

EJ Wendel – All Around Junior Handler **by Executive Field Rep Gary Sadler**

Thirteen-year-old EJ Wendel, an 8th grader at Princeton Community Middle School in Cincinnati, OH, enjoys a very active social life. In sports, he is the goalkeeper on his soccer team and he runs track. He's also Student Council Treasurer, in the Regional Honors Choir, Concert Choir and a member of the National Junior Honor Society. EJ also has high academic goals maintaining his near 4.0 average in honors level classes. His plan for the future is to go to college and study wildlife biology.



You'd think that would take up all of his spare time. Not quite. EJ also enjoys training his Lab, Carolina's Rock N Cotton. Doing all the training himself (except the force fetch), EJ has handled Carey to a Junior Hunter title and aspires to get her Master title.

EJ comes by his love of dogs and training honestly as both his parents, Bud and Allison, are involved in dogs participating in Hunting Tests and Obedience.

EJ's first memory of dogs was one of the Wendels' Golden Retrievers, Bucky, a big, gentle dog who was EJ's buddy and

acted as a pillow. Bucky was also EJ's "walking buddy." His first time in the field with retrievers was a dove hunt with the Wendels' friends, Paul and Carolyn Elam. "I was able to shoot a few dove and it was so cool to see the dogs retrieve and bring them back. It would have been hard to find them in the cornfield without the dogs."

EJ's favorite hunting trip, however, was when he got his first mallard duck. He recollects: "It was a small farm pond. We had a pair of mallards come in and my dad and his friends gave me the first shot and I hit a very big drake mallard and was able to send my dad's dog, Brandy, to retrieve it and bring it to me. It was awesome!"

EJ was seven when he started helping his dad train his dog by throwing birds and loading wingers. Now, he and Bud train all over Ohio and into Kentucky and Indiana. EJ also trains with friends from their club and with Carolyn Elam of Blazing Red Kennels.

Besides his parents, EJ says Carolyn has helped him the most by offering him a chance to stay with her and train dogs every day for two weeks. "I went to live with her and I took my dog and she helped me through some problems I was having. She gave me some hints on how to read my dog."





Asked what he likes most about Carey and EJ will tell you it's because she's his. "Our friend Chris Valentie's dog had a litter of pups and we got one of them from him and it has been great ever since. She is my buddy and sleeps with me every night. She and I are learning to work as a team. She is a great upland dog and has gone duck and dove hunting with me."

Bud adds that EJ has been raised with dogs of one kind or another. At age seven EJ started helping Bud train his Golden Retriever which is now at the Master level. Training dogs "has helped teach EJ responsibility and compassion. He knows now that when we get back from a test or training the dogs come first. They need to be taken care of before anything else."

EJ is also very active in the two clubs to which the Wendels belong. "All the positive response he has gotten from people in the community to people at the tests has reinforced a very positive self esteem. I am very proud of him and all the hard work he has put into Carey and the rest of our dogs."