

DIXIE, THE WONDER DOG

By Gwynne McDevitt

Gordon Setter FC/AFC Falcons Doubledee Dixie, the Wonder Dog, has done it again. The first wonder, of course, was that she ever got trained, going on to win both her AKC field championship titles. The second wonder, after a year of disappointment and travail, was that she has given me a beautiful litter of five healthy puppies, whelped March 10, 1995, sired by my dog, The Shootist.

Dixie's problems with first time motherhood began June 8, 1994 when she lost her litter, also sired by The Shootist (Shooter) with only a few weeks to go in her pregnancy, which had run smoothly until that time. After being artificially inseminated, six-year-old Dixie had suffered a miscarriage. She was taken to the Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where her treatment was overseen and coordinated by Dr. Robert Washabau, associate professor of medicine, without whom the miracle of Dixie puppies would not have occurred.

Dr. Washabau reported that Dixie was in good health despite the recent miscarriage. An abdominal ultrasound study revealed a dead fetus in one uterine horn, and bony fragments in the other uterine horn. Dr. Washabau had hoped that Dixie would pass the fetus and fetal fragments with medical treatment, but this was not to be the case. Thus, Dixie underwent caesarean section.

Dr. Brockman, who performed the surgery at VHUP, noted a mild to moderate inflammation or infection involving both uterine horns. Dixie recovered from surgery uneventfully and was discharged from the hospital eight days after admission. Dr. Washabau gave an excellent prognosis for recovery, but a more guarded prognosis for future fertility. He was concerned that Dixie might have difficulties with future breedings because the final biopsy report had shown chronic

active endometritis with Enterococcus infection. So, Dixie was subsequently treated with Clavamox for three months. Needless to say, I had heavy doubts that it would be wise for me to breed Dixie again.

I started to work her in August slowly at first to get her ready for September field trials. She is such a joy to run and really loves it. Receiving placements in most of the trials in which she ran, she won first in an Amateur Limited Gun Dog Stake, second in an Amateur Gun Dog Stake, thirds in Open Limited and Gun Dog and a fourth in an Open



Mrs. McDevitt and the five little "wonders."

Limited Gun Dog Stake.

During the last competitive stake of the Fall season, Amateur Gun Dog at the GSCA Mason-Dixon Regional, she ran a rather controlled race for her, with three nice finds and received a red ribbon in a field of 18 dogs. At the end of her performance, she had a suspect hypoglycemic episode, suddenly keeling over on her side. I thought she had a heart attack. Dr. Pat Lyons came to the rescue and with the help of Susan DeSilver and Bill Wolter, she was taken to the nearest veterinarian. She recovered nicely. At the end of many tests by Drs. Knight and Washabau at the Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, she was found to be healthy. It was suggested that I feed her a small amount of food each morning, especially before competitive events and to watch her closely. She had never had a hypoglycemic episode before six years of age, and fortunately, has not had another one. Dr. Ray Giuliani, my regular veterinari-

an, said that in all probability this was a one-time event.

While at a field trial in Connecticut in the Fall of 1994, I told Jean and Kevin Culver about Dixie and how she had lost her pups. I also mentioned that Dixie, who has good OFA certification and is sound in both mind and body, is my last direct link to my wonderful foundation bitch and beloved companion, Doubledee Highland Dare. I so badly wanted puppies from her. They told me that from their experiences, my dreams of Dixie pups were still possible. They suggested that I contact Dr. Robert Hutchinson at the Animal Clinic Northview in North Ridgeville, Ohio, who had success with some of their bitches who had a history of difficult pregnancies. After consulting with my veterinarian, I called Dr. Hutchison and we decided that when Dixie came into season again, we would put her immediately on Clavamox and send her and the stud dog to Ohio where he would surgically inseminate her. The only treatment throughout the pregnancy was Clavamox. On February 3, ultrasound showed nine pups, although three were later re-absorbed. A program of careful monitoring was followed with progesterone level tests, ultrasound and x-rays.

True to form with Dixie, the births were not easy, and work for me, Dr. Giuliani and my friend, Brenda Massi. Dixie had mild dystocia which occurs when the uterine muscles are too weak to dispel the fetus. Five pups needed human help to be born, losing one large female in the process. The last, a small female arrived easily. Dixie really did not try too hard, looking at us with annoyance about the whole affair. The final tally was two male pups and three females. I was ecstatic! She was a wonderful, perfect mother, very protective for a few days, making me wary of getting too close. She took her new motherhood seriously and well until the pups were weaned.

With five active youngsters bounding around my yard, I look forward to the 1996 field trial stakes. Yes, I am keeping them all - could there be any other way? ■