

A Reelection Of Summer

When the days turn short and the leaves turn colors I find myself awaiting the upcoming pheasant season, and wondering if the seeds I have sewn will produce. For those of you who do not understand I am talking about, I am referring to the time spent with a young dog doing yard work.

With opening day just weeks away, I take a moment to reflect on the progress that I have made with my young dog over the past summer. Late last February I sat down to reminisce over the past season to find areas to improve on and increase our chances of putting more meat on the table.

As the yard changed from frozen tundra to a muddy mess, pup and I headed outside to the back yard. There we worked on steadiness drills, we used tethered birds, birds with pulled flight feathers, and even worked our way to using a blank gun. We must have done hundreds of repetitions. Over time pup became rather steady, in fact it surprised me as to how well he had progressed. Now he is even proving to be steady to wing and shot.

As the days grew longer and much hotter we continued to work. The sessions became shorter and straight to the point, we no longer ran for 20 minutes to find a bird, I just brought pup directly to the bird. Once pup is on the bird we then continued to work on steadiness. We also shifted focus onto the retrieving problems. Pup loves the water, so I used it to my advantage. Luckily I have access to a pond, and am not forced to stop training in the hottest of hot days. Water retrieves are great for conditioning and tidying up sloppy retrieves. Most dogs when making water retrieves will refuse to drop the object being retrieved while swimming back.

Throughout the summer pup and I even found time to bond sitting side by side in a flat bottom aluminum boat while chasing crappie, or the occasional car ride past our favorite bird fields all in hopes to catch a glimpse of a whiley rooster and enjoy some time together. What a summer it was. Now as I sit here looking outside I can only imagine what lies in store ahead.

Looking back through the clouds of mosquitoes, hot temperatures, and hundreds of repetitions I feel adequately prepared for whatever this season holds. Now that opening day is just ahead I look at where I was and all that I have been through, and boy oh boy what a season it will be.

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