



2023 National Amateur Championship

Todd Stelzer Judge

I was born and raised in Cadott, WI. A small little town in Central Wisconsin, where nothing is happening all the time. As a teenager, when I went to get the cows in the fall I would take my Grandfather's springer with me and every now and again I'd shoot a couple of roosters. That dog was a renegade, but he could find birds. Today there are very few pheasants in our area.

Thankfully, both of my Grandfathers loved to hunt and taught me the trade. Neither was worth a spit as a dog trainer but they loved hunting. I spent many afternoons in the woods with them hunting grouse and loved every second of it.

I got my first springer spaniel from a back yard breeder. She wasn't the most athletic dog but she would find birds. After doing some research, I went to my first springer field trial in Minnesota. When I got home I told my wife that our dog might be the same breed as the field trial springer, but not the same dog.

I started competition in the run and gun series with a few dogs. Even though it was fun, I didn't feel it was a good evaluation of the dog. I eventually started competing in the AKC field trials. My first field trial dog was the National High Point Puppy which hooked me totally to the sport. Her name was Brandy and she was probably the most talented dog I've had my hands on and the foundation bitch of my kennel. From that point on the springer spaniels and the field trials just exploded for me. I never had any intention of becoming a professional dog trainer. Now 25 years later I have a kennel full of client dogs that trust me enough to train and compete with their dogs across the nation. I can't thank them enough. I also am Thankful to all the people that supported me, guided me, offered their homes to me, and mentored me through the years. Most of all I need to thank my family, especially my lovey wife Ann. Being a professional dog trainer isn't very glamorous, especially at midnight in a rain storm waiting for dogs to do their business. But Ann has endured it all, me being gone months at a time, not getting projects done and dog crap everywhere. She's a trooper.

Finally, **thank you** to all, it is a huge honor to be selected as the 2023 ESS National Amateur judge. I am extremely passionate about springer spaniels and AKC Field trials. I am very excited for the opportunity to judge the best springer spaniels in the Nation.

Good luck to all and as my training members would say, "Don't Suck."

