

The Future of Pointing Breed Field Trials

-by Kendall Brown



Something unusual happened Memorial Weekend. I attended my first field trial 41 years ago and thought I had seen about everything but, this if not unique, is very uncommon. May 28, at the Central Maine Brittany Club trial, a first time handler took a ribbon. Not the usual first time handler. This sport has become majorly populated with gray haired gentlemen and a good showing of ladies, but few youngsters are seen. But, this handler by the name of Alana Day is 10 years old. She is the daughter of David and Maryann Day and the granddaughter of John and Ann Short.

Alana did not run her parents or grandparent broke dog. She ran her 15-month old puppy she calls Toph. Alana has been training in the field every

chance she gets with her mother and grandparents but, this weekend she wanted to handle her own puppy in the Amateur Derby. The Amateur Derby had 8 starters and the day was hot, over 90 degrees. Alana handled her pup-

py to a 3rd place finish even beating Toph's littermate who came in 4th handled by the breeder of the litter. Wow! She was so inspired she then decided to handle her the next day in Open Derby.

10-year-old Alana took home the Blue, beating 6 other competitors. I am not sure how many times a 10-year-old handler has won in an open class in an AKC trial because the statisticians have not gotten back to me yet. But, this is an incredible accomplishment! Doing it with her own amateur trained puppy is icing on the cake. Some may think it a fluke but hard work pays off even for the younger set.

Alana has been around puppies since before she could walk. She grew up with her family's first Britt and was always interested in training with her grandparents and mother. When she was 9 she helped with the training of the family's second dog a young pup named Zuko. That fall at 6 months with mom handling, but with Alana watching and learning, Zuko earned his JH title. Now what to do? Enter dog shows. Alana started handling in dog shows. Alana and Zuko won a Sporting Breed Group at a match. And then with an older dog won Best Junior Handler in an all-breed show. She has now also handled Zuko in Junior classes as well as multiple wins in Junior Handler classes.

Now with a new puppy Toph, with Alana's mother handling this pup earned AKC JH titles and NAVHDA titles as well. Alana wanted to take the

over the reins, or leash if you will, of her puppy. Once again handling this puppy in Regular Classes and Junior Classes and once again earning ribbons. Earlier this spring Alana handled Toph to a near perfect score towards her Advanced Junior Hunt Test title and was even asked by the judges to run again as a bye.

Is it any wonder she had the confidence to handle her in a regional trial? Did I mention she has a black belt in Karate, competes in Judo and runs half marathons with her dad? Yea, that too. So what is in store for this young lady? Well of course fall trials, fall and winter shows and with luck we will see her at the 2017 American Brittany Club Eastern Futurity as Toph is nominated.

Good Luck, young Lady. This sport needs new blood and there are plenty of youngsters and newcomers that will gain inspiration from the likes of you and Toph.

