically won, hands down.

Master John is not what we would call a brilliant dog and we confess that we do not quite like his way of going, but he is a level headed, wide ranging bird dog possessing an insatiable desire to find birds, and find them he will, even if he must go to the next county for them. As an all age candidate we look for him to do some exceptional work, even though he does not prove to be better than last year, for then he was a derby dog in all age form in every sense of the word. Master John is by Count Whitestone out of Marion Mills, breeding that has produced such a lot of performers during the past three or four years.

Two other young dogs that deserve mention, even though they did no winning are Cæsar's Ghost and Gibraltar; the latter a son of Prince Rodney, the former a son of Cæsar. Both of these youngsters possessed exceptional natural quality, but rather bring them down too closely on bird work and thus to a certain extent take the vim and dash out of them, Beazell, the trainer for the Gibraltar kennels, preferred to let them go without records and make great all age dogs out of them. Hobart Ames thought so well of Cæsar's Ghost that he paid \$600 for him last January as an unplaced puppy, and we understand that the Gibraltar kennels refused nearly twice that amount for Gibraltar.

A dog that attracted considerable attention toward the end of the season was Paul Verdayne, the black, white and tan setter by Count Whitestone out of Nellie Tate, owned by Frank Reily of Philadelphia. During the early part of the field trial season he was not taken very seriously, but he kept coming, getting better in each trial and practically training and improving himself during his strenuous campaign, which is rather unusual. In the Continental trials he was placed third, in the Virginia, fourth, and when he struck Texas he was in his real form. Here he won the North Texas Derby one week and the week following, won the Lone Star Derby. We had been following this dog's career from the early part of the season and noted from time to time how he was improving, but we were not prepared for the two great races he ran in Texas, where he won handily.

Another dog that we thought well of for his great abundance of natural quality was the orange and white Fairplay. This dog from the early part of the season showed great range and speed, but he seemed to be unable to handle game as he should have done. In the U. S. Derby in January he did better than he had ever done previously, but it remained for the Texas trials for him to show his true form. Here, in the Lone Star Derby, he ran a remarkable first heat and only lost to Paul Verdayne by a small margin in the second

series, so he was placed next to him in that event.

Bynum's Tonystone was another dog that showed some very brilliant flashes, but it seemed that he failed to sustain himself at the crucial moment and on several occasions lost out in the second series. The best race he ran was in the



Kentucky derby. Here he produced two very nice heats and won second to Master John.

Among the all age setters there was nothing last season that stood out with as much brilliancy as the pointers. Tonopough won the Championship stake of the Manitoba trials in September, but he was not eligible to any of the all age events, as he had won in these the year before and was therefore barred from most of them, although he started and won second in the Continental trials.

There was a very good son of Tonopough on the circuit last season which attracted considerable attention in the Kentucky trials. This was Powhattan. He started in the Independent trials, but did not create much of an impression. In Kentucky, however, his owner, Chas. Tway, took him in hand and ran him through the stake. It soon became apparent that Powhattan had more of the field trial quality in him than we had previously seen and his owner seemed to know how to make him show it.

His first heat was one of very nice wide ranging, going out and staying out. His last cast took him through a large field of standing corn where he disappeared; the last we saw of him was when he went down the hillside through the corn. Tway rode around to the bottom of the hill while the judges were on the crest awaiting developments. Finally we heard him call "Point, judges!" from far below and we rode down the hill through the corn, with the breaking stalks making a noise on all sides of us, but it did not seem to disconcert the dog in the least, for there he stood along the edge of the field, with his satiny sides glistening in the sunlight, a veritable piece of statuary. The point proved to be on a bevy and the dog was as steady as a clock. This piece of work assisted him very materially in earning third place in the stake, which was awarded him.

Pawnbrakes, belonging to Mr. Armstrong of Detroit, was another dog that did some very creditable work. He won second in the Kentucky trials, fourth in the Virginia, fourth in the North Texas and second in the Lone Star. He is a birdy dog, and a diligent hunter, but he lacks style on point and this has much to do with a dog's status among field trial dogs.

In summing up the situation we find that the pointers had a decided advantage over the setters in the all age stakes, but that greatest winning derby, Master John, was among the young dogs which goes far toward striking a balance. What next season may bring forth is mere conjecture, for at this early date it is impossible to obtain any definite line on the derby material, and even if this could be done noth-

ing definite could be learned from it, since it is only through real competition that we learn the exact worth of a dog.

We are inclined to believe that the all age setters will make a better showing this coming season than they did last, for the simple reason that there were better derby setters

last season than there were the year previously, but it must be borne in mind that the pointer men also have some very good young material to draw upon, so instead of making predictions as to what next year may bring forth, we believe the better plan would be to wait and see them run.



California Bell Boy, Ned M., Pinehurst Jingo and Imported Scotland Bragg.