



Record numbers of dogs qualify for the KC's Cocker Spaniel Championship 2011

THE COCKER Spaniel has rapidly gained in popularity as a serious Gundog for the shooting field; this popularity is also reflected in the increasing number of field trial competitions being held for the breed each season. This year saw history being made when a record 36 dogs had qualified to run in the Kennel Club's 79th Cocker Spaniel Championship, in association with Buknuba. This was held on Thursday January 20 and Friday January 21, at Drumlanrig Castle and the Queensberry Estate by gracious permission of the Duke of Buccleuch.

There was only one withdrawal and 35 dogs actually began the stake. Females were in the majority with 28 bitches against only eight dogs. There was no dominant sex this year but FT Ch Maesydyrwen Scimitar, FT Ch Mallowdale Gun and FT Ch Mallowdale Zander all had four progeny each competing. However Zander, besides competing himself, also had the distinction of string the winner, while Gun sired the runner-up.

The headkeeper and steward of the beat Rab Clark, with the help of staff from the Buccleuch Estates, had prepared the ground and game supply meticulously under Rab's control the field trial line ran smoothly throughout both days, allowing every one of the enthusiastic Cocker's the opportunity to show their hunting, game-finding and retrieving skills under the close scrutiny of four very experienced judges, Jon Bailey, David Chudley, Stan Pearson and Eddy Scott. Stan, being the first reserve, was drafted in at the last minute as a replacement for scheduled judge Mark Clifford.

Jon Kern, chairman of the Kennel Club working party, made the introductions and after an official photograph

of all the competing dogs and handlers in front of Drumlanrig Castle, we moved to the trial ground in country Good guns are all important at trials and the Buccleuch team was no exception. Rab Clark, Graham Osborne, Derek Goodwin, Andy Donachie, Charles Robinson and Roy Green all shot fantastically throughout the stake despite the difficulty of shooting through trees and woodland. Some sorties out into open rusky ground provided the gallery with really excellent viewing of the dog-work.

This historic 79th Cocker Championship began with Mark Whitehouse handling FT Ch Cheweky Scholes under judges John Bailey and David Chudley on the right, while on the left running under Eddy Scott and Stan Pearson was David Sowerby with black bitch Kirkstall Amethyst. The brambles, laurels and binnings were full of birds and soon enabled the guns to give retrieving opportunities for both dogs, however the sub-zero temperatures meant that a lack of scent affected the dogs right from the start.

Will Clulee had qualified four dogs this year, but Lockslane Archibald became the first elimination when Howard Kirby's Western Rosie picked a running hen which had already eluded Archibald. Gareth Davies' FT Ch Mallowdale Zander subsequently failed to produce another runner and Richard Claydon's FT Ch Maliscott Eclipse took a long time to find a dead rabbit shot well out on fairly open ground, another indication that scent was difficult. Last year's winner, Will Clulee's FT Ch Moelhamau Mini, had a clean first run but failed on a gallery in the second. Greg Beaton's FT Ch

Maesydyrwen Sizzle unfortunately passed a pheasant and then FT Ch Randallyn Black Knight moved too far on a flush. Dead birds were being collected more easily, Joe Shotton's FT Ch Chyknell Iris and FT Ch Chyknell Hiddle, both handled by Ian Openshaw, dealt with their retrieves well but then a runner shot for FT Ch Gibblestone Style escaped capture. Style made a great first attempt, Ben Randall's FT Ch Heolybich Fatty also tried on this bird, but by then it had long since departed. Fatty then showed her class when she was not distracted by several birds flushing as she was sent out for a retrieve. Dai Ormond's FT Ch Rowston Serana hunted with drive, as did Nigel Parfiss' FT Ch Brook Purlong of Tiptop Jack. Martin Snee's FT Ch Cheweky Howrit also hit the cover with determination and completed a double retrieve of two pheasants shot well out in front with minimal handling. FT Ch Mallowdale Kim retrieved a lively bird to handler Wendy Openshaw with ease, while husband Ian skilfully handled John Healey's FT Ch Chyknell Lilly down the slope, over a side and into the gully behind for a bird shot out of sight of the dog. A second good long marked retrieve off its own flinch completed their run. Graham West's Wetlands Spice of Leaglen got confused when returning with a bird and put it down among the people just behind the line. Robin Lund's FT Ch Fenlor Rosey hesitated before picking up a dead hen shot well forward, and a large brown hare proved too much to retrieve all the

way back to hand through the briars for Will Clulee's diminutive little bitch Midlight Honeycuckle.

The popular buzz around the gallery, as the first day drew to a close, was that Joe Shotton's FT Ch Chyknell Iris was definitely be in contention after completing both its runs in fine style. However there were many other dogs still surviving, and with the thick cover it was only the judges who had a clear idea which dogs were in contention and after thorough deliberation they dropped from further participation those with lesser marks which left 20 to continue on day two.

Ian Openshaw handling Nigel Parfiss' FT Ch Winhocklin Single Star of Tiptop Jack completed the first round demonstrating good control, eventually flushing a bird from rushes but took handling to complete the retrieve. Fatty then consolidated her previous day's work with excellent ground treatment and drive; she could easily have moved when another dog was sent past her for a retrieve, but remained rock steady. Daisy's FT Ch Chyknell Lilly down the slope, over a side and into the gully behind for a bird shot out of sight of the dog. A second good long marked retrieve off its own flinch completed their run. Graham West's Wetlands Spice of Leaglen got confused when returning with a bird and put it down among the people just behind the line. Robin Lund's FT Ch Fenlor Rosey hesitated before picking up a dead hen shot well forward, and a large brown hare proved too much to retrieve all the

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also express my personal thanks to the organisers for giving the press the opportunity to photograph and report on this historic event from such close quarters. Your news or views please to Paul Rawlings KCAI (WFO) by email r7per@btinternet.com.

Results

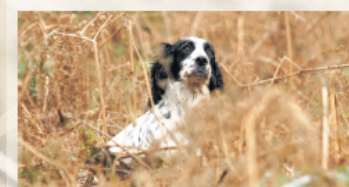
1 FT Ch Heolybich Fatty (liver bitch) owner/handler, Ben Randall. Awarded 6100 plus the Lady Auckland Memorial Trophy, the Brook Challenge Cup, the C.A. Philips Perpetual Challenge Cup, the Prewett Cup and silver frame from the Kennel Club.

2 FT Ch Chyknell Iris (b/w ticked bitch) owner Joe Shotton, handler Ian Openshaw. Awarded 650 plus the Jack Windle Memorial Trophy and the Kirkstall Silver for the gun's choice.

3 Selrach Daisy (black bitch) owner Charles Fearn, handler Simon Tyers. Awarded 630 plus the Chyknell Trophy.

4 FT Ch Centrewalk Daydream (gold bitch) owner/handler, Richard Prest.

Diplomas
FT Ch Cheweky Scholes (liver dog) owner/handler, Mark Whitehouse.
FT Ch Rowston Serana (black bitch) owner/handler, Dai Ormond.
FT Ch Brook Purlong of Tiptop Jack (black bitch) owner Nigel Parfiss, handler, Ian Openshaw.



Second placed FT Ch Chyknell Iris waits for orders in the run-off.



Simon Tyers' FT Ch Cheweky Twiggie retrieving a woodcock.



The historic line-up: 36 dogs qualified for this year's Championship.



Nigel Parfiss' Winhocklin Single Star of Tiptop Jack focussed on his handler.



The Buccleuch team, headkeeper and steward of the beat Rab Clark (kneeling centre).



Judges David Chudley, John Bailey, Stan Pearson and Eddy Scott.



Jim Clark's FT Ch Saxophone Coco retrieves a rabbit.



Andy Whitehouse's Scarlet Dusk retrieves a cock pheasant.



The winner FT Ch Heolybich Fatty in the frozen rushes.



Proud winners Ben Randall with FT Ch Heolybich Fatty.



The Duke of Buccleuch presents a diploma to Dai Ormond and FT Ch Rowston Serana.



Third placed Charles Fearn's Selrach Daisy breathes heavily in the cold air.



The Duke of Buccleuch presents the fourth place award to Richard Prest and FT Ch Centrewalk Daydream.



The Duke of Buccleuch presents the award for second place to Joe Shotton and FT Ch Chyknell Iris.