



Royal Kennel Club



Field Trials Newsletter

Spring 2026

The International Gundog League Any Variety Retriever Championship report

By James Bailey

The phrase *'the best of the best'* has become synonymous with the International Gundog League's Retriever Championship since Graham Cox's 2013 study into the history of Championships employed the phrase as its title. It is a phrase particularly befitting of the 2025 IGL Retriever Championship, as anyone who witnessed the three days will attest.

Day One: the rains came

Monday 24 November 2025 dawned brightly in Lauder, Scotland, although rain was not far away. As everyone gathered to be welcomed by Mary Jane Opie, the IGL's Field Trial Secretary and Chief Steward for the Championship, there was a hubbub of excitement in the air. This was the third time that Wilson Young Snr and Wilson Young Jnr and their Eskdale

Shooting Services had hosted the Championship in the stunning Berwickshire countryside, the previous times in 2010 (in conjunction with other estates) and 2013.

Of the 59 qualified dogs, 55 started the Championship stake. Judges Mark Demaine and Terry Prentice were paired on the right. Mike Tallamy and John Williamson were paired on the left.

Game was plentiful and the mastery of Head Keeper, Adam Liddle, produced a steady flow. A valley more used to driven shooting presented spectacular pheasants and partridges, which were matched by some epic shooting from the eight guns. For the most part the judges sent for retrieves on their own side of the line in the first and second rounds, each consisting of one retrieve. The dogs and handlers invariably completed their allotted tasks with minimal concern, although there were inevitable casualties, unfortunately including the defending champion Tucker Munday's FTCh *Rustler Master*.



Fraser Forbes sending FTCh Carnochway Red Rooster
©Russell Cano of Arc Photography

Continued on page 2

A round-up from the editor

Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of the Field Trials Newsletter!

We hope that competitors, judges, and societies had a successful 2025/26 season. As we gear up for the upcoming season, this edition reflects on the Royal Kennel Club trials and championships that took place during the 2025/26 season.

In addition to these comprehensive reports, you'll also find our regular updates and features for judges and societies.

If you have any questions relating to the Royal Kennel Club's field trials or Championships, please contact Kate Broers at the following email address – ft.secretary@royalkennelclub.com

If you have any queries relating to your society or licences, please email your Regional Support Advisor directly or RSN@royalkennelclub.com

For more information on the RSN team please go to **Regional Support Network | The Royal Kennel Club**

If you have any queries relating to field trial regulations or judges etc, please email the team at gundogs@royalkennelclub.com

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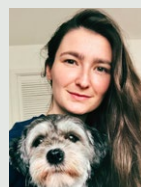


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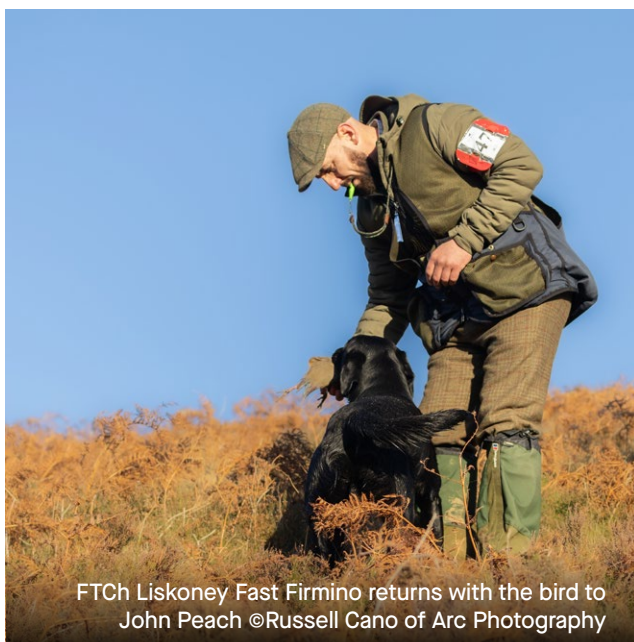
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Continued from page 1



FTCh Liskoney Fast Firmino returns with the bird to John Peach ©Russell Cano of Arc Photography

By mid-morning the rain had started, and save for a few all too short breaks, it continued incessantly. By lunchtime the line had moved not more than a few hundred yards along the steep bracken, heather and white grass clad hillside and the first round was almost complete. As the line moved past a conifer wood the other side of the valley came into play. Lee Hartis with *FTCh Kentwone Columbine of Leacaz* laid down an early marker in their contention for the title by achieving a three-dog eye wipe in the second round. Being sent from the valley bottom, across the by then fast-flowing burn, over a fence and a good way up the far hill *Columbine* set the pace for similar retrieves to come over the rest of the trial.

With the temperature dropping and the rain persisting, everyone made their way off the hillside shortly after 3pm. 39 dogs were required for the second day.

Day Two: Sunshine and eyewipes

The second day was in complete contrast to the previous day; glorious sunshine, with a breeze and a continuing chill in the air.

Everyone made their way up the valley, and the line formed where the previous day had finished. With the line stretched up both sides of the valley, testing retrieves were to be the order of day.

An early woodcock shot on the right was offered to the left. Three dogs were tried without success. Simon Dixon with *FTCh Idawood Laser of Dawsonlee*, running in his first IGL Retriever Championship (although, Simon is no stranger to championships, being an accomplished spaniel handler), made a swift job picking the woodcock out of sight.

Another first-time qualifier, Becki Thistle with *FTCh Cardueae Yealands*, picked up the mantle laid down by Hartis and *Columbine* the previous afternoon with a tidy retrieve on a pheasant which dropped into the bracken a long way behind the line, over the burn and the fence.

As the line made its way along the hillside Kirsty Cousins' *FTCh Gunnerspeg Drummer* showed exemplary marking ability on a pheasant in the middle of the hill. The line hadn't moved far when another pheasant flushed, which saw Hartis' *Columbine* match *Drummer's* precision marking.

A partridge across the burn and fence unfortunately defeated first time qualifier Emma Champion with *Bellsbank Shooting Star of Berlastone* and Orin Imgram's *FTCh Riverview Farm Dr. Pepper* in the experienced hands of Paul Dukes. Mike Tallamy and John Williamson brought their dogs up the hill from the left, sending Kirsty Cousins and *Drummer*, who picked in smart fashion.

Soon after Simon Capstick with *FTCh Gunnerspeg Apollo* laid down a solid marker in his campaign with two eye wipes. Firstly, over Nathan Laffy's golden retriever *FTCh Think Twice Zero to Hero* (which had qualified for a sixth consecutive year) and Reuben Mort's *FTCh Flethcingly Lyon*. And, secondly, over the Duke of Buccleuch's *Chatsworth Boots of Buccleuch*, handled by David Lisset.

John Peach with *IRFTCh FTCh Liskoney Fast Firmino* completed their third round before a dramatic climax to the second day unfolded. Two partridges remained down on the far hill, once again over the burn and the fence. Ellena Nunnelley with *FTCh Swiftlands Briar*, Vince Thorby with *Hullabaloo Thunder of Thorchase*, Declan Boyle with *FTCh IRFTCh Knockyclovaun Ralph*, Nathan Laffy with *FTCh Spireview Kodi at Grovery* (his second dog in the stake) and Iona Blackhall with *Ythanvale Tswana of Strathieburn* were all tried before Leigh Jackson with *FTCh Blackgrass Dougal* picked the partridge with relative ease and swiftness to significant applause from the gallery. John Halstead with the Duchess of Devonshire's *FTCh Cheesecake Artillery of Chatsworth* was sent for the second partridge, which was a further 40yds or so up the hill. *Cheesecake* provided a masterclass to take the burn, the fence and most of the far hill in one cast. After only a few adjustments, he picked the partridge at what must have been one of the furthest distances of the Championship, returning to further applause from the gallery.

As the judges reorganised the line, another covey of partridge tore down the valley. One was dropped from the covey, diving into the reeds in the bottom. Adam Holmes with *FTCh Riverrush Flow*, Billy Lundy with *Razzle Dazzle Billy*, and Jackson with *Dougal* were tried before Halsted and *Cheesecake*. This time, *Cheesecake* put on a masterclass

of a different sort: a mesmerising display of hunting, investigating what seemed to be every inch of every tussock. If *Cheesecake* left the area, within five strides he had put himself back into it without any input from the handler. It was in total disbelief that everyone watched the judges find the partridge in the area. The consensus was that the partridge must have tucked itself into the tussocks and scent must have been near to non-existent in the valley bottom, which had been in shade for well over an hour and was noticeably colder than up on the hill.

As everyone made their way off the hill at 3pm, the judges confirmed 14 dogs were required for the third day.



David Logan sends *FTCh Craigmaddie Mufasa of Bishopbrae* ©Russell Cano of Arc Photography

Day Three: Red Rooster rises

A sense of anticipation hung heavy on the third morning. By this stage the remaining competitors had battled through half of the customary number of retrieves required to complete the Championship. Yet, for each there was still much work to be done.

Of the 14 remaining competitors, two were first-time qualifiers to the Retriever Championship: Mark Morton with *Thankali Tom Jones* and Simon Dixon with *Laser*. The youngest dog in the stake, Simon Capstick's *FTCh Gunnerspeg Gambler* at two years and eight months old, was also still in contention. Quite remarkably, three of the remaining fourteen competitors were of Simon's breeding – his own *Apollo* and *Gambler*, and Kirsty Cousins' *Drummer*. Judge Mark Demain had also qualified *Gunnerspeg Excalibur of Claytonfell* for the Championship but was of course unable to take the run.

As all made their way up the valley to once again line out where the previous day had concluded, an ashen sky replaced the bright dawn and the temperature noticeably dipped. The game presented steadily as it had done on the previous two days.

Robin Drysdale with *FTCh Flagsdale Sweep* had a tidy find over the burn, over the fence and halfway up the opposing hillside in the bracken. Notable work in the fourth round came from Fraser Forbes and *FTCh*

Carnochway Red Rooster on a wounded partridge landing over the brow of the hill out of sight. *Rooster* was quickly to the fall and able to locate the partridge a significant way down the slope before it had a chance to completely abscond. *Rooster's* work was a display of game finding to be expected at the highest level, although unsighted from the gallery of spectators.

Soon after, Kirsty Cousins and *Drummer* were similarly presented with a wounded partridge landing over the brow and successfully made swift work of it. Cousin and *Drummer* asserted themselves further with a tidy find over the burn and fence behind Oliver Bell's *FTCh Eelburn Flavius*, which drew applause from the gallery.



Lee Hartis sends FTCh Kentwone Columbine of Leacaz
©Russell Cano of Arc Photography

Twelve dogs were required for the fifth round of one retrieve. The beaters continued to send coveys of fast flying partridge over the guns, who maintained their sterling marksmanship to provide plentiful challenging retrieves. Further casualties in the fifth round included Morton's Tom Jones due to an eye wipe by Laura Hill's *FTCh Jarailstar Hogan of Stauntonvale*, John Halsted's own *FTCh Rowpainter Othello* due to an eye wipe by David Logan's *FTCh Craigmaddie Mufasa of Bishopbrae*, and Cousins with *Drummer* due to an eye wipe by Peach's *Fast Firmino*. Forbes' *Rooster* received further applause from the gallery in recognition of yet another first-class piece of work over the burn.

With eight dogs left in the stake, the judges lined up the remaining competitors for a final drive and, with a dozen or so partridges dropped, the judges sent each remaining dog for one last retrieve, before declaring the Championship over at around 1:15pm.

The winning partnership – Fraser Forbes with *FTCh Carnochway Red Rooster* – demonstrated over the three days all the qualities and characteristics to be expected of a Retriever trained to the highest of standards. *Rooster's* work was executed with minimal fuss. He negotiated fences, walls and the burn without any hesitation. His handling and control were crisp and precise, but – when necessary – *Rooster* took over and natural game finding ability prevailed. The roar of approval from the crowd when *Rooster* was announced as the 2025 Retriever Champion was testament to them having run a brilliant Championship.



1st place to FTCh Carnochway Red Rooster
owned and handled by Fraser Forbes
©Russell Cano of Arc Photography

Awards

1st place - FTCh Carnochway Red Rooster owned and handled by Mr Fraser Forbes. Awarded as winner: The Retriever Trials Championship Challenge Cup, The Lady Auckland Memorial Salver, The Hiwood Challenge Trophy and the IGL President's Trophy. Also awarded The Lorna Countess Howe Memorial Trophy for the best dog entered by an owner resident in Scotland. Fraser Forbes also presented with The Kingsford-Lethbridge Trophy as Breeder of the Winner.

2nd place - FTCh Kentwone Columbine of Leacaz owned and handled by Lee Hartis awarded The FTCh Ulstaire Style Challenge Trophy.

3rd place - FTCh Gunnerspeg Apollo owned and handled by Simon Capstick awarded The Willowyck Trophy.

4th place - FTCh Craigmaddie Mufasa of Bishopbrae owned and handled by David Logan

Diplomas of Merit were awarded as follows:

FTCh Flagsdale Sweep

owned and handled by Robin Drysdale

FTCh Jarailstar Hogan of Stauntonvale

owned and handled by Laura Hill

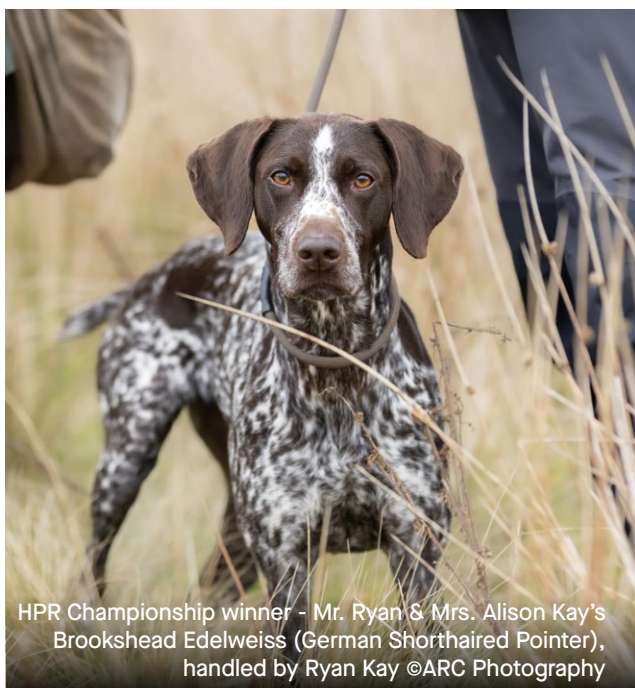
FTCh IRFTCh Liskoney Fast Firmino

owned and handled by John Peach

The Royal Kennel Club Hunt, Point & Retrieve Championship report

By Kate Broers

The Royal Kennel Club Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) Championship was held at The Royal Kennel Club's Emblehope and Burngrange Estate in Northumberland on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 November 2025. The 23rd Championship was sponsored by Skinner's Field & Trial, The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and Sporting Saint Gundog Equipment Suppliers. The Royal Kennel Club is most grateful for their generous support.



HPR Championship winner - Mr. Ryan & Mrs. Alison Kay's
Brookshead Edelweiss (German Shorthaired Pointer),
handled by Ryan Kay ©ARC Photography

Renowned as excellent HPR hunting ground, it is the second time the HPR Championship has been held at this lovely northern estate. The Royal Kennel Club is indebted to Head Keeper Raymond Holt for his time and effort in preparing the ground and game.

Day One

The first day of the Championship began overcast but thankfully drier than forecast, as the handlers and owners gathered in the Alan Rountree Cabin for the morning briefing. The excitement was evident among the gathered 25 competitors, spectators and officials. Setting off on foot to the starting point, the cold northeast wind immediately dictated the hunting direction for dog number one running under judges Peter Howard and Mark Spearing.

Casting off towards the farmhouse, the Championship pressure unfortunately proved too much for FTCh Gilleyfield Blossom (German Wirehaired Pointer), owned and handled by Louise Holmes and their run was over swiftly, bringing in dog two for a retrieve straight at the start of its run. Islasbraw Ash, owned and handled by Darryl Elliot, made a neat retrieve of the partridge and was then cast off to begin hunting. This stylish German Shorthaired Pointer worked its beat well, eventually pointing a cock pheasant and completed its first run.

The first of several German Longhaired Pointers, Cadanbyrig Marin, owned and handled by Frances Smart was next to run. Coming on point after several casts, with its beautifully feathered tail indicating the presence of game, a cock pheasant was flushed on command and shot to the left side of the beat but sadly, the temptation and Championship pressure again proved too much and the dog could not resist the fall.

Next up, Howard Kirby's GWP, Tickencote Body and Soul of Mullenscote came on point in white grass and rushes; the dog relocated several times before finally holding the bird which had been seen moving ahead. The bird was flushed and shot but hit the ground running; the dog was able to take a line on the wounded bird from the fall site and completed its run with the retrieve. Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Zoltarous Lupin, owned and handled by Zoë Dicker, began its run covering a wide

beat; drawn on scent and moving positively, the dog indicated and was joined by the handler, judge and two guns. Unfortunately, the indication was unproductive, and the dog was picked up.

The second of four German Longhairs to run was Ir FTCh Caldera Ballerina owned and handled by Sean O'Carolan. Taking elegant wide swathes of ground in its stride on a cheek wind, this dog displayed a free flowing systematic hunting pattern, characteristic of the breed. When the dog came on point after relocating several times over some distance, it eventually produced a cock pheasant which was flushed on command and shot to the left of the dog. Unfortunately, the Longhair was unable to locate the strong running pheasant and after several attempts the dog was picked up so that the next competitor could try for the retrieve. Two further dogs attempted to make the retrieve and neither the dogs nor judges were able to find the bird, leaving all dogs tried still in the competition.

Moving across the track to a bracken paddock just above the farm, the gun line formed for Emily Hinchliffe's FTCh Goosepoint Gambler; part way through its run, the dog indicated in front just as a covey of around 20 partridge lifted ahead. One red leg was shot at some distance and with the GSP steady to fall, the dog was sent to make the retrieve. Unable to locate the bird at the fall site the dog was picked up as the judges called for next dog, Jayne Herbert's Fennslane Guiding Star. This dog made a lovely job of collecting the game, neatly eye wiping the previous competitor but before delivering to hand, Fennslane Guiding Star put the bird down and unfortunately, both dogs were put out of the Championship.



Mrs J Herbert & Fennslane Guiding Star (German Wirehaired Pointer) are given a mark by the judges
©ARC Photography

The first of Jim Bird's two qualified German Shorthaired Pointers, FTCh Sutchest Isla hunted the ground with style, indicating a bird which was flushed and shot, the dog made a swift job of marking and retrieving the bird to hand before it could escape into the woods. After swapping dogs at the end of his run, Jim was straight back in with Sutchest Schwartz Heidi. This powerful black dog covered the ground showing lots of drive and completed her first round with a blank run.

Running next was defending Champion, FTCh Ardgroom Artemis (German Wirehaired Pointer), handled once again by owner Derek O'Connor. As the gun line pulled round, the dog hunted, working a bird across the wind which lifted ahead but was not shot, completing its run. Richard Bows' Tickencote Get Away hunted an area bordering the wind-blow at the edge of woodland, indicating game in the tree roots. When a hen lifted it was swiftly followed by a cock bird which was shot and fell among the cliff-like toppled trees. The German Wirehaired Pointer wasn't able to find the bird and judges Peter Howard and Mark Spearing brought in the next competitor Mr & Mrs Froome's Vizellven Eks Wizard. This handsome Hungarian Vizsla was handled to the fall site by Jason Froome but sadly was also unable to make the retrieve of the bird which was successfully picked by the judges.

As the gun line moved away from the woodland and onto white moor-grass, Francis Briley's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla, Zoldmali Irka Firka at Canalgame was cast off to hunt on dense tufted tussocks. The dog worked a back wind, pointing a bird tucked into the cover which was flushed on command and shot. The Vizsla was sent to the fall site and made a great job of taking a line, to successfully pick the lively hen bird and deliver to hand.

With mild winter sunshine making a break through the cloud, Mr & Mrs Parr's FTCh Bonario Fagiana was next to take her place under the judges. The first ever Bracco Italiano field trial champion, Bonario Fagiana demonstrated her hunting ability, powerful, stylish and a lovely example of this ancient breed, she covered the white moorland with ease. The dog hunted with great passion but sadly, pulled ahead a little too far, resulting in her run being over.

Kieran Fox's Gramhey Lucky Star started her run on new ground, hunting on green grassland. When a hen bird was pointed and shot over a wall, the dog was eager to retrieve and delivered to hand. Hunting on and finding a covey of partridge, when a bird was shot it proved too tempting for the German Shorthaired Pointer. The judges brought the dog next in line to make the retrieve and Sue Harris's Goldstar Miss Teeq from Szajani, handled by Rory Major, made a clean job of the retrieve. With an icy rain shower beginning to fall, the Hungarian Vizsla continued its run and covered its beat well, showing off her stylish action and the handler making a great job of remaining in contact with the dog despite the high rush cover, to complete its run.

Lee Loveridge's handsome black German Shorthaired Pointer, Sutchest Schwartz Hugo came on point seconds after being cast off but struggled to complete the subsequent retrieve bringing the partnership's competition to a close.

The third of the German Longhaired Pointers to run under the judges was Annie Jones' FTCh Cadanbyrig Maestral who hunted well and pointed a covey of partridge which were unfortunately too distant for the guns. Hunting on, the dog came on staunch point and being steady to both flush and shot, the dog was sent for the bird but unfortunately its retrieve was not perfect, ending this pair's Championship hopes.

Mr R & Mrs A Kay's Brookhead Edelweiss had a beat of white grass; handled by Ryan Kay, the dog flushed a partridge which was brought down by the furthest gun on the left. The dog was efficiently handled to the fall site some distance away and whilst it made repeated attempts to locate the bird in the cover, it was unsuccessful. The

judges searched for the bird but were equally unable to find the partridge.



HPR Championship judges - Mark Spearing and Peter Howard ©ARC Photography

Jordan McCooe's Annagora Ballyoran Belle was cast off, heading down the paddock to the beck which was full from the week's rainfall and the dog was steady to a flushed bird shot at over wire fencing completing the German Shorthaired Pointer's run. Ray Behan's Ballyowen Belle, German Longhaired Pointer, came on point shortly after casting off but not long into its run was picked up by the handler.

As the day drew on, the weather turned icy cold, competitors and gallery alike, tightly wrapping their coats and hats around them as Luise Janniche's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla, Venatordream Michigan, hunted down the field heading towards the rushing river at the bottom of the valley. The dog flushed a bird and handler and dog working in harmony, doing a lovely job of retrieving the bird from the bracken some distance away.

As the competitors crossed the bridge, first time Championship contender Nick Lambert and Theodore Bear worked up a steep bracken bank with the Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla nosing a hen bird from out of the cover. The bird was shot and the dog sent for the retrieve out of sight of the handler, being trusted to return with the bird, very much to the handler's relief!

The final dog of the day FTCh Beechwolf Tonka, owned and handled Rory Major, the handsome German Wirehaired Pointer bitch began its run on the bracken bank, hunting systematically up the bank, above the waiting gallery. Working the cover methodically it indicated the presence of game. A pheasant was flushed and nicely shot by the gun giving Tonka the opportunity of a retrieve to hand and bringing the first day of the Championship to a close.

Day Two

Judges Peter Howard and Mark Spearing brought ten dogs through to day two of the Championship, with handlers and dogs all keen to get the day underway. Head Keeper Raymond Holt had assessed the conditions, and everyone moved off in vehicles to the top of the Estate.

With slightly warmer weather, bringing with it better scenting conditions for these hard hunting dogs, Darryl Elliot and his stylish German Shorthaired Pointer Islasbraw Ash was the first to be assessed by the judges. Working a cheek wind to flush out a cock pheasant buried in brash cover, the bird was shot and retrieved tenderly by the dog, completing its second run.

The wind was swirling when Howard Kirby and Tickencote Body and Soul of Mullenscote worked a backwind hunting downhill. The pattern was perhaps not what the handler might have wished for, but the pair covered their beat. Sadly, the dog was not able to produce a bird for the guns, and the judges decided their run was complete.

FTCh Sutchest Isla, owned and handled by Jim Bird achieved a point and a flush on a cock pheasant as the line moved back up the hill and crossed the track onto new ground. This solid liver bitch was asked to make her retrieve over a fence and delivered to hand.

The guns and judges lining out once more, Francis Briley and Zoldmali Irka Firka at Canalgame hunted their way towards a dry stone wall, hoping for a tightly sat pheasant sheltering from the weather. The dog kept to his hunting pattern but disappointingly the partnership was out of luck and there was no bird to be found before they reached the wall which signalled the end of their run. The judges and gallery made their way past the wall and next competitor, Sue Harris's HV Goldstar Miss Teeq from Szajani worked a bracken gully, by handler Rory Major. The pheasants were using the bracken as cover and a number lifted around and ahead of the dog giving the gallery an impressive view of the Vizsla remaining steady to flush as each bird lifted. With the dog and handler moving out of the cover towards the hilltop, a bird was produced, completing the partnership's run.

Ryan Kay and Brookhead Edelweiss worked a varying cheek wind as the line continued up the white grass paddock. Scenting conditions were difficult with the cold North Easterly cheek wind and birds were jumpy. The dog did a good job of remaining in contact with game and the bitch was able to point and produce a pheasant which was not shot.

and shot over the fence, falling down a steep bank. The German Shorthaired Pointer retrieved the bird, completing her second run.

Next in, was Venatordream Michigan, owned and handled by Luise Janniche. The Wirehaired Vizsla blended with the cover, her russet coat melding perfectly with the texture of the moorland grass in the weak sunlight. She came very smartly on point, right in front of the watching gallery and produced a cock pheasant which was shot by the left hand guns. The dog was sent for the retrieve which it picked swiftly but unfortunately readjusted too many times and brought their Championship sadly to a close. The gallery all agreed that they had witnessed a lovely piece of work, which was later awarded gun's choice; a beautiful new trophy donated by the family of the late Pip Williams.

The line moved to fresh ground before Nick Lambert and Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Theodore Bear were called in to hunt, the gallery marching single file like Fell sheep down the gully over the beck and up a bracken and heather covered hillside. The dog produced a pair of cock pheasants, but the temptation was too great, and in a moment, their run was over.

Rory Major and FTCh Beechwolf Tonka worked a headwind, taking scent on birds ahead, the pair took the right hand guns and a judge across the hill deep into the beat, flushing a cock pheasant some distance away from the watching gallery. The bird took a single barrel and despite her best efforts, the dog could not locate the fallen bird. The judges were also unable to find the bird.

At the end of the second round the judges had two dogs which had not yet filled their cards. Sue Harris's Goldstar Miss Teeq from Szajani was brought into line and came quickly on point. The Vizsla flushed on command and was sent for the retrieve which was tidily delivered to handler Rory Major. The final dog of the Championship to run was Brookhead Edelweiss, owned by Mr R & Mrs A. Kay. This bitch was quick to come on point on a cock pheasant, which she produced off her nose and smartly retrieved and presented to her handler Ryan Kay, bringing the Championship to a close.



Mr N Lambert's Theodore Bear
(Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla) ©ARC Photography

Jordan McCooe's German Shorthaired Pointer Annagora Ballyoran Belle skilfully nosed a woodcock out of the bracken on her beat but unfortunately, the bird was too swift for the gun team. The dog moved quickly on and pointed a hen pheasant which this time was well taken



Mr. Ryan & Mrs. Alison Kay with HPR Championship winner Brookhead Edelweiss (German Shorthaired Pointer), handled by Ryan Kay ©ARC Photography

Awards

The Championship was a great success, and The Royal Kennel Club would like to express its thanks to all those who involved in the preparation of the event, in particular sponsors; Skinner's, BASC and Sporting Saint. Head Keeper Raymond Holt read the weather conditions beautifully and ensured an even playing field for every competitor. The gun team shot well over the two days, and our grateful thanks must go to these experienced guns who have taken the time to come and shoot over these fabulous dogs.

Judges Peter Howard and Mark Spearing managed the two days with experienced patience, understanding and skill.

Following the Championship judge Peter Howard stated:

"At the conclusion of the Championship both Mark and I were in total agreement which dog was in the top spot and were happy to award a full list of prizes and two Diplomas of Merit.

In terms of ground treatment, the winning dog used the wind covering plenty of ground with ease, easy on the eye, and one with the quietest of handlers and a pleasure to watch. She pointed game on each of her runs and was steady to shot and fall. A very pleasing all round performance between handler and dog.

I would like to thank my co judge Mark Spearing, all those that organised the event, the guns for shooting so well and lastly for the competitors for their sportsmanship, prompt on call into line and co-operation with the red flag. A very memorable two days."

Championship winner Ryan Kay said "Every trialler aspires to win a Championship, and just to compete at one is a huge achievement. Behind every competitor and their dog, there's a journey which has involved lots of hard work, highs, lows, and tests of resilience. But we all carry on because when it happens, nothing beats the feeling of winning. I know I have a slightly different handling approach to the norm, but I feel it enhances the connection and partnership that Quince and I have, which helped us on the testing ground at Emblehope. I've been lucky enough to compete in the Cocker Spaniel Championships previously, but this was my first HPR Championship so our win may be a little audacious. However, because Quince is such a talented bitch, I felt that if she finished, she had the potential to be right up there. It was a fantastic event from start to finish and we couldn't be more delighted to have achieved the top award."

Congratulations to each and every Championship qualifier and many congratulations to all who feature in the awards.

The awards from the Championship were as follows:

1st place – Ryan & Alison Kay, Brookhead Edelweiss
German Shorthaired Pointer, handled by Ryan Kay

2nd place – Jordan McCooe, Annagora Ballyoran Belle
German Shorthaired Pointer

3rd place – Jim Bird, FTCh Sutchest Isla
German Shorthaired Pointer

4th place – Sue Harris, Goldstar Miss Teeq from Szajani
(Imp USA) Hungarian Vizsla, handled by Rory Major

Diplomas of Merit were awarded as follows:

Darryl Elliot, FTCh Islasbraw Ash
German Shorthaired Pointer

Rory Major, FTCh Beechwolf Tonka
German Wirehaired Pointer

Guns' Choice – Luise Janniche, Venatordream Michigan
Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla

The Royal Kennel Club Cocker Spaniel Championship report

By Kate Broers

The Royal Kennel Club ran the 95th Cocker Spaniel Championship on 29 & 30 December, the last Royal Kennel Club event to be held at the Emblehope & Burngrange Estate. It was lovely to hold the Championship in-between Christmas and the New Year, the event had a special festive atmosphere and everyone in attendance was in good spirits.



Cocker Spaniel Championship Winner
FTCh Spirocon Cassandra of Novaton, owned and handled by Susan Hunton. ©ARC Photography

This was the second time the Cocker Spaniel Championship has been held at this lovely Northumberland Estate, having been held previously in January 2024. The Royal Kennel Club is indebted to Head Keeper Raymond Holt for his time and effort in preparing the ground and game for these hard hunting little dogs.

The event was a great success, with 43 of the UK's best Cocker Spaniels competing across two days, expertly judged by judges: Richard Claydon, Justin Lascelles, Ben Randal and Andy Waterhouse. The Working Party had worked in conjunction with Raymond for all aspects of the organisation, and The RKC is extremely grateful to them for their time and commitment to the event.

The Championship was generously sponsored by Skinner's, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and Sporting Saint Gundog Equipment Supplies. We would also like to thank ACME whistles for providing an engraved whistle to the winning handler.



Cocker Spaniel Championship Judges - Mr Justin Lascelles (3480), Mr Ben Randal (2797), Mr Richard Claydon (2749), and Mr Andy Waterhouse (3543) ©ARC Photography

The Ground

The Championship running ground was a mixture of tussocky white grass, and rushy pasture, and the handlers were also treated to the rich bracken filled gullies that Emblehope is renowned for. There was plenty of game, and plenty of scent in the thick cover, but the dogs had to work hard for their finds. Those dogs that knew how to hunt for and locate the game were able to produce some impressive flushes. The gun team followed the dogs closely, working hard to keep their footing whilst doing their best to hit the birds lifting from the dogs.

The days were dry and still and the gallery needed to be very quiet to provide the best conditions for the dogs and birds. With the dogs predominantly working into a headwind down the valley sides the substantially sized gallery could be up close and watch the action of the dogs as they progressed through the Championship.

Emblehope Estate is a popular ground for trials, and by late December it is certainly a challenge to keep lively

birds to sit in cover but Raymond had fed the ground well and every dog got game on both runs. The judges were looking for dogs with a real partnership with their handler, keen to ensure that a dog wasn't hunting for itself but instead in conjunction with its handler, working the wind, flowing seamlessly together.

Working Cockers

The judges brought 28 dogs through to day two of the Championship, an impressive number of the field had been successful in their first runs. There was little to distinguish the top dogs as the event progressed, with some excellent dog work witnessed across the two days. The number of Diplomas of Merit awarded was testament to the standard, and a panel judges are not always easily pleased. All the dogs who featured in the awards had shown that they were able to quarter the ground systematically, not just following a pattern but working the wind and the ground available to them on their beat.



From L-R, Cocker Championship Guns - Kingsley Wood, Neil McIntosh, Headkeeper Raymond Holt, David Templar & Matt Nesbitt ©ARC Photography

The Championship was won by newcomer Susan Hunton and her four-year-old bitch, FTCh Spirocon Cassandra of Novaton, known at home as Bez, a fantastic achievement for the partnership. The dog had worked a back wind beat on her second run, showing that she was completely at one with her handler. A powerful and stylish hunter, on her second run she nosed out a cock bird sat tightly in the heather, which she marked, despite the thick vegetation, picking the large bird up cleanly, returning quickly and delivering tenderly to hand.

Second place went to Orrin Ingram's FTCh Riverview Farm Briar Alice, handled by Simon Dixon who had two tidy runs. On her second run the dog was notably handled from the fall of a dead bird onto an unmarked live pheasant. The runner was impressively picked by the Tennessee bred dog. She and her kennel mate FTCh Riverview Farm Briar Billie being the first American bred cockers to be made into UK Field Trial Champions.

Long standing Championship competitor FTCh Tiptopjack Firebug owned by Nigel Partiss and handled by Ian Openshaw gained a worthy third place, the eight year old bitch showing her quality. Fourth place was given to Fran Ardley and her handsome golden dog FTCh Tarncrag Razzamataz.

Winner's words - Susan Hunton & FTCh Spirocon Cassandra of Novaton

"After running my first field trial in 2023, it is still hard to comprehend having won the 95th Cocker Spaniel Championship just two years later.

I came into the sport almost by accident, having first run a working test before moving on to group lessons with Andy Parker and Paul Matthews. Their passion for the sport was infectious, and their encouragement led me to run my first trial. The following season, having seen how I had progressed training my own Cocker, "Roxy", Paul asked if I would like to try trialling one of his Cockers. That was when Spirocon Cassandra of Novaton came into my life, known at home as Bez.

The bond we have developed has been central to our success. The trust between us has grown beyond belief, and to say I have been on a steep learning curve would be an understatement. Bez has found her confidence, and everything seemed to click for us. Her natural hunting ability and desire to please have made training her an absolute pleasure.

2024 proved to be a fantastic year, gaining our Novice win in October, followed by an Open win at the end of November, and then completing the 94th Championship in January with a DOM. From the day I qualified for the 95th Championship, I said it was a lottery; every dog there had the ability to win. My aim was simply to go out and do our best. I certainly wasn't expecting to be announced the winner, and the moment truly took my breath away.

My deepest thanks go to my parents for encouraging me to give Bez a go, and to Paul for entrusting her to me, as well as for all his guidance and training along the way. A huge thank you also goes to my partner, Kieran; if it wasn't for trialling, we wouldn't have met. His support and organisation are second to none when it comes to preparing for trials.

It was a great honour to run at the final Championship at the Emblehope & Burngrange Estate. Thank you to Raymond and Anne, along with all the helpers, for ensuring both days ran smoothly and for making us feel so welcome. Thanks also to the judges, The Royal Kennel Club and to all who organised the Championship,

and to the other competitors, whose encouragement and sportsmanship make it a privilege to be part of this community.

It is such an honour to have won, and I very much look forward to running Bez in the 96th Championship."

The awards from the Championship were as follows:

1st place - FTCh Spirocon Cassandra of Novaton
owned and handled by Susan Hunton

2nd place - FTCh Riverview Farm Briar Alice
owned and handled by Simon Dixon

3rd place - FTCh Tiptopjack Firebug
owned by Nigel Partiss, handled by Ian Openshaw

4th place - FTCh Tarncrag Razzamataz
owned and handled by Fran Ardley

Diplomas of Merit were awarded to the following:

Int FTCh Sliabh Nugget
owned and handled by Louis Rice

Breckmarsh Faron
owned and handled by Lee Cooper

FTCh Kiltonbeck Salute
owned and handled by Steve Winspear

FTCh Popsheath Abbie
owned and handled by Anthony Myers

FTCh Woodash Beaufort Belle
owned and handled by Dave Rayner

Zetlandgun Kurt
owned and handled by Nathan Harkess

Churchview Atomic
owned and handled by Jon Bailey

Lambsway Black Jack
owned and handled by Tom Humphries

FTCh Kiltonbeck Nahar of Tomlinswood
owned and handled by James Elliott

FTCh Kentwone Passion Mulberry
owned and handled by Nathan Harkess

Mallowdale Pain
owned and handled by Ian Openshaw

FTCh Popsheath Art at Canalgame
owned by Francis Briley, handled by Ian Openshaw

FTCh Riverview Farm Briar Billie
owned by Ian Openshaw & Orrin Ingram,
handled by Ian Openshaw

FTCh Churchview Ember
owned and handled by Jon Bailey



The Royal Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel (Excluding Spaniel [Cocker]) Championship report

By Kate Broers

The 95th Championship, organised by the Royal Kennel Club for the sixth time, was held this year on the Invermark Estate, by gracious permission of The Earl of Dalhousie. The Championship was previously held on this stunning Scottish estate in 2023, and the event three

years ago had been a great success. Headkeeper Garry MacLennan is a highly experienced keeper, with a strong support team of beat keepers around him, and all involved in the organisation of the event were confident that we would be set for another successful Championship.



©ARC Photography

Unfortunately the heavy snow that was brought by Storm Goretta which hit Aberdeenshire just after the New Year meant the Championship had to be postponed and The RKC is extremely grateful to the Host and Keepers, Judges, hoteliers and competitors alike for their cooperation and flexibility in securing a new date. The Championship began on Wednesday 28 January 2026.

71 English Springers Spaniels had qualified for the event this year, a record number of qualifying dogs, showing the standard of the Open Stakes being held in the UK this season.

Competitors Raymond Wilson and David Templar were handling eight of the qualified dogs between them, and Eddie Scott handling three. A number of handlers had also qualified two dogs; Allan Rickerby, Jim Adamson, Simon Dixon, Mark Colclough and Alan Sankey, a truly impressive achievement from all these competitors.

Planning

The previous few weeks' heavy snow and following rainfall had left many estates across the country waterlogged and keepers were struggling to keep their birds where they were needed, but the Championship attendees need not have worried, the experienced team at Invermark had pulled out all the stops. Following the morning announcements, presented by Spaniel Championship Working Party Chairman Jon Kean, the officials and guns travelled up in convoy as the first 24 dogs of the Championship were ferried by the estate Pinzgauer vehicles. The level of organisation and forward planning from the Working Party and Estate was evident and meant the first bird of the day was shot at a timely 9.15am.

The judges were Ian Clarke and Ian Openshaw who took the odd numbers on the right and Richard Claydon and Wendy Openshaw who were positioned on the left-hand side. All the judges have a wealth of experience in the shooting field, with many years of trialling experience and judging knowledge between them. All the judges have competed in an AV Spaniel or Cocker Championship previously, and following the judges briefing on the Tuesday night, all were in agreement over what they were looking for.

Day One

The Invermark running ground for day one was classic hill ground, a mixture of white tussock grass and rashy reed beds, interspersed with small hardwood copses lined with bracken. The stunning snow topped Grampian mountains were a picture perfect setting and the heather covered banks of the mountains flowed down to the grassy lowland where the trial was situated. The conditions on the first day were much better than predicted, a light breeze which swirled around the undulating terrain, and provided one was well dressed, the dry day almost felt warm.

The variety of cover concealed a surprising amount of game considering the past weeks' weather conditions, and both feather and fur were sitting tight. The judges were looking for dogs that had outstanding ground treatment, and the open cover meant there was very little room for error for the dogs and handlers, although it provided excellent viewing for the gallery.



AV Spaniel (Ex Cocker) Championship judges from L-R Mr Richard Claydon (2749) Mrs Wendy Openshaw (2564) Mr Ian Clarke (3222) Mr Ian Openshaw (102) ©ARC Photography

Headkeeper Garry MacLennan held many responsibilities over the Championship, including being the Steward of the Beat and member of the gun team, the additional three guns were Ali Brown, Colin Scott and Neil Thomas. This gun team were highly praised over the event, praise which was well deserved as they hardly missed a shot and worked together as a team as well as any judge or handler could ask for.

The judges were looking for dogs who were efficient in their ground treatment and consistently turned into the wind. Those dogs which hunted hard, with their noses to the ground were those that were likely to find the well-hidden game, and a number fell by the wayside for passing a rabbit or pheasant. Even dogs and handlers with plenty of experience were unseated by the waterlogged ground and concealed game.

The tightly sat game meant dogs had to really push the quarry out of the cover, consistent contact flushes being the order of the day. These nose to game flushes often proved too tempting for a number of the dogs, and it was the truly experienced which showed their capability and skill in hitting the contact flush and remaining steady before the game was brought down by the gun team.

Retrieves were mainly short and simple due to the outstanding shooting, although a couple of long shots created the opportunity of a few runners which were well taken by several of the dogs. Travis Crothers' FTCh Rokedene Amy took a long runner across the bordering grassland field shot by the right hand gun, the dog being sent some distance to the fence line, collecting the hen bird to a round of applause from the watching gallery. Charlotte Gill's Sharmesvale's Earthquake of Smallbrooks, handled by Garret Marson also made a tidy job on a running bird, taking a good line and putting the dog ahead as the morning session closed for a break. Lunch was delivered by some of the additional keeper team and estate helpers, and the warm soup and pheasant pies were very much welcomed by the hard working judges and stewards.

Following lunch, the line reassembled and took another beat. Eddie Scott's FTCh Broomfield Jackie successfully picked a loose rabbit, followed by a flushed cock pheasant, and Alan Sankey's FTCh Brocklinton Kia had two lovely finds on rabbits tucked solidly in their seats.

Although later errors meant neither dog featured in the awards, the hunting abilities of these two bitches, and the calm and quiet handling style of their owners had put these two dogs in good stead for their second rounds.

Second Round:

The second round began on the left as the right-hand side ran its last remaining dogs. The judges were hoping to get each dog another flush and retrieve in the second round to ensure that the dogs had been thoroughly tested.

FTCh Rosebay Blue owned and handled by David Templar had had a very good first run. Last year's Championship winner with his previous owner, and one of only 13 male dogs running in the event this year, the dog was eagerly watched by the gallery. The handsome dog had worked the cover well and was rewarded with a loose cock pheasant and loose rabbit, completing his first run with a flush. In his second round the dog flushed and retrieved a hen pheasant, an overall performance which earned him a Diploma of Merit and the Thomas Gaunt Trophy, a beautiful ornate silver topped crystal jug presented to the male dog placed highest in the Championship.

In her first round Brockrise Floss owned and handled by Alan Sankey had nosed a rabbit out of the cover but the creature unfortunately managed to evade both dogs in line and the judges by disappearing down one of the many rabbit holes on the beat. The bitch was stylishly hunted on, and a loose hen bird was well shot out on the right, which she was sent for, completing her run.

Her second round performance was equally notable, the dog's pace and drive clearly evident as she quartered the ground and flushed a hen, finishing her run with a rabbit which had shifted from its fall, the judges observing the dog's every move as the game was delivered to hand, earning them fourth place in the Championship.

Simon Dixon's FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi was the last dog in on the right under judges Ian Clarke and Ian Openshaw, the five year old liver and white bitch showing her quality as she tackled the cover with ease, demonstrating her pace and style, hunting not just in a pattern, but actively seeking out a rabbit, the retrieve of which brought day one to a close.



The Gallery at the AV Spaniel Championship 2026 Invermark
©ARC Photography



AV Spaniel (Excluding Cockers) Championship Winner - FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi with owner and handler, Mr Simon Dixon ©ARC Photography

Day Two

Of the 71 qualified dogs, 53 had started the Championship but only 16 dogs made it through to the second day, two of which had already completed their second run. Due to the reduced field, it had been agreed that the event would conclude on the second day.

There was a sharp easterly wind, which had certainly increased in velocity for the second day of the Championship, causing handlers and judges alike to pull coats and hats tightly around them against the icy chill. Working into the headwind the Championship hopes of a number of dogs and handlers were quickly over. If it was possible the game was sitting even more tightly in the reedbeds than it had been the previous day, and the strong cold wind and water soaked ground meant the scenting conditions were very hard.

Eddie Scott's experience shone in both first and second runs as he handled Broomfield Gemma across the rushes, the pretty black headed bitch covering her beat thoroughly with the minimum of help from her handler. On her second run she skilfully located a rabbit, the little animal sitting amazingly snug and dry in the damp thick rushes. The dog was rock steady to the flush, and marked and retrieved the rabbit with style, delivering tenderly to hand. Broomfield Gemma was hunted on the left, in a pair with Charlotte Gill's Sharmesvale's Earthquake of Smallbrooks, handled by Garret Marson on the right, both dogs achieving additional flushes and retrieves on a rabbit and two hen pheasants shot by their guns. Eddie's young bitch was awarded third place in the Championship, taking home the Posterngate Flask. Both young dogs were lively and biddable, showing great game-finding ability, a credit to their handlers and training.

Brockrise Lexi owned and handled by Billy Sankey had a neat first run. The dog was quietly and confidently handled by the young man, swiftly flushing and retrieving

a rabbit followed by a hen pheasant, a tidy performance by the pair. Their second run was more arduous and a frosty drizzle began to fall making the conditions harder. But the young team kept working, the dog courageously covering her beat and smartly retrieving a loose shot rabbit, and after some distance flushing a cock pheasant which was successfully delivered to her handler, gaining them a Diploma of Merit. It was also lovely to see father and son, Alan and Billy Sankey both collecting an award at the same Championship, a real achievement for the family.

FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi owned and handled by Simon Dixon was again the final dog of the two rounds, making a lovely job of a retrieve on a hen pheasant. The dog was then hunted on for some distance in her search for game but unfortunately, she wasn't successful despite her best efforts. However, she never let up on her drive, showing her stamina and pace even over a long run. Simon's calm handling was also impressive, showing his field craft and understanding of the ground cover and game presence as he steered the dog fluidly and with very little fuss.

Third Round

The judges came together to discuss the scores and were all in agreement that they would like to see two dogs again; FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi owned and handled by Simon Dixon and Sharmesvale's Earthquake of Smallbrooks owned by Charlotte Gill and handled by Garret Marson. This wasn't however to be a run-off, instead the judges had something more they wanted to see, so the two dogs were run consecutively, with Garret the first under the judges, followed by Simon. Ground treatment was paramount during this third round, and all four judges observed and assessed the dogs' game-finding ability, style, pace and drive before coming to their final decision.

The judges were in full agreement that the winner of this year's Championship was Simon Dixon's FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi, the dog's refined style and stamina combined

with subtle and skilful handling from Simon made the partnership a pleasure to watch, and a unanimous choice for first place. As an additional accolade, Simon also handled Stephen Tyson's FTCh Rytex Racing who was awarded guns' choice.

Charlotte Gill's Sharmesvale's Earthquake of Smallbrooks handled by Garret Marson was in a well-deserved second place, and winner of the T.J Greatorex Memorial Trophy which was awarded to Garret as the handler placed highest in the awards who was competing at the event for the first time, a great achievement for the young pairing. Both third round dogs had worked extremely well in challenging conditions and were well deserving of their awards.

With Thanks To

The Earl of Dalhousie had joined the line on the second day to witness the Championship dog work first hand on the family's stunning Estate. We were also delighted to welcome His Grace to present the awards to the owners and handlers, it is an honour to have the Host in attendance and his presence added to the prestige and gravitas of the award ceremony. The Championship had been very kindly offered the use of the Masonic Hall in Tarfside and the beautiful historic hall was the perfect setting for the Championship presentation.

We would like to thank all those involved in the Championship, the Royal Kennel Club for funding and organising the event, the Spaniel Championship Working Party for all their hard work, the guns for shooting so well over the dogs and to the volunteers without whom we would not be able to successfully run the event.

Thanks must also go to our sponsors, Skinner's, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and Sporting Saint Gundog Equipment Supplies. We would also like to thank ACME whistles for providing an engraved whistle to the winning handler.

Our sponsors are always hugely appreciated, and we would not be able to run these events without their ongoing generous support.

Thanks must finally go to our Host The Dalhousie Family, in particular the Earl of Dalhousie and Head Keeper Garry MacLennan and his keeping team for hosting the Championship on this very special Scottish Estate and for preparing the ground so wonderfully.

The Championship was once again photographed by ARC Photography, and filmed by Ted Cloney media and we all look forward to seeing more of the official images and watching the Championship runs on the official DVD.

The awards from the Championship were as follows:

1st place - FTCh Dawsonlee Pepsi
owned and handled by Simon Dixon

2nd place - Sharmesvale's Earthquake of Smallbrooks
owned by Charlotte Gill and handled by Garret Marson

3rd place - Broomfield Gemma
owned and handled by Eddie Scott

4th - place - Brockrise Floss
owned and handled by Alan Sankey

Diplomas of Merit were awarded to the following:

FTCh Rosebay Blue
owned and handled by David Templar

Brockrise Lexi
owned and handled by Billy Sankey

Guns choice - FTCh Rytex Racing
owned by Stephen Tyson and handled by Simon Dixon

Working Gundog Certificate

Congratulations to the following handlers and their dogs which have achieved the Working Gundog Certificate on dummies.

HAMPTONGLADE GLENBUCHAT
Spaniel (Cocker), Ms S Baker Clark

COUNTRYWAYS MARSHMALLOW
Spaniel (English Springer), Mrs J Owen

MAJOR BELLATO
Spaniel (Cocker), Mr C Carter

BRACKENBEAT CELLESTIA
Spaniel (English Springer), Mrs L Latimer

AINGEAL'S SHARE BALVENIE (IMP AUT)
Retriever (Nova Scotia Duck Tolling), Mrs S Sanford

LITTLE ALBIEBEAR
Spaniel (Cocker), Miss S Holland

THAKALI SNOWDROP
Retriever (Labrador), Ms C Lillywhite

LYJANSEN MIDSUMMER DREAM
Retriever (Labrador), Mrs J Jenner

LEOSPRING MAGNET
Retriever (Labrador), Ms M Rose

GUNOAK FOREVER LOYAL
Retriever (Flat Coated), Mr D Ashcroft

BRIGBURN DEXTER IN WOODMIST
Retriever (Labrador), Mrs S Rogers

Congratulations to the following handlers and their dogs which have achieved the Working Gundog Certificate on game.

QUINCEGROVE GUNPOWDER PLOT
Spaniel (English Springer), Mrs V Payne

LEADBURN FAYE
Retriever (Labrador), Mr R Lovegrove

SELPATCH WOODCOCK
Retriever (Labrador), Mrs K Coleman

CRICKMAY ARES
Retriever (Labrador), Dr J Mason

TOWTON BAR GIRL
Retriever (Golden), Mr A Hale

WINDMILLVIEW JET
Retriever (Labrador), Mr P Mould

LOLA ANGLEWINGS
Retriever (Labrador), Ms C Walker

RUDOLPH WEIHNACHTEN
German Shorthaired Pointer, Ms C Walker

AMBERSHADOW BEECH

Retriever (Labrador), Miss E Rigg

PIBSBURYMILL OLLIE

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs C Smith

SANNA PUDDLEDUCK

Spaniel (English Springer), Mrs S Ings

RUDY DOODY

Spaniel (Cocker), Mr G Clifford

BELLAROYALS DESERT FOX

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs M Brotherhood

WAVERTON ICE AND FIRE

Retriever (Flat Coated), Mrs H Cobby

KUGAE OF THE MEADOWS

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs S Ebling

UNTIMELY GENT

Spaniel (Cocker), Mr N Gell

TRIGGER HAFF

Retriever (Labrador), Miss A Haffenden

LIGHTBRINGER ROMANO

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs T Parker

KILPEN SKYLARK OVER WOODMIST

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs S Rogers

CWNSAETHU WOLFMAN

Spaniel (Cocker), Mrs M Gaskins

MYHEN BLACK ANT

Spaniel (Cocker), Mrs D Beaney

BROWN SNOUT

Spaniel (Irish Water), Mrs C Green

QUINCEGROVE FIRECRACKER OF PURPLEPLUMES

Spaniel (English Springer), Mrs N Filler

JENBULL BRACKEN

Retriever (Labrador), Ms C Jenkins

FENWAY GLORY

Retriever (Labrador), Miss T Pearson

TESSMENE TALK OF THE TOWN

Retriever (Curly Coated), Miss G Boorman

IVCAR BRIGADOON

Spaniel (Sussex), Mr A Grainger

MAGIC BALTHASAR

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs S Furlong

THAKALI SNOWDROP

Retriever (Labrador), Ms C Lilywhite

RAMALLEY MAVIS

Retriever (Labrador), Mrs C Cox

CASBLAIDD HOPSACK

Spaniel (Cocker), Mrs J Hewison

BRACCIANO NEVER TOO LATE

Bracco Italiano, Mr T Doyle

Applications for permission to hold field trials

Societies wishing to register their views on the following applications should do so electronically, stating reasons for supporting or objecting to the application. Please note that all letters should be sent by email to gundogs@royalkennelclub.com

The applications will be considered at the next available Field Trials Committee meeting and therefore responses must be with the Royal Kennel Club by 29 May 2026.

Central Scotland Gundog Club

2 day Open Any Variety Retriever Stake

Eastern Counties Golden Retriever Club

Open (Golden Retriever) Stake

Grampian Gundog Club

Open AV Spaniel (Excluding Spaniel [Cockers]) Stake

Kintbury Gundog Club

Open Any Variety Retriever Stake



Approved applications for permission to hold field trials

Central Scotland Gundog Club

Novice Any Variety Spaniel Stake

Cheshire North Wales & Shropshire Retriever & Spaniel Society

All Aged Any Variety Spaniel (Excluding Spaniel [Cocker] and Spaniel [English Springer]) Stake

Exmoor Gundog Club

1 day Open Any Variety Retriever Stake

Italian Spinone Club of Great Britain

Show Gundog Working Certificate (HPRs)

Mid Wales Working Gundog Society

1 day Open Any Variety Retriever Stake

South West Scotland Gundog Association

Show Gundog Working Certificate (Retrievers and Spaniels)



Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Panel Judges List

The following judges have been added to the official panels of Field Trial Judges:

RETRIEVERS "B"

Mr Matthew Ager (3248)
Mr Leigh Jackson (3024)

SPANIELS "A"

Mr Graham Clark (3017)
Mr David Templar (2588)

SPANIELS "B"

Mr Nicholas Cox (3236)
Mr Lee Marson (3915)
Mr John Robertson (5007)
Mr Matthew Warren (4010)



HPR "A"

Mr Darryl Elliot (3814)
Mr Howard Kirby (3647)
Mr Paul Nixon (3160)

HPR "B"

Mrs Kathy Connor (3995)
Mrs Ruth Webster (4017)

POINTERS AND SETTERS "A"

Dr Stephen Clarke (2950)
Mr Douglas Collins (3801)
Mrs Tilly Thomas (3869)
Ms Linda Westron (3870)

Retired Judges

The following judge has retired from the official panels of Field Trial Judges. The Royal Kennel Club would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their contribution to the Gundog fraternity over the years.

Mr John Naylor (2530) - A Panel HPR & Pointers and Setters

Amendments to Field Trials J Regulations

[NOTE: All regulation changes for the forthcoming season are listed in the back pages of the J Regulation booklets for reference]

Our apologies for omitting these regulation updates from the winter edition of the newsletter, however these regulation amendments have been approved and became effective on 2 February 2026:

Regulation J12.a.(6)

TO:

To have been handled at a trial, boarded or prepared for competition by one of the scheduled judges within the previous twelve months prior to the trial **or by the scheduled judge's spouse or immediate family or is resident at the same address as the scheduled judge within the previous twelve months prior to the trial.** This provision does not apply to judges appointed in an emergency **or at any Field Trial Championship or Champion Stake.**

(Insertion in Bold. Deletion struck through.)
(Effective from 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(A)3.m.

TO:

At the end of each retrieve or run, Judges are advised to place each dog in a category such as A or B (+ or -) according to the work done. Such gradings may, quite properly, be supplemented on occasion by additional notation for reference purposes when Judges are going through their books. It is, however, imperative to appreciate that gradings **must should** never be retrospectively adjusted **once agreed with all judges and written in the grid.** Neither should there ever be any attempt to sum sequences of grades to produce a single

letter grading of a dog. When all dogs have been seen by a Judge, or Judges, they will wish to confer to determine which dogs they wish to discard or retain; it is vitally important for Judges to make short notes of each dog's work. Judges should never expect to be able to trust to memory.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(A)4.i

TO:

All game should be examined for signs of hard mouth. A hard-mouthed dog seldom gives visible evidence of hardness. The dog will simply crush in one or both sides of the ribs. Visible inspection and blowing up the feathers on a bird will not disclose the damage, digital examination is imperative.

Place the game **bird** on the palm of the hand, breast upwards, head forward, and **using that same hand** feel the ribs with fingers and thumb. They should be round and firm. If they are caved in or flat this may be evidence of hard mouth. Be sure the game reaches the co-Judges for examination. Judges should always satisfy themselves that the damage done has been caused by the dog, not by the shot or fall. Judges, for instance, must be clear about the difference between damage to the ribcage caused by shot and the quite distinctive damage caused by a dog.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

J Regulations J(B), J(C), J(D), J(E).

TO:

These Regulations should be read alongside and assume a familiarity with The Royal Kennel Club Guide to the J Regulations document.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)3.(d)

TO:

In the event that the dogs are to be split between the Judges **under the 4 judge system**, this will be done odds and evens. ~~Where the Trial is to be run under the 4 judge system,~~ In the first round the odd numbered dogs will be seen by the right hand Judges and the evens by the left hand Judges. Where this system is adopted, in the second round the odd numbered dogs remaining in the Trial must be seen by the left hand Judges and the evens by the right hand Judges. ~~The Judges can thereafter continue to rotate the dogs remaining in the stake in this way until they get together for a run-off, when the order of sending shall revert to numerical order.~~ **Upon completion of the second round the order of sending may revert to the order of the draw, although this decision depends on circumstances applying at the time and would be at the discretion of the Judges.** Where a handler is running an odd numbered dog and an even numbered dog, both dogs should be run on the side of the lowest numbered dog. The dogs on that side will be run in numerical order.

(Deletion struck through) (Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)3.(e)

TO:

Where the trial is to be run under the three judge system, the dogs should be split equally, and in numerical order, between the three Judges, i.e. 1,2,3,4 with the right hand Judge, 5,6,7,8 with the middle Judge and 9, 10, 11 and 12 with the left hand Judge in a one-day stake and 1-8, 9-16 and 17-24 in a two day. Dogs should then rotate from right to left so that the dogs under the left hand Judge in the first round should be seen by the right hand Judge next and so on. ~~The rotation should continue until a run-off when numerical order will resume.~~

(Deletion struck through)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)7.d.(4)

TO:

In a round with two retrieves a judge should be most careful to see that each dog gets its chance in the correct order, starting with the lowest number on the right. Should dog No. 1 fail, and dog No. 2 be successful, so eliminating his partner, No. 2 still has the first chance on the next retrieve. In these circumstances a dog may be given two consecutive retrieves.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)7.d.(5)

TO:

When a Judge tries his dogs, for example No. 1 & No. 2, behind other dogs, if No. 1 dog is successful, then the next retrieve under that Judge should be offered to No. 2 dog. **The back up dog in line must always have the first opportunity of an eye-wipe over its partner, irrespective of which round it is in. Lower round dogs should not be called over from the other side until after this dog has been given its chance.** If the two dogs fail on game, the Judge should not call fresh dogs into the line to try for the retrieve until all the other dogs already in the line have been tried. **The exception to this is when using the odds and evens system the Judges should continue to use dogs on their own side. For example, dogs No. 5 & No. 7 would be tried behind No. 1 & No. 3. If No. 5 is successful, the next retrieve should be offered to No. 7. Should No. 5 fail and No. 7 be successful, No. 7 still has the next retrieve. The Judges should have four dogs in line, the two sending dogs and two back up dogs.** ~~In the concluding stages of a Trial, Judges may use their own discretion as the situation arises.~~

(Deletion struck through) (Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)8.

TO:

When the Judges decide to run-off the top few dogs to confirm their final placings, they will usually position themselves together in the centre of the line or, at least, in a position where they can see all the dogs working. At this stage in the Trial, a dog may be stretched to such a degree that it may fail and be eye-wiped. In this situation the dog which has had its eye-wiped would be penalised,

but could still feature in the awards. **In the concluding stages of a Trial, Judges may use their own discretion with the order of sending, as the situation arises.**

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation J(B)9.d

TO:

A handler should not have their second dog backing up their first dog, while other dogs are available in the round except in a run off.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

K regulation amends

Regulation K2.c(3)

TO:

(3) Proviso for all Retrievers

Before any Retriever is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have a Water and Drive Certificate. ~~The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water test.~~

The **Water Certificate** ~~or special water test~~ must have been conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at one of the following: the Retriever Championship, a Field Trial Open Stake, or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.)

The Drive Certificate must be conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at the Retriever Championship or a Field Trial Open Stake.

(Deletion struck through) (Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation K2.c(6)

TO:

(6) Proviso for all Spaniels

Before a dog is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have gained a Water Certificate. ~~The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water test.~~

The **Water Certificate** ~~or special water test~~ must have been conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A, at one of the following: the Championship, a Field Trial stake or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.)

(Deletion struck through) (Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

Regulation K2.c.(8)

TO:

(8) Proviso for all breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve

Before a dog is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have gained a Water Certificate. ~~The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water test.~~

The **Water Certificate** ~~or special water test~~ must have been conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom

must be an A, at one of the following: the Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship, a Field Trial Stake, or at a subsequent special test (J(A)2 refers.)

(Deletion struck through) (Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2026)

The following regulation amendments have been approved and will become effective on 2 February 2027:

Regulation J4.c.(1)(vi)

TO:

(vi) ~~Save in exceptional circumstances, †~~ The names, **Panel** and ID numbers of the judges, **save in exceptional circumstances. Any changes to the scheduled Judges (including TBC) must be notified to the members and competitors immediately.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2027)

Regulation J4.d.(1)(iv)

TO:

(iv) Names of the judges, **Panel** and their ID numbers.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2027)

Regulation J6.f

TO:

After an applicant has been successful in the draw for a place in a stake, or as a reserve has accepted an offer of a run, if the run is not taken up, the applicant may become liable for the full entry fee except:-

(1) Where the applicant has qualified out of Novice Stakes (where applicable) or

(2) Where the dog drawn to run has qualified for the championship after entries have closed or

(3) On production of a veterinary certificate confirming that the dog entered for the stake is unfit to compete or

(4) On production of a medical certificate that the applicant or the applicants nominated handler is unable to compete or

(5) Where the dog drawn to run is withdrawn more than 7 days prior to the stake **or**

(6) Where there is a change in the schedule within 7 days prior to the trial.

The applicant must notify the society of their withdrawal immediately.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2027)

Regulation J(A)3.h

TO:

Judges should be careful for the safety of dogs and should not require them to negotiate hazards such as dangerous barbed wire fences, ice on ponds,

unsupervised roadways or walls with high drops. Whilst judges should take reasonable precautions for the safety of competing dogs, it is also the duty of the handler to satisfy ~~himself or herself~~ **themselves** that their dog is suitably trained, physically fit and prepared to undertake the work allocated by the judges before directing it to carry out the task specified.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2027)

Update to Regulation J(D)2

At its most recent meeting, the Royal Kennel Club Board approved the following amendment to regulation J(D)2 effective from **1 April 2026**.

Regulation J(D)2

TO:

2. Number of runners.

To qualify for entry in The Royal Kennel Club Stud Book, the number of runners permitted in stakes is:

a. Open Stakes: maximum 40, minimum ~~16~~ **14**.

b. Novice/All Aged Stakes: maximum 45, minimum 10.

c. Puppy Stakes: maximum 45, minimum ~~8~~ **6**.

Where an open and any other type of stake are to run on the same day, the maximum number of runners over the whole day is 45.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)
(Effective 1 April 2026)

It has also been confirmed that for those trials where the schedules were already published, permission has been granted that those societies could amend the minimum number of entrants for those stakes, if required to ensure they were qualifying stakes. Competitors must be updated on any amendments to the schedule.

Clarification on Novice Dog/ Novice Handler

At its recent meeting, the Field Trials Committee discussed the addition of the Novice Dog/Novice Handler for Gundog Working Tests. In order to provide clarity to several queries received, it has made the following amendment which has subsequently been approved. This amendment provides clarity that Novice Dog/Novice Handler is an unclassified class.

Regulation J(G)2.b(4)

NOVICE DOG/NOVICE HANDLER (**Unclassified**). Confined to dog and handler who have not gained any award in a field trial or classified GWT or won a Novice Dog/Novice Handler test.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2027)

Red Flag Reminder to Secretaries

The organising society must ensure that a Red Flag and Picking Up dog are both available at any field trial held for all sub-groups required to retrieve. The Red Flag must be carried by a nominated person/s and must be visible throughout the stake to indicate the position of the gallery.

The Picking Up Dog must be a dedicated person/s and must be available from the commencement of the stake to search for any dead or wounded game shot during the trial which is not then collected by the competing dogs or judges. It is not permissible to only use an eliminated competitor for this purpose, although handlers may also be required to use their dogs to look for game after the trial at the request of the keeper as detailed in J(A)4.j.

Spaniel Levy Payments

This is a notice to remind societies that championship levy payments are due by 30 September 2026. Please note that the levy payments are as follows:

HPR – £50

Cocker Spaniel – £75

Any Variety Spaniel (Excluding Spaniel [Cocker]) – £100

Societies will shortly receive an invoice for the 2026/27 season, which will include all the relevant information on how to make payment via bank transfer.

If you have any queries or have not received an invoice by 30 June 2026, please contact your regional support advisor who will be able to assist you.

Field Trial Secretaries' Seminar

The Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Secretaries' Seminar focuses on providing essential knowledge and understanding for the management, organisation and stewarding of field trials and gundog working tests.

The seminar is an opportunity for those who are newly appointed field trial or gundog working test secretaries, club officials and existing field trial or gundog working test secretaries to benefit from the very latest information from the Royal Kennel Club. Other field trial society representatives, competitors and anyone else with an interest in the discipline are also welcome to attend.

The seminar focuses on providing essential knowledge and understanding for the management, organisation and stewarding of field trials and gundog working tests.

The day will consist of presentations and breakout sessions which are designed around a variety of issues that a secretary is likely to encounter. Each delegate will receive a comprehensive digital information pack containing template forms which can be tailored for individual use, as well as copies of the presentations and examples of the various certificates.

Refreshments and a finger buffet lunch are included.

The Royal Kennel Club Field Trial Secretaries' Seminar

Date: Sunday 28 June

Time: 10am – 3.30pm

Venue: The Kennel Club Building, Stoneleigh Park, Coventry, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ

Price: £65

To book your place, please visit <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/shop/events/field-trial-secretaries-seminar/>

For more information, please email our field trials team ft.secretary@royalkennelclub.com

Find a Club

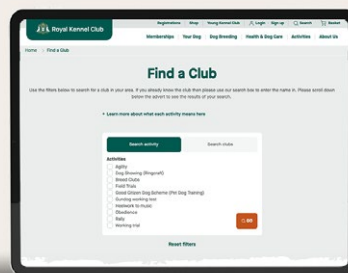
The Royal Kennel Club has announced that 'Find a Club' service is available online. The service includes a list of field trials clubs and the purpose of the service is to enable new dog owners to find local clubs in their area.

The Find a Club service can be found here:

royalkennelclub.com/findaclub

Please ensure that you have reviewed your club information. Any amendments, including secretary details, can be updated via your online account.

Looking for a club in your area? Visit Find a Club



Visit royalkennelclub.com/fac



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