

Working Gundogs National Championship Field Trials

by Barry Oliver, Working Gundogs National Discipline Chairman

This year, the Working Gundogs discipline conducted two Pointer & Setter National Championship events, a Closed Season event (no game being shot) in Western Australia and an Open Season event in Victoria.

Pointer & Setter National Championship Field Trial (Closed Season)

The Inaugural Western Australian Pointer & Setter National Field Trial (Closed Season) was held in the Meckering area, east of Perth. The judge for this prestigious event was the well-known Victorian pointer and setter personality, Bill Cross. The assistant judge was Denis Everard. The event was organised by the Working Gundog Association of WA (Inc), the SSAA's Gundog group in the west. Sponsorship for the event came from the SSAA National, SSAA WA and Rosendorff Jewellers, Perth.

The National was one event in a long weekend of four Closed Season trials, which commenced on Friday and went through to the following Monday. It was a tough program for bird dogs who had to



National Pointer & Setter Closed Season field trial place-getters. From left, Henry Foster with winner Koram Kris at Innistona (Imp Ire) Major, judge Bill Cross and Alan Willey with runner-up Field Champion Closed Season Ywurrie Rani (Abbey).

show great endurance to compete consistently over such a program. Dogs cover many kilometres at top speed in each heat and some dogs ran up to three heats each day, often in quite warm conditions, which is no easy task. The National event was the third in a series of four trials.

The form dog of the program was the pointer dog Koram Kris at Innistona (Imp Ire) Major owned and handled by Henry Foster. Major had left his opposition far behind in the previous two events and was looking unbeatable. Field trialling commenced in the 1850s and the basic requirements have remained unaltered over the past 150 years - winning dogs should show style, dominant game-finding ability, speed and good field manners. Major's performance on the day of the National left no-one in doubt that he had met these criteria and by late in the day, when there were only two compulsory retrieves left to perform, he made no mistake - he was a clear winner on the day.

Runner-up was the local dog, Alan Willey's pointer bitch Ywurrie Rani (Abbey), a very stylish dog who showed great endeavour over the four days of trialling. Lacking only the number of finds produced by Major, Abbey was a worthy second place-getter. No third place was awarded. Over the week-end, both Major and Abbey were awarded their WGAA Field Champion Closed Season titles.

Pointer & Setter National Championship Field Trial

The 2008 SSAA WGAA National was a hard-fought affair marked by freezing weather but plentiful game. The event was conducted in Victoria's Western District and the judge once again was Bill Cross. The assistant judge was Robin Gaskin from New Zealand.



National Pointer & Setter Field Trial place-getters. From top left, New Zealand judge Robyn Gaskin and judge Bill Cross. From bottom left, Barry Oliver with runner-up Wingfield Dame (Imp NZ) and Denis and Anne Everard with Field Champion and Field Trial Champion winner Russetray Tullamore.

Thin stubble and vast native grass patches made up the venue for 14 of the country's best pointers and setters to fight it out.

At the end of round one, six dogs were brought back - Vince Pino's Diesel, Henry Foster's Major, Barry Oliver's Jaeger and Striker, Taner Ozsehitoglu's Diesel and Denis Everard's Tara. Four dogs proceeded into the third round - Striker vs Major and Tara vs Jaeger and as the heats progressed, it was left to Tara and Jaeger to vie for trial honours. An extremely long final heat saw multiple finds, hard-running birds and good productions. At around 4pm, a halt was called with Irish Setter Tara being given the

nod over Pointer Jaeger.

This was a great event, characterised by some excellent dog work and a phenomenal number of finds. The standard of all dogs was high and judgement was accordingly very difficult on occasions.

Generous funding was again provided by the SSAA for this event, a sign of the Association's ongoing commitment to field sports in this country. Many thanks to those who put together the necessary infrastructure for this major event and especially the landowners who generously make available their properties upon which we are able to run our dogs. ●