

FC Phantomwoods Omi Bodi “Bodi”



Bodi was owned by John Holland and Leslie Williams. He was sent to us to train while we were in California. He was one of the original crowd of cockers we loaded up and took to the farm in North Dakota in 1997 marking the beginning our new adventure north. Bodi was a strong, fairly large, black dog. Rabbits had played a significant role in my training while I lived in Virginia; they are not a factor in North Dakota. It's not that there's a shortage of them, there is just not the small workable clumps of honeysuckle and rose bushes to hold them. Bodi would have benefited from rabbits; they would have

encouraged him to hold his ground. Instead we improvised with bobwhite quail in the woods behind our house. He loved to run. The trick was getting him to modify this flat run and begin to hunt.

Bodi was a talented animal with an impeccable mouth. The only thing to stand in Bodi's way was Bodi. He would just become so frenetic at trials working himself up to frenzy. While hardly subdued at home, he was a pleasant dog to train, extremely enthusiastic, regardless if we were working with birds or dummies.

This trait is extremely difficult to manage at a trial, much more so at an English trial where all dogs must follow behind the line on a lead from the commencement of the event until the end, regardless if they have gone out of competition. At the present moment in the United States trials, some handlers have honed their skills to manage dogs with questionable line manners down to a fine art; haranguing them out to the line in all-terrain vehicles at the very last moment. As comforting as this is at the time, it doesn't contribute to the stability of the breed in the long run. I've been as guilty as anyone.

One of the manifestations of when Bodi's "cup runneth over" at a trial was when he would start to fumble retrieves. I have seen this quite frequently with dogs exhibiting a nervous energy. They are not hard mouthed, usually the opposite, an extremely soft mouth. As the anxiety level increases during the day, there's a direct correlation to untidy retrieves as the dog tires prematurely.

Bodi had a great work ethic and was really into retrieving drills. In the late summer, Mike would step behind large oat bales and throw marked and blind pigeon retrieves. I will usually set up a brace of dogs alternating them on each send. Even having repeated this drill dozens of time, Bodi could barely contain himself when I sent the other dog.

He mellowed some with age, winning a couple of really good trials.