2007 Junior Showmanship Awards

Best Junior Handler

English Springer Spaniel – Field Trial Association
2007 Best Junior Handler
Jonathan Ryan Williams

I had completed about 4 months of training in Jr. Showmanship classes before entering the dog show ring for the first time in February 2005 in Greenville SC. I wanted to enter the ring fully prepared and comfortable with showing dogs. My first show dog was a Flat-Coated Retriever and we became a very well-connected team. I got my Novice wins with my "Flatty", moving into Open competition and garnering several Best Jr.'s very early in my career. However, my Flat-Coat returned to his training in performance events so I had to find another Jr.'s Dog...that was when I met my new Jr.'s dog, English Springer Spaniel CH. Tara's Southern Justice. I had been introduced to his breeder, Janice Spence, years before though a mutual friend but would not meet "Marty" until late 2007. But, when we did, we were instantly connected!

"Marty" and I had the potential to be a very strong team but, after a couple of months, somehow we did not seem to be "hitting our mark". So I sought out "The Master" (and my mentor) Mr. George Alston, how was conducting a seminar in our area. It was at this clinic that everything began to "CLICK"! Over time, Mr. Alston's guidance and Janice's patience and training in the proper grooming of a Springer along with advice from other experts in the dog show world sky rocketed my Jr.'s career. The next weekend in Hilton Head, SC, I swept the show winning Best Jr. both days. That was just the boost I needed. Personally, my favorite wins were at the Kentuckiana Cluster defeating 78 Jr.'s and the fall Maryland shows where I garnered 6 back-to-back Best Jr.'s over a 3 weekend period. In 2007, I went on to win a total of 19 best Jr.'s with 26 class wins, 18 Seconds, 9 Thirds, and 6 Fourths defeating a total of 772 Jr.'s and finishing #3 in the Sporting Group and #8 in the Top 30 Overall.

Most importantly, these wins and points were achieved by showing only on weekends, holidays and during summer break. My entire family supports the sport of showing dogs – in fact, my sister also shows dogs. But my parents do not permit us to miss school in order to show our dogs with one exception: Westminster! I am currently going to college majoring in Business Administration. I hope o return to dog showing in the near future and eventually show dogs professionally specializing in Springers. But, for now, my education comes first.

I want to sincerely thank you for this award – it means a lot to me. It represents a significant accomplishment and recognizes my hard work, dedication and commitment which all of us put forth: my boy "Marty", my "dog show mom" Janice, may family and I. But the most important lesson of all that I take with me from this experience is the love, appreciation and admiration of the English Springer Spaniel breed. They are all-around the most ideal breed to show competitively – especially in J r. Showmanship – great family companions, buddies to walk or jog with, and loving devoted four-legged friends and beautiful to look at.

Runner-Up Best Junior Handler

English Springer Spaniel - Field Trial Association

2007 Runner-Up to Best Junior Handler

Demery Paladichuk

It has been a wonderful journey for me and my Springer, Gleason, and it isn't even close to over yet. 2007 was a whirlwind year for Glea and me, gaining all ten wins we needed for Westminster in five months, with several Best Juniors along the way. It didn't stop there however, this year Gleason and I have accumulated 14 first place wins, along with 14 Best Junior awards, a rare feat. Those Best Juniors have placed me in the Best Junior Hall of Fame, as well as qualifying us for both Eukanuba and Westminster twice, as well as being consistently ranked in the Top 5 Sporting Juniors and Top 10 Juniors All Breeds. I hope to pursue a career as a professional handler once out of juniors, and am maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA as a junior in high school.

Juniors is supposed to be a learning experience, and it certainly has been. Thank you to everyone that has taught me and supported us, to the dogs before Gleason that were my junior's partner, to Kim Bullard for being the best big sister, and to Gleason, for teaching me things no human ever could.