

# WINNING IRISH WAYS



"Although they are quite good looking, show bred Irish Setters often appear hardheaded in the field. Actually, their attention span is too short to carry out commands effectively.

by  
**Larry Mueller**

"I heard Buddwing was a bit hardheaded as a pup . . ." I said, starting to phrase a question.

"No," Roger Boser broke in, "I don't agree at all that Irish Setters are more hardheaded than other breeds."

I started to rephrase the question because "hardheaded" means different things to different people. And I wanted more specific descriptions that would tell me about the total character of this winningest of all Red Setters. But once more Dr. Boser, the veterinarian who trained Buddwing, answered in terms of the breed in general: "Hardheadedness is an individual characteristic, not a breed trait."

"Of course, but . . ." I began, and then it dawned on me. Incredible as it seems, after all these years since Red Setters have returned as field dogs, the fanciers of these dogs still feel compelled to defend them against reputations not earned by them, but by Irish Setter show stock.

A dog that's a bit willful or a little more determined than average might be called hardheaded by a field man. But when applied to show stock, hardheadedness only SEEMS to mean the same thing. Not all, of course, but far too many Irish of show breeding appear willful when actually they're scatterbrained. Every little thing distracts them. They SEEM unconcerned with obeying their

people, including personnel at our local airport and the Washington office of the Civil Aeronautics Board as to what could be done about this, but my voice alone won't do much. We ship quite a few pups at Elhew Kennels and needless to say this new rule is causing us a problem.

**Julie Szell**  
Secretary to Robert G. Wehle  
Elhew Kennels, Scottsville, N.Y.

We're doing what we can to handle the complaints directed to the CAB and the Department of Agriculture by trainers and breeders throughout the country. It is not only an inconvenience but it has actually brought the dog business in this country to a standstill. I'm getting calls every day from people trying to ship dogs and as you'll see in the Breakaway, some airlines are adhering to the rules and some are not. Probably the most adamant about adhering to the rules (in line with advice from their legal department) has been American Airlines, which just also happens to be one of the largest in the business. When your complaint comes in we'll see that it gets proper handling and delivery to the Civil Aeronautics Board and U.S.D.A.

Dear Editor:

We are enthusiastically renewing our subscription to HUNTING DOG. We enjoy every issue and eagerly look forward to its coming each month. We always appreciate the articles you carry on breeding, nutrition and health care and the early development of pups. Someday we are going to write an article very dear to our hearts: "How an orphaned, dog pound, bird dog

(registered) became a prepotent sire of field trial winners and natural hunters that point, back and retrieve as early as ten months of age."

**Doug and Dorothy Fry**  
Greene Mountain Kennels  
Greeneville, Tennessee

*I'm glad that you are enjoying HUNTING DOG and I would enjoy reading the article you have in mind. I'm aware that that's how Greene Mountain Kennels got its start and to this date I have heard nothing but success stories of the setters from Greene Mountain.*

Dear Editor:

I just received my copy of the December issue of HUNTING DOG and the story *The Georgia Breeze* by Dan O'Brien is a great one. I'm glad to see that you are supporting Ducks Unlimited too. I've been an honorary trustee of Ducks Unlimited for some time. Regarding Arthur Beaman's article; I agree with him on the Golden and Labs, however, I cannot understand why he allowed his setter Hi-Gal to flush pheasants, that's a good way to ruin a bird dog. He should have let his Golden do that.

**John Rockwood**  
Toledo, Ohio

*I enjoyed The Georgia Breeze myself and will betcha \$5.00 that it wins an award in next year's writing contest. I have no idea what Art was thinking of with his setter but he's a pretty talented trainer so he must have had something in mind.*

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***"It's about time  
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and say, Ah Hell,  
I knew it all the time!"***



**"The ideal hunter and field trial competitor is the adjustable dog, and more Red Setters are joining that rather exclusive club each year."**

masters' commands when in truth their attention spans are so short they can't remember what they were told to do for long enough to get it done.

More than a quarter of a century ago L.E. "Ned" LeGrande saw the sorry state of the Irish Setters and decided to do something about it. He and his friends scouted the country and found eight or ten red dogs that could run, point and handle birds. Of these, only three pointed with erect tails. One of these was Askew's Carolina Lady. She made it into the Field Trial Hall of Fame. Another was her son, Ike Jack Kendrick. He became America's top winning Red Setter, a record only recently broken by his great-great grandson, Buddwing.

Le Grande and friends recognized that there wasn't enough suitable Irish Setter stock left to bring these dogs back into competition with Pointers and English Setters. So they asked repayment of a long overdue loan. By crossing onto Irish Setters, Llewellyn improved his stock and became the father of field trial English Setters. Now it was time for English genes to improve Irish stock. Ilsley Chip, a son of National Champion Mississippi Zev, was chosen.

There was nothing undercover about this outcross. Bill Brown of the Field Dog Stud Book agreed to register the offspring as Cross

Bred. When bred back to pure Irish three times, the strain of dogs was again considered to be purebred Irish.

To make sure their breeding program produced results and perpetuated itself, LeGrande and friends also organized the National Red Setter Field Trial Clubs. Their dogs, and the dogs of generations to come, would be compared in the field, not on the bench. The best of the lot would always receive the notoriety accorded champions. And the genes of the champions would improve the next generation of pups.

Has it worked? The same kind of system has worked well for English Setters and Pointers, so logically, it should be working for Irish Setters. But judging from the way Irish fanciers feel the need to defend the breed, if it is working, most dog lovers apparently aren't aware of it. Why?

"It's a numbers game," says Dr. Boser. "There are more Pointers and Setters around, so more develop into winners. People see more winners among Pointers and Setters, so they conclude these are the superior breeds.

"I admit I love it just a little more if my good dog is red, but number one, I'm after a bird dog, regardless of color or breed. And my success rate has been better on Red Setters than English Setters or Pointers. I also see lots of bird

dogs in field trials, and as veterinarian for a couple of pro trainers. From all of this I can't help but notice that a higher percentage of Red Setters make top calibre field dogs."

What does Roger Boser call top calibre bird dogs? "To be a winner in field trials - or in the field for a hunter - a dog has to be adaptable," says the York, Pennsylvania, veterinarian. "I'd say 90% of our good ones - the top winners - can be hunted on foot as well as field trialed from horseback."

Boser's Fandango won the 1977 Red Setter Spring Championship and adapts not only from horseback to foot, but from one bird species to another with no problems. "At home, we hunt pheasants," Boser said. "She won her championship on quail.

"One day we were hunting near the house and she pointed after I had run out of shells. I was determined to reward my dog, so I left her on point while I walked home for shells. She was still pointing when I returned. And I got the pheasant. That's the kind of dog work that makes for perfect hunts.

"Fandango's grandsire on the dam's side is Buddwing," Boser added, "and he has always had that same strong hunting desire. Even now that he's getting arthritic, and has trouble getting



Dr. Roger Boser, York, Pennsylvania, veterinarian, shown here with Fandango, winner of the 1977 National Red Setter Spring Championship, says more field bred Irish Setters make hunters and field trialers, on a percentage basis, than the breeds usually thought of as field trialers.

out of the box, when you turn him loose, he runs."

Buddwing was the last of LeGrande's breeding. The father of modern Red Setters has been out of the picture since about 1961, but nearly all of the good ones trace back to LeGrande's dogs.

Roger Boser got Buddwing as a green pup and said he immediately recognized his brilliant possibilities. "One day I ran the dog in the morning at the

Keystone Field Trial Club, loaded him up and ran him in the afternoon at the Central New Jersey Field Trial Club. He won first in the open puppy class at both places. He was always a big running dog and naturally handled to the front - a great front running dog."

Buddwing took four puppy wins, seven derby and one shooting dog win before Dr. Boser sold the dog to Dave Garrett, New Mexico. He

was 3 at the time and quickly adapted to the high country of the southwest where he took 12 shooting dog wins.

Finally, Buddwing was sold to his present owner, Don Beauchamp, R.R. 1, Box 118, Chaney, Kansas, where he quickly adapted to prairie hunting. Don put 38 wins on Buddwing in two and a half years. The dog now has 62 American Field wins, 71% of which were earned in all-breed competition. Of that number, 32 are first place wins, 22 are second place, and only 8 are thirds. He was the Kansas Amateur Shooting Dog of the Year during the 1976-77 season.

"I wasn't serious about field trialing until I got Buddwing," said Don Beauchamp. "He taught me more than I taught him. I had all the worries of a newcomer. Scared to death I'd lose him. Even tried to send a scout out to the front to find him. The scout wouldn't go and later said, 'That dog would run a good trial even if he HAD a handler.' But I soon learned that as long as he hears you sing, he'll be with you."

"Buddwing is the type of dog you just turn loose and follow. He'll do the rest. He wins because he's consistent. He does the same thing each time and always runs a good race. When he finds birds, the judges almost have to place him."

Okay, so a descendant of Ike Jack Kendrick has taken two more wins than old Ike himself. Does

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that really mean Red Setters are better than ever? And are these dogs really Irish Setters or just English Setters with red coats?

Bob Kerans of Newton, Illinois, who is secretary/treasurer of the National Red Setter Field Trial Club, and who publishes their house organ, THE FLUSHING WHIP, addressed himself to the first question. "Obviously, we have good Red Setters as proven by their wins in all-breed competition. But I doubt that we have much better dogs today than

a few years ago. What we do have is a greater number of dogs that are capable of winning."

Several hours later, Don Beauchamp's answer to the same question was "There may not be better dogs today, perhaps, but we have more Red Setters that can compete. I also believe range and run are steadily improving."

Roger Boser hadn't heard either conversation, but when asked the question said, "We have more consistency, more overall quality, more dogs capable of winning that we had a few years ago. Eight of

the 12 derbies I rode with rated hard driving and stylish."

It might be added that six of the 16 derbies entered in the 1977 Red Setter Fall Championship held at Green River, Illinois, were offsprings of Buddwing. The field trial system of selective breeding is working.

But what about the second question? Aren't these improved field dogs really just English Setters colored red? Hardly. The outcross has long since been dominated by pure Irish blood. The character of the breed hasn't been changed. Only a shot of fiery bird dog of another breed was added to provide enough stock for a breeding program.

While it's true that many of today's Red Setters scarcely resemble show bred Irish Setters except for color, it's also true that today's show Irish scarcely resemble the original Irish Setters that distinguished themselves in the fields of the Emerald Isle. Irish Setters have doubled in size since shows began. Straight shoulders, clumsy gait, lack of endurance, and scatterbrained heads often accompanied these oversized, although beautiful, bodies. Today's field bred Red Setters have been bred to run and hunt, so their size and sense have been selected more realistically.

And finally, one last question. What will this do for the average foot hunter? Will he be able to control all this field trial fire?

Buddwing is a perfect example of the well bred Red Setter of today. Even the pressure of field trialing at an early age didn't wilt the drive and desire of Buddwing as it often does puppies and derbies of all breeds. "Yet, he's perfectly calm around home." Don Beauchamp said. "He's house-broke and contented to loaf until you show signs of going hunting. If you take a shotgun, he adjusts his range to hunt with you."

The adaptable dog has always been considered the ideal by bird hunters and field trialers alike. Some of the Red Setters joined this rather exclusive club a couple of decades ago. More and more are becoming eligible every year. 🐾

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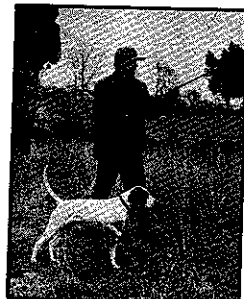


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