



Twelve-year-old Nikki Bowen is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Teasley Middle School in Canton, GA. You'd think cheerleading and chorus and her passion, writing, would take up all of her time. But somehow, this student has managed to find the time to train and handle Sadie, her 21-month-old Vizsla, and her family's other two dogs: Breeze, a 13-month-old Vizsla and Codee, a two-and-a-half year old Weim.



These three canine members of the Bowen Family participate in Pointing Breed Field Trials and Hunting Tests. Just this month (January 2014), Nikki handled Sadie to a fourth place finish in Open Derby in Quincy, Florida.

Daniel and Lara Bowen are quite proud of their daughter. "Nikki has developed confidence in the field that will help her develop into a person who trusts her instincts, listens to the advice of

others, and competes to win titles. We are very proud of her," says Lara.

She cites a real positive from Nikki's participation in Field Trials and Hunting Tests: "Nikki also gets to spend quality time with her Dad and the dogs."

And they're equally proud of the adults at Field Trials and Hunting Tests. According to Lara, "Participating in field trials is a fabulous learning experience for Nikki. Many of the adults take the



time to mentor her and encourage her to participate and do her best."

Nikki has learned her handling and training techniques from her parents and family friends, Will Garrett and Trish Burdin. She and her parents train on their leases in Milner and Dallas, Georgia.



When asked what she liked about Field Trials, Nikki said: "I like competition and it is fun to win, especially against adults." She adds that some of the important things she's learned from family and friends: "I learned to make my dog go in front of me. I learned to flush the bird away from the dog and not to flush it in the dog's face. I learned to watch my dog to find out where the bird is."

All of this has led to Nikki's success in Field Trials and Hunting Tests:

"I won first place Amateur Walking Puppy and Amateur Walking Derby with Sadie, each for 2 points. I placed second with Sadie in Amateur Derby and had several other placements. With Breeze, I got second in Amateur Derby and six additional placements with Breeze."

Her favorite time was "When I got a blue ribbon for the first time. I ran in a field trial with my dog, Sadie."

Nikki also finished Codee's Junior Hunter title and put one Junior leg on Sadie, her favorite dog. "I like how consistent she is in Field Trials." Currently taking horseback riding lessons, Nikki hopes to expand her experience to horseback trials.

Further, participating in Pointing Dog events has allowed Nikki to travel. "I have travelled to Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee Florida and South Carolina" for Field Trials and Hunting Tests.

And not only does Nikki earn awards in the field; just last year she won her school's Young Author's Fair. Quite an accomplished young woman.

While Nikki loves to write fiction and read (she lists the Harry Potter and Hunger Games series among her favorites), it is apparent the dogs come first in this promising handler's heart.



Gary N. Sadler  
Executive Field Representative.