



Like many of us who are passionate about spaniel field trialing, I stumbled into it totally by accident. I went looking for a dog to replace my well trained Labrador that had been killed in an accident. A couple friends of mine had recently acquired field bred English Springer Spaniels and I had really enjoyed hunting over them so I decided to see if I could find one. My search was for a dog that was already started because I only had a few months until the fall hunting season would be upon us.

On one Saturday afternoon I made a trip to Pine Shadows in Brainerd MN to see the selection of started dogs that Mark and Sophie Haglin had available. Mark spent a couple hours showing me the fine hunting prospects that he had available. I told Mark that I was going to visit a couple other kennels and that would get back to him about what I decided. He mentioned that they were going to start a training session for field trial dogs and that if I desired I could stick around and watch. I stayed and watched until they finished training the last dog.

On the drive home I came to the quick conclusion that it was a trial quality dog I wanted not a hunting dog prospects. Within a month I owned a field trial dog and that was the beginning of a serious change in my life as my primary hobby focus went from hunting to field trialing. I have competed in trials all across the USA and also in most of the Canada provinces. I have found two things to be the same everywhere, great dogs and great people who enjoy the sport. Over the last 15 years I have had the good fortune of having some very special dogs but more importantly, I have had the chance to meet people with equal passion for our sport and develop long term friendships with them.

The honor of being selected to judge our National Championship is one that I take very seriously. Thank you for this opportunity and privilege, and I wish each of the participants and dogs the best of luck!

Jerry Barrett