



Workinggundogs, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Cambridge Structured training for a balanced dog

My First AV Spaniel Working Test

By Stewart North Northglen Gundogs.

Dukeries (notts) Gundog Club, Novice & Open Working Test Sunday 3rd May 2009, Normanton Shooting Ground, Bothamsall, Notts by kind permission of The Carr Family ~ Judges Mr. SR Bates & Mrs. P Dyson, Chief Steward Mr. PN Raper

I have been training spaniels at grade 1, 2 & 3 levels for the gundog club over the last 18 months, and I am continually surprised about the quantity of spaniels arriving for training each month in Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Cambridge? Not one dog has ever arrived with a good level of basic obedience.

A contributing factor may be the availability of good quality training or lack of it!, but I am inclined to believe, the professional world or traditional handling of Spaniels puts such emphasis and high priority on hunting, the brakes and steering are not applied until a much later stage in training? This approach to training demands a level of assertiveness, which a lot of spaniel owners are not prepared to administer on a young dog. Hence most of them go self employed, out of control and get too embarrassing to take into a shooting environment.

I follow a graded program provided by <http://thegundogclub.co.uk> and to date have been successful in satisfying the requirements of those grades, which are independently assessed.

The Gundog Club places significant emphasis on OBEDIENCE at an early stage, which is reflected in my training too such a degree, a common comment of external assessors is that my client's dogs always meet obedience standards! But can they hunt? There is no hunting requirement on G1 and the hunting test at G2, is not that demanding?

There is a price to pay for too much obedience and this was very evident in **My First AV Spaniel Working Test**. I primarily entered this working test for the experience both for my client's dog and me.

I entered a Cocker Spaniel **Paxton fair Lady** Call name "Tegan" owned by Miss. D Williamson. Tegan was youngest dog running at 14 months, and has recently passed a Gundog Club Grade 2 assessment with Distinction.

Initially I wanted to enter Tegan in a puppy test; however the number of working tests in the East Midlands offered by clubs and societies in May was very limited.



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I have been a member of the Dukeries (notts) Gundog Club for some years attending numerous tests and field trials for Retrievers, Club events are always well organised and friendly, the venue was definitely fit for purpose, Pine woodland with early bramble and bracken for cover, something Tegan had not seen before, so I knew, it wasn't going to be easy.

I arrived so early the directional signs were not out, but Mr. Paul Raper instructions were spot on even if the Sat Nav gave me four Clumber Park Hotel's to choose from?

Much to my surprise I was not the first to arrive, Mrs. Beryl Middleton was on hand as always "I don't think I have ever been to a Dukeries event without Beryl in attendance" such is her devotion to the club.

As a late entry Tegan was not registered on the running card, so we were allocated number 19 and after the usual introductions we set off, into the wood.

This working test allowed both Novice and Open Springer's/Cockers hence AV "Any Variety". Spaniels are always run in pairs, with one judge on the right hand side on the line and the other on the left hand side, each handler has an opportunity to show their dog off for approx 4 minutes, may be longer if they like your dog?

During the hunt up, novice dogs were given a mark with shot from the line approx 30 metres into cover, at a point when the dog was turning towards handler on the turn whistle under the right hand judge, then a blind behind the line with a mark distraction in front, which had to be retrieved after the blind was picked, under the left hand judge.

I thought Tegan for her age performed well, she completed all her retrieves and delivered to hand, stop to shot and whistle, honored other dogs and I never lost control of the dog. She did miss her marks, paying too much attention on handler and needed to be handled onto the mark with some calm and persistency from my handling, she did lack drive/style and confidence compared to the competition but did hunt the cover very methodically and held a pattern reasonably well.

At the end of both runs, I had an opportunity to watch a run off with 4 open dogs numbered 8, 10, 11 & 17, which worked in pairs very close to each other to decide positions/rankings before the water test.

Number 6 a Novice dog was also called to run off with an Open dog, I presume to measure its hunting standard against that of an open dog, and prove it can work in close proximity of another dog?



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Finally Novice dogs 5, 6, & 15 and Open 8, 10, & 11 were asked to complete a short water retrieve on a pond through some reeds, the novice dogs were required just to enter the water 2/3 metres and the open dogs 4/5 metres.

Dogs were not required to enter the water from any great distance and the odd dog needed handling due to the wind moving the dummy very quickly.

It was interesting to note that the handler of the Novice Dog was allowed to talk and hold the dog by hand signals at heel, prior to entering water!

After the event, I approached the Judge's for their comments on Tegan's performance, which confirmed the dogs lack of experience, lack of drive, limited game experience, the dog in their opinion was just not interesting to watch compared with the competition. More experience in game environments was recommended. In conclusion they wanted to see a lot more hunting!!!! Mrs. P Dyson did comment she was impressed by the level of control in such a young dog?

Which more or less confirmed my own thoughts, too much obedience and you sacrifice a spaniels desire to hunt, not enough and they just become a self employed embarrassment.

In conclusion ~ if puppy buyers continue to buy from field trialing stock, I will always be kept in work! But if my clients aspire to run in field trials the obedience has to take a back seat initially.

Results

Open		
1st	2nd	3rd
Mr. AJ Atkinson	Mr. RC Flavell	Mrs. A Austin
Lallaljo Jet CS/D 010406	Edwardian Gregg ESS/D 270307	Cobcar Magdeline ESS/B 090406
Whapley Falldun of Briarquest x Kingcott Ardcadian of Lallaljo	Clarburgh Art x Edwardian Topsy	Pendalgate Blaine x Cobcar Final Fling
Breeder - Handler	Breeder J Edwards	Breeder Mrs. V Beaumont



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Novice		
1st	2nd	3rd
Mrs. P Baker	Mr. N Flemming	Mr. I Bannister
Tailorsdrift Sandpiper at Gripton ESS/D 050607	Whitehope Dove ESS/B 280307	Taylor'sdrift Chatelaine ESS/B 050607
FTCH Misselchalke Lad of Halaze x FTAW Kevway Lady of Tailorsdrift	FTCH Misselchalke Lad of Halaze x FTAW Whitehope Dotterel	FTCH Misselchalke Lad of Halaze x FTAW Kevway Lady of Tailorsdrift
Breeder I Bannister	Breeder P Dyson	Breeder I Bannister

Overall Best Dog Mr. AJ Atkinson – Lallaljo Jet



For assistance in Gun Dog Training throughout
 Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire & Cambridge

Contact: <http://workinggundogs.co.uk>