

## FC and AFC Doubledee Dancer

A dream came true when my lovely and courageous Gordon setter, Doubledee Dancer, became the first of my Gordons to win both AKC field titles. Already an Amateur Field Champion, Dancer completed this feat at the Gordon Setter Club of America Field Mason-Dixon Field Trial December 5, 1992 in Petersburg, Delaware, besting a field of 15 in the Gordon Setter Only Open Gun Dog Stake. This was such an emotional win for me since Dancer won her title after all the odds seemed stacked against her.

In the summer of 1990 Dancer developed laryngeal paralysis and became quite ill. Surgery was performed by Dr. David Holt at the Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (VHUP). Dancer recovered and went on to win her Amateur Field Championship in October. Early in 1991 she developed a megaesophagus which led to aspiration pneumonia. Dancer was hospitalized at VHUP and was under the care of Dr. Robert Washabau. The cause of the megaesophagus was unknown and at the time it was uncertain whether or not it would resolve. Dancer recovered from the pneumonia and came home. The veterinarians recommended that a humidifier be installed in the kennel and that she be fed from a height to help the passage of food through the non-functional esophagus. We followed these instructions and Dancer slowly recovered.

Dancer was always spunky from the time she was a puppy, holding her own against her two much larger brothers. If any dog could make it back, I knew she could. She was always a joy for me to run. She loved it, hunting everywhere and checking out every likely objective, always with speed and incredible animation. Her wins as a younger dog included the GSCA Derby of the Year Award in 1987 and the GSCA Gun Dog Award in 1989. Before her 1990 surgery she had placed in 15 Gun Dog Stakes, including three firsts. She also had the honor of winning the Page's Rotating Amateur Gun Dog Trophy.

Even after hearing the guarded prognosis from the Penn veterinarians, I always kept hoping that some day she might run again so I could enjoy her spe-



cial talents while restoring to her the opportunity to once again soar across the fields in search of birds. Dr. Guiliani, my regular veterinarian, even pointed his finger at me saying, "She will run again."

In the summer of 1992 I started roadworking her from my horse since she cannot run and hunt during the pollen season because during the surgery to correct the laryngeal paralysis her protective vocal folds were resected, removing one of the defenses protecting against aspiration.

I roadworked her at first several times a week increasing this to every other day for a half hour as she built up condition. By early November, with most of the pollen gone, I started running her in the field, working on bird work, backing and fine points. She looked so happy, running and hunting, rejuvenated and young again.

She was now ready and I entered her in the Open Gun Dog Stake in December at the Delaware trial. She ran a wonderful animated race with two solid finds, hardly showing any strain, going on to win the stake and complete her field championship.

Dancer also accomplished another feat that I had thought unattainable,

whelping a litter of eight wonderful, healthy and lively puppies. On May 7th, 1992 I woke up in the morning to find Dancer in her crate where she had spent the night with three puppies already born. She had not given me any signs the night before of being ready to whelp. She quickly went into the whelping box and had the balance of the litter in several hours for the easiest delivery I have seen. She was the most wonderful mother I could hope for. One of the three pups that I kept, Doubledee Dakota, has won every Open Puppy Stake in which he has been entered. It is such a special thrill for me to see Dancer and her pups competing in field trials and winning!

Doubledee Dancer is a great granddaughter of my beloved Doubledee Highland Dare and granddaughter of my veteran 13-year-old campaigner, Doubledee Heatherfield Dash. Needless to say, I am extremely proud of my courageous and special FC and AFC Gordon setter, and grateful that the veterinarians could restore her health, as she looks at me with that twinkle and love in her eyes, saying to me, "Thanks."

Gwynne McDevitt