

**2008 WCA National Open Field Championship**  
**Saturday, December 6- Monday, December 8, 2008**  
**Lake Murray Resort, Ardmore, OK**  
**by Tim Carwile**

The annual renewal of the Purina-sponsored National Open Field Championship kicked off with a timely start at 8:00 CST, Saturday, December 6, 2008. The start was *so* timely, in fact, that Frank Long, the Stake Manager, and yours truly, humble Scribe, were left in the dust, relegated to the rear of the gallery until we could ride hard to catch up in the vicinity of the first bird feeder!

Evident almost immediately was the fact that near-drought conditions prevailed, beautiful Lake Murray down significantly and all ponds on course completely dry. High winds were also almost-constant throughout the stake's three-day run, save for brief respites early each morning. These two factors alone made scenting conditions particularly challenging for the thirty dogs competing in the event. Added to the mix was a larger than normal "armadillo encounter ratio" that provided a certain measure of comic relief unless you were handling one of the hapless victims of the ubiquitous little armored varmints!

The field was perhaps less experienced than in some years. Sixteen of the thirty starters had not yet earned field championships; however, many of the remainder had multiple field titles to their credit---eleven were Field Champions, two were Amateur Field Champions, one was a former National Field Champion, one a National Amateur Field Champion, and one a TRIPLE Champion!

As is usually the case, the competitors were blessed with superlative judicial services. Our senior judge, Shorthair fancier, retired postal service employee and Michigander, Jim (known to many of his friends back home as "FLCS") Baker, returned to us after judging our 2006 National Amateur and Derby stakes. Jim was joined in the saddle by affable Californian, Bill Landress. Both brought a wealth of good humor, experience, wisdom and plain good sense and sportsmanship, sharing all with us in full measure throughout the week. If I may be permitted a personal comment, they were two of the most positive gentlemen I have ever observed in judges' saddles, a trait sadly lacking generally and greatly appreciated by the competitors under whom they competed.

The strongest brace, yielding the eventual second- and third-place dogs was brace 7, off at the top of the hill above camp on course one at 8:05 a.m. on day two, Sunday. With the temperature hovering around 38 degrees and light to calm winds, Mongo (NFC/DC Sirius Mostly Mongo), owned by Helen and Dick Moore and handled by Diane Vater, runs a bold hour and finishes second in the Championship. He points first, at 15, his bracemate whoaed to a back. After a relocation and no bird, Diane collars him and continues toward the Lake, Judge Landress advising that he had seen a hen quail in a tree above the pointing dog though it was not flushed. Mongo scores a covey find, in order, at 27, a single at 50 and, at 59, points, is moved up and points Diane's dropped stocking cap (you gotta' love these dogs of ours, don't you?), is moved up again but comes up empty to end the hour. Bleu points at 37, is relocated but no bird can be produced. He points again, at 51, style wanting, but flush and shot are in order. His final point comes at 59; when Mike's initial flush is ineffectual, he relocates but no bird can be produced and time is called, concluding the hour.

Brace 10, off at 10:05 on day two, Sunday, yielded the fourth place performance in Bev and Wayne Cowgill's young bitch, Ruby (Waybac's Ahwawego), handled by Diane Vater, overcomes an armadillo encounter early in her hour, at 15, thanks to Diane, who assisted her charge in regaining her composure and moving on; at 52, she scores a divided find, with her bracemate, Blitz, handled by Steve Reynolds, in order. Blitz had earlier bird

contact, at 28 and 35, but was a bit loose and took a step on the flush at 28, which clearly kept him from a share of the placements.

Luna (FC Gould's Farwest Lunatic), owned by Ross and Michele Nott, and handled by Diane Vater, took home top honors, running on day one in brace 3! This Buck-TJ daughter took full advantage of the terrain she was dealt, showing boldly to the front throughout her hour. She was whoaed to a back at 18 when her bracemate had a stop to flush; pointed, with the style worthy of a champion, at 19; and, at 27, demonstrated mature, stylish composure on a stop to flush upwind of a nervous covey. Her last thirty minutes was spent largely between the proverbial 10 and 2, pleasing to the judges and gallery alike. River, her bracemate, had birdwork at 15 after a long absence from view; a stop to flush at 18, back at 19 and a non-productive at 50 after a point and relocation.

Noteworthy is that, in addition to the foregoing winners, Tim Smith and Virginia Alexander's Getty, handled by Steve Reynolds, was called back in reserve but was not called upon to retrieve, given the success of the four named above.

As this Championship is the annual preeminent breeders' stake of our breed, Judge Baker felt constrained to observe that there were three dogs in the stake to whom he would strongly suggest breeding; they were, in alphabetical order, Bo, Rocket and Rogue. All three ran big and beautifully but suffered one sort of bad luck or another as reported below. Interestingly, the latter two were sired by the Beaven's venerable "Buddy" (NAFC/FC/AFC Northernlight's This BudsForU).

### The Running

**Brace #1: (8:00 a.m.- Saturday, December 6, 2008)**

**Molly- Tim Hidalgo**

**Dolby- Diane Vater**

Enjoying clear weather (about 35 degrees) and calm winds, the first brace was off timely. Molly can muster only a stop to flush during her hour, at 55. Dolby suffers a non-productive, at 42, soft on both ends, and goes prematurely with her only bird, at 50, and is up.

**Brace #2: (9:15 a.m.)**

**Ben- Vater**

**Reno- Gorden Hansen**

At 10, Ben gives chase to deer, is rounded up by Diane; Reno follows; Diane returns in due course with both. At 12, Ben is absent again, likely still intent on deer; Diane calls for the tracker but reconsiders in the nick of time as he reappears. At 15, he has a suspicious looking stop to flush but is left down given that it's early in the stake. At 24, Reno points, backed by Ben. As Gorden is still catching up, Jack Potter comes forward from the gallery, ably handling Reno through the flush and shot, ably assisted by your humble scribe acting as a very poor substitute for Gorden's scout, Shirley! Diane calls point, at 38, but waves it off when Ben loosens and moves; she raises her cap moments later, dismounts but comes up empty on the flushing attempt

**Brace #3: (10:25 a.m.)**

**Luna- Vater**

**River- Steve Reynolds**

**(Previously reported above.)**

**Brace #4: (1:05 p.m.)**

**Hans- Hansen**

**Hombre- Reynolds**

Hans is particularly troubled by armadillo, encountering his second, at 10. Gordy hooks him, at 20, when his charge's mind continues to be on armadillos this day. At 58, Hombre has his sole find, in order.

**Brace #5: (2:15 p.m.)**

**Rocket- A- Chuck Cooper**

**Leyna- Mike Mullineaux**

At 26, Leyna points, with style, but Mike moves her on upon realizing that she's on an armadillo. At 30, he retires her as she, too, appears to have fallen victim to the dreaded armadillo. Though Rocket concludes the hour birdless, he has made numerous long, bold, independent casts and has clearly impressed the judges who seem as disappointed as Chuck.

**Brace #6: (3:30 p.m.)**

**Getty- Reynolds**

**Caymus- Vater**

At 12, Caymus scores a stop to flush and Getty is whoaed to back.

At 28, Diane retires Caymus for roading out a bird. Getty is found standing, at 28; she is relocated after loosing style but the relocation does not yield a bird. Near the end of the hour, at 59, Steve calls point, and, though style is lacking, the flush and shot are in order.

**Brace #7: (Day 2- 8:05 a.m.)**

**Mongo- Vater**

**Bleu (A)- Mullineux**

(Previously reported above.)

**Brace #8: (9:20 a.m.)**

**Zoom- Hidalgo**

**Pi- Vater**

Zoom is running nicely at 12; she stops then appears to self-release and stops again but is ordered up after the flush and shot for blinking the point.

At 22, Pi points a covey, moves up some, tail ticking, but is steady through the flush and shot. Though she continues to run well, at 36, when she points again with tail ticking, Diane elects to pick up, confident that these judges are looking for more style than Pi can deliver today.

**Brace#9: (10:05 a.m.)**

**Blitz- Reynolds**

**Ruby- Vater**

(Previously reported above.)

**Brace #10: (1:05 p.m.)**

**LZ- Reynolds**

**Ali- Cooper**

**This brace ends early when LZ is up for roading a bird before flush and Chuck chooses to retire Ali, at 30, as she is not performing to his expectations.**

**Brace #11 (1:40 p.m., Sunday)**

**Bo- Vater**

**Chevy- Nikolaus Scharpf**

**Chevy points at 10 but Nikolaus curiously declares a non-productive without a relocation attempt. At 11, Bo points but roads birds out before flush and is up. Chevy points again at 18 but loosens up with his head as Nikolaus dismounts and Nikolaus takes a second NP.**

**Brace #12: (2:45 p.m.)**

**Blue- B- Hidalgo**

**Cesty- Vater**

**Cesty points a single, in order, at 48. A minute later, Blue points and, after an extensive unsuccessful flushing attempt, is relocated but comes up empty. At 55, Cesty points, relocates, and bird is produced, in order.**

**Brace #13 (8:15 a.m., Monday, Day 3)**

**Lily- Mullineux**

**Sam- Vater**

**At 15, demonstrating singular sportsmanship, Diane collars and retires her charge when she suspects his declination to honor. Lily points at tree island 100 yards past oil well and across road; flush and shot in order. At 27, a regal buck is sighted on course. Though Lily has additional birdwork, at 39, 45 and 48, in order, she is not running much this day.**

**Brace #14 (9:20 a.m.)**

**Chap- Vater**

**Rogue- Tim Carwile**

**Dogs have initial bird contact at 15 with a divided find, in order, but both are somewhat loose. Rogue is really rolling, bigger than is his usual bent; he stops hard, at 35, near Sealy's Tree; Tim relocates him after brief unsuccessful attempt to produce birds; Rogue moves about ten yards and sticks a covey caught feeding in the open; flush and shot in order but tail is still ticking. At 38, Diane hooks Chap, not pleasing.**

**Though he has mannerly stops to flush at 40 and 45, Rogue is still uncharacteristically loose, perhaps explained by the high winds. While both judges comment enthusiastically about his ground speed and independent application on course, his uncharacteristic lack of style on his game will keep him from the callbacks.**

**Brace #15 (10:30 a.m.)**

**Diesel- Anne Tyson**

**Sirius- Joe Fingerlin**

**At thirty seconds into the brace, as both dogs pause to water the same bush, a bird lifts; then, another. The judges treat the incident as "no event", a positive and wise call. Sirius has a mannerly covey find, at 5, but Joe ropes him at 12 when he fails to honor his bracedmate, somewhat understandable as Diesel points, takes steps and self-relocates. Diesel points again at 17 but takes another step on the flush and shot. At 35 he points, in order, this time showing more confidence and better style.**

**Placements:**

- 1) **FC Gould's Farwest Lunatic (NFC/FC Briar Meadow Buck x NAFC/FC/AFC Gould's Just Call Me TJ) B: David and Cathy Gould O: Ross and Michele Nott H: Diane Vater**
- 2) **NFC/DC Sirius Mostly Mongo JH, NRD, VX (NFC/FC/AFC Westend's Lil Sage Rider x DC Sirius Really Rosie) B/O: Helene and Dick Moore H: Diane Vater**
- 3) **Axel's Bleu Bayou of Reiteralm (CH Axel Reiteralm of Weimar's Joy x Reiteralm N Snakebreaks Bonnie) B: Virginia Alexander O: Stephanie Tsantes H: Mike Mullineux**
- 4) **Waybac's Ahwawego (FC Jax's Waybac Tyler x Grau Geist's Remember the Alamo) B/O: Wayne and Beverly Cowgill H: Diane Vater**