

Excerpt from the
2002 Continental
All-Age Championship
Report

The American Field
March 23, 2002

Reporter: Tom Word



Brantley Goodson (center) is flanked by the judges, Sherry Ebert and Dale Bush.

Monday dawned cool and clear, with a stiff northwest breeze. We were in for a treat in the first brace—Barshoe Esquire (Daugherty) and Quick Cash (Rayl). Tom Faller was riding for his Esquire, which found a bevy at 5, style, manners and location faultless as would be the case on each of his subsequent finds. At 14, just across entrance road, Cash suffered an unproductive. When they reached the hayfield beyond creek Esquire took the right edge, Cash the left. Esquire was found on point at 20 on the right, a woodcock requiring a relocation, which he accomplished with polish. At 22 atop the hill beside the hayfield Cash stood beside course path; again it proved unproductive. At 28 Cash stood where birds had just been seen lifting. Meanwhile, Esquire rolled ahead on course, down to the valley before Pike's Peak, then up it on right side. Judge Ebert last saw him by a lone oak a quarter mile ahead. At 34 scout Colvin Davis called point. Esquire stood handsomely beneath that oak, the big covey before him in brush, a super limb find, handled faultlessly. Tension began to mount, galley conversation subsided. At 38 Cash stood; Rayl asked Judge Ebert if she'd seen birds leave. When she shook her head he took Cash on without flushing. At 40 beside course path at Cadillac Pond Cash stood and Esquire backed handsomely. Rayl elected to pick up.

The course now was Esquire's alone. He would make the most of it. Keeping the front to Cadillac Field he coursed across it to the front, then took the far field edge right to the woods at the end for a showy cast. Here Andy rode hard to gather him. He then sent Esquire to the front and through the section beside Big House hayfields and to the right turn corner where the first hour usually ends. Here Esquire hunted at modest range, Andy seemingly not wanting to lose him in this bear trap corner. Esquire made the turn without problems and Andy let him roll up the rising country toward the "Y". He scored another good find at 57 ahead. Andy had him at the "Y" where Esquire jumped into the

where he entered the cover. Andy continued to ride the course path just ahead of the judges, singing. When we reached the end of the long field and started up through woods toward the Gene field Andy and Colvin searched in the vicinity where Esquire had entered the woods. Here we had a sweeping view to right of the country where Esquire might logically have hunted beyond the field where he was last seen. All eyes were peeled in search of the dog but he did not appear. When we reached the Gene field the judges stopped the gallery and rode ahead to listen for call of point and to gain the best view of the country to the right, left and ahead. We listened to Andy's calling, tracing his ride by his voice in a big arc ahead and to both sides as he searched. Minutes ticked away . . . tension was palpable. We prayed the 37 minutes of grace time would not expire, for Esquire's performance to now had been outstanding. Judge Bush sat his mount alone at the top of the hill, listening . . . looking . . . listening. At 1:40 just ahead of Judge Bush and dead on the line of the course path came the call of "Point!" Esquire stood in a dip beside a big lone longleaf pine. He had been there a long time but his composure was perfect, tight, with a twelve o'clock tail, his head unmoving. The birds were ten yards before his nose and rose in unison with a pleasing whirr. Tension melted. "I've got about seven minutes, right?" Andy asked, and the judges nodded. Andy heeled Esquire the hundred yards to the front, then sent him ahead along edges of small fields where he hunted with zip as we watched until call of time, all thinking, "Don't lose him, Andy." He didn't.

A superb hour and fifty minutes had been enjoyed by all riding and we knew a championship standard had been set. A consistently front running, deep hour of probing, rewarded with five splendid finds, one on a woodcock, the kind of performance that thrills observers and brings great satisfaction to handlers, scouts, owners, breeders and dogs, reflecting endless hours of toil and thought.