

Retrievers of the Past...

By Joule Charney

FC-AFC Nakai Anny

“ He could have taken ‘the brute.’
Instead, he chose the
small female ... ”

“BACK IN 1971, I wanted to hunt a wide variety of game birds. I knew nothing about field trials. I’d been to one in my life. I figured if I went to a person who bred field trial dogs, I’d get a good dog” Tom Quinn reasoned. “I needed quality.” He decided to go to Ornbaun Kennels in northern California. Barbara Ornbaun had a litter of pups that was five and a half-months old already, and which had no training in them. The choice came down to a large chocolate male, who was predicted to be around eight-five pounds when fully grown, and a small black female.

“I thought, at the time, what a lot of duck hunters thought, that I needed a brute.” But, a bit of a rebellious nature, apparent in my recent interview with him, directed him toward the little female. He named her Nakai Anny, and called her “Nakai,” pronounced like ‘Knock Eye.’ “I ran into a Navajo about that time and asked for an Indian name. One fellow said it meant ‘dark.’ Another Indian told me it meant ‘Mexican.’ Dark. Perfect. If it’s incorrect, it doesn’t matter. I chose ‘Anny’ just because I liked the word.”

Breeder Barbara Ornbaun ...

Nakai’s breeder, Barbara Ornbaun, who, sadly, died recently, became one of Tom’s mentors. “I phoned Barbara often when I was stumped by my own training results,” Tom wrote in memory of Barbara on *page 7* of this issue. He read what he had written about her during our interview. “She had learned much from Rex Carr and was generous with dog lore and advice. Besides being an encouraging teacher, Barbara was a wonderful pigeon shot, remarkably inventive and intuitive with animals, courageous, ambitious, funny and undeterred by any weather. She was freaky strong: I saw her shoulder one hundred pound sacks of bird seed and easily climb a dozen kennel stairs.”



Owner/Handler Thomas Quinn with “Nakai” at the 1975 National Amateur.
Photo courtesy of Retriever News – 1975 National Amateur archive

FC-AFC NAKAI ANNY

OPEN	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	TOTAL:
Starts	1	15	7	4	4	31
First	1	1	0	0	0	2
Second	0	1	2	1	1	5
Third	0	1	1	0	0	2
Fourth	0	0	0	1	0	1
Places	1	3	3	2	1	10
Jams	0	3	0	0	0	4
# Finished	1	6	3	2	1	14
% Finished	100%	40%	43%	50%	25%	45%
Open Points	5.0	9.0	7.0	3.5	3.0	27.5
Cumulative Pts	5.0	14.0	21.0	24.5	27.5	27.5
AMATEUR	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	TOTAL:
Starts	1	14	6	4	4	29
First	0	0	1	0	0	1
Second	0	3	0	0	0	3
Third	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fourth	0	1	1	0	0	2
Places	0	4	2	0	0	6
Jams	?	5	2	?	?	7
# Finished	?	9	4	?	?	13
% Finished	?%	64%	67%	?%	?%	45%
Amateur Points	0.0	9.5	5.5	0.0	0.0	15.0
Cumulative Pts	0.0	9.5	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
ALL AGE	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	TOTAL:
All Age By Year	5.0	18.5	12.5	3.5	3.0	42.5
Cumulative Total	5.0	23.5	36.0	39.5	42.5	42.5

OWNER: Tom Quinn
 BIRTHDATE: 10/23/70
 NOT ON DERBY LIST

Avg. Open Points per year: 6
 Avg. Amateur Points per year: 3
 Avg. All-Age Points per year: 9

From "Retriever Field Trial Statistics 1941-1995," by Sue Reynolds.

Tom last saw Barbara around two years ago. "She was in a wheelchair. She had had a number of physical setbacks. I think she had such amazing strength, in a smallish frame, she overwhelmed herself."

Tom's immense admiration for Barbara comes through, not only in his words; but also in his struggle to utter them. "I'm getting emotional," he admitted. I chose to feature Nakai Anny for this installment of the Retrievers of the Past feature series just a few days before she died. I knew her health had been failing. I last spoke with her in November 2015, on the phone. I was surprised, given what I had heard about her health, that she was extremely chatty, although her voice had become quite faint. She was looking forward to getting together with a group of other field trial old-timers at a small reunion I was organizing at the 2015 National in Corning, CA. Regrettably, I did not interview her about Nakai Anny at that time, and she was not able to get to the reunion.

"FC-AFC Nakai Anny won the first Open she ran at age two; and, with Barbara's help, produced four champion-rich litters. Nakai is in the Retriever Hall of Fame. I have a new pup now and am starting the exasperating process of teaching this gorgeous imp to be useful. How I wish I could call Barbara now..." Tom's tribute wistfully concludes.

"Barbara was proud of Nakai and I when we started to find success.

I learned through Nakai that you don't need a brute. You need a dog that can get into small spaces. She proved it over and over again. Defeating these monster dogs. At that time, the bitches ran last. You already were a second class citizen as a team. Women's lib was just budding at that time. I enjoyed defeating professional trucks full of dogs!"

Blind Devotion ...

"Nakai's devotion was just amazing. She was small and intense. In fact," says Tom, to illustrate the point, "I had entered her in an Amateur up in Eureka [CA] when she was in prime time. They ran out of judges. They asked me if instead of running my dog who was entered, if I would just help them and judge one of the stakes. I had her honed to what I thought was a high degree. I asked my wife to run her. She'll do what you ask, I told Jeri."

"Jeri got through the first series. I judged a Minor. Jeri ran Nakai in one of the major stakes. Third series – water blind. I knew both of the judges. They were trying to be unique with a plain piece of ground. There was a serpentine piece of water and an old duck blind. They were competing against Ray Goodrich, who had Nakai's sire. I saw Ray when I got my new pup. He recalled when Jeri ran the dog. The judges put a half a fifth of whisky in the blind, which you could drink, or not. The

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opening was on the left. The [line to the] blind was all the way on the right. It was almost impossible to jump out. Or, you could take a penalty, get your dog to the left, then start hacking to the right. There was a rotting corner with blackberries on the right.”

Tom had a chance to assess the situation and speak with Jeri before Nakai ran the series. “I’d never seen anything like it. You had to pop gun. They threw a dead duck over the blind. My wife had never run a dog.”

“I told my wife to send her like normal. ‘Everyone’s making a mess of it. There’s a special command for going into blackberries. Be firm, say it at least three times.’”

“Nakai went into the hole in the floor, through the blackberries. All Ray saw was that Jeri put her hand down!”

The Competition ...

“I competed against Ray. Once I folded up on the first series, Ray, who had a private plane, offered me a ride home instead of commercial.”

“It was fun to run against ‘Rascal.’ ‘Corky’ (River Oaks Corky,

Owner Tom Quinn ...

Starting out in the field trial game, “We were just little nobodies, we were often short-changed when it came to ribbons because we were nobodies,” Tom believes.

Tom was a painter when he was training and handling field trial dogs, and he since has become well known, with artwork in multiple prominent galleries. “After I left field trials, I’ve gotten a hell of a lot more work done. I didn’t just want to go to trials. I wanted to win trials. The last trial I went to I had a grandson of Super Powder and Nakai. I went to six or seven Derbies with him, and when I couldn’t go, I had a friend run him. I think he ran six or seven Derbies in a row. He was a lot like Nakai in intensity. He was just as small. I said I didn’t want to make a field trial champion out of this dog. Only my hunting partner saw what he was capable of. He would have loved to trial. He was a show-off!”

Tom is well known in the retriever world as the author of *Working Retrievers: The Classic Book for the Training, Care and Handling of Retrievers for Hunting and Field Trials*. Writing a book was not part of his plans. “I was competing with my Derby dogs, trying to get points. I was at dinner with a writer friend, a Brit, and there was another writer from New York at the dinner table. He was very bright. He’s always in the New Yorker, one way or another, but he’s glib, and he fancies himself as an artist, which I don’t. They were competing about how intelligent they were, about something celestial. When it was my time to comment, all I had on my mind was not celestial. It was my dog. When they gave me a chance to speak, I would talk about dogs, retrievers.”

“I got a call from the guy when he got back to New York. ‘Some of your remarks were intriguing,’ he told me. He was a packager. Packers take different subjects to the publishing houses and they pitch them. Dutton was one of the grand old publishers. They thought it was time to do a dog book and asked me if I was interested in doing it. I said ‘yes.’ I was thinking dogs, dogs, dogs at the time. It took a long time to put it together.”

“When I was judging, some people would come up to me with their books. Some had just worn the book out, with mud, and blood and dog hair. The center of the book was almost destroyed.”

owned by Mike Flannery.) The Eastern dog, Mi Cris Sailor.” Tom has a big lament when it comes to the latter. “I wanted to see the dog. I wanted to defeat the dog with mine, in the high altitude. Both dogs broke and were eliminated. I was pissed off that Mi Cris Sailor was eliminated. So much for that. They were fabulous dogs.”

Some of my favorite companions were Wanapum Darts Dandy, owned by Charlie Hill, fanatical competitor and trainer, Kannonball Kate. The elite bitches. We judged each others’ dogs. “Dandy” was the cream of the field.”

“Another factor about a little female running last... I bet that I was always the poorest person on the trial grounds. I did all my own training, with help from friends. When I showed up, and I thought I was ready, I was ready for dog trucks filled with FCs. It was fantastic being the underdog in a field of heros, mighty dog trucks. If you could defeat Rex Carr, Jim Gonias and all the eastern pros, it was a very fine feeling.”

“There were people who expected to win one way or another, the old boy ‘aristos,’” Tom’s abbreviation for ‘aristocracy.’ “Blue collar Brits. Some were fantastic people. Some of them weren’t. For example, Auggie Belmont. He and his wife wouldn’t have been nicer. Plenty of the snotty ones. If you showed up with a fine animal, barriers melted.”

“Rex Carr he influenced everybody, whether they knew it or not.

They were there to ask Tom to autograph their copies. “It was very, very high praise. Flattery!” Tom adds that he met a man with a field champion from Redding, CA who claimed he trained his dog using only his book, to his surprise and delight.

The influence of Tom’s book runs far and wide. “I was quail hunting in the south with a guy who had owned Whygin Cork’s Coot.” The dog would become the 1966 and 1969 National Field Champion. “He was a college kid at the time and sold him to get through college. He’d read my dog book! Years later, we ran into each other in South Carolina.” In a major reversal of fortune, the man’s situation had changed dramatically. “He became a lawyer and had one account, and the account was the Rockefellers!”

The book is out of print; but, copies still are available for purchase online.

Tom summarizes his profession as “watercolor painting animals. I rarely paint dogs. That is very difficult, like painting somebody’s child. Obligations come with portraiture that I don’t care for. I painted a dog named “Stinger,” recently, from Wisconsin, for the head of the Labrador club [Fred Kampo]. That was the last portrait I did. I also did one for Ole Jackson (aka Ken Jackson, owner of FC-AFC Creek Robber). It’s in the HOF. I never painted my own dog.”

“On my studio wall is very nice color of Nakai taken by Bill Hillmann. He always wanted to shoot her, and he did when she was in prime time. It’s the same photo that’s in the HOF, different portraits, same background. She was probably age two. I used to train with Bill Hillmann. He was quite competitive and he knew what trials were. I was just trying to make my dog better. He was from the Wisconsin area, up that way. He knew a lot of people in the sport, he had the ‘who’s who’ down. ‘They’re going to make you do this and make you do that.’ I was pretty intimidated by what the judges were going to ask for, like they were Gods, or something.” Essentially, Tom would debrief trials with Bill. Bill would say, “Holy Christ! I knew nothing and Bill knew something.”

“It’s fun to talk about another era. I want my friends to be alive forever. Barbara, and a lot of people I competed against are gone. I knew six or eight with dementia.”

Handling an interviewee’s trip down memory lane often is a lot

I was down there [at CL2] once or twice, with his clients. I got along very well with him. He was supposed to be so intimidating. He took one look at my puppy, which was Nakai, and he gave me the red carpet treatment.”

“I like Mike Flannery,” notes Tom, then he launches into a story about an incident in Alaska where he was with a group of judges. “We were driving around looking at water we could use.” They finally found the water they liked; but, it was a no-go. The homeowner was irate. Mike punched him. We found some other water!”

“When you’re at full throttle, you tend to remember things,” then he cites “the Jackson Hole water blind. Corky and Anny were the only dogs to do it well. Our dogs were the only ones to break ice, in some trials. When the dog would finish, the ice would freeze up tight, and they’d have to go out and break the ice for the next dog.” Corky and Anny one-whistled that blind, says Tom. The other dogs averaged twenty whistles.



Photo by Hal Lauritzen of San Rafael, CA.

An Intense But Short Career ...

Nakai demonstrated amazing qualities of intensity, birdiness, obliviousness to water, and resolute eye contact, according to Tom and the late retriever historian Richard Hal-

stead. She “exhibited early signs of greatness,” they continue. “She had an excellent memory, reckless disregard for body and pain during retrieving, and an extreme desire to please.”

Tom told Richard “that she would have, without hesitation, charged into his large blazing fireplace to retrieve embers if he had asked it of her.”

like standing at the line, watching your dog run a massive quad, or more realistically, a dozen or more, very lengthy, marks, with countless factors throwing them off-line. Eventually, they arrive at the areas I’m hoping they’ll reach, and often, they reach ones I don’t anticipate from my pre-interview research. If I decide I need to handle, I do so very gently. This seemed like a good juncture to probe what possessed Tom to go for the little female, instead of ‘The Brute.’ I still didn’t have a handle on that ...

“There wasn’t any choice for me,” Tom says reflectively. “I was getting a female. “When I was 21 or so, I didn’t like the fact that we had an underpowered car. But, it handled beautifully. It was an early Porsche. Now it’s sort of a symbol for something else. Unknown inferior car and it could do amazing things as far as staying on the road. I liked being the underdog. I liked defeating giant powerful cars. That probably got converted over to dogs. I like the underdog thing. And, showing up with a little bit of a ‘speak softly and carry a big stick.’

And, with that revelation about himself, I concluded the interview. Tom was packing for a trip with Jeri to the National Wildlife Art Museum annual show. Modestly, he adds, “They collect my stuff.”

Bill Hillmann – Friend; Photographer ...

“I remember very clearly when, to the questionable glances of friends, Tom Quinn sold a LC Smith shotgun to give him the funds to buy Nakai Anny as a six month-old puppy,” says Bill. She had been basically a kennel dog and not accustomed to life in America. So Tom struggled ... teaching her about things that she was fearful of because of her confinement to kennel life during a time when many puppies are in their new homes and experiencing new and

wonderful things each day. Tom would go into the center of town and try to make her less fearful of flying flags and other things that she was not used to.”

“I remember very clearly when I first saw Nakai. She was pretty and willing, and had a very keen knack for marking. I tried at that time to convince Tom that he had a very good field trial prospect on his hands. My advice was to train her for field trial competition. Tom and I trained many months together; and in the end, Nakai became a very prominent and competent field trial competitor. But, perhaps her greatest achievement was being one of the earliest females to be bred to the great “Super Powder.” That breeding became one of the most famous and productive breedings in the history of field trials.”

“Tom had a high point Derby dog from Nakai’s first litter, a fabulous marking dog by the name of Dr. Davey PHD. His sister, NFC-AFC Risky Business Ruby, went on to be one of the top females in the history of the sport. My own high point Derby dog, FC-AFC Sunday Hawkeye, was from the second litter.”

“All in all, Nakai Anny was a great female who was a wonderful competitor and the mother of some of the greatest litters in the history of the Labrador retriever breed.”

“Bill has been in field trials for over thirty years and most everybody knows who he is and how much he’s accomplished,” says his wife Mary.

From his website: “Bill has trained the most High Point Derby dogs in Field Trial history. He has also been credited with scoring more total Derby points than any other retriever trainer in history. Bill has also developed more than forty Field Champions, numerous Amateur Field Champions, Double Header winners and a National Amateur Retriever Champion.

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“I just said that, word-for-word, to someone the other day.”

After winning her first Open at age two, Anny earned her FC at age three. Her career was cut short during her fourth year of trialing. “She injured her stifle, probably pushing off too hard. There was a long levy into water. Probably badger holes or gopher holes. She yipped. She came back and gave me the bird. But, she was limping and carrying the leg. It was repaired the old way. She broke the other side within a year. They said that was normal, because they compensate with the other leg. It was repaired. She was not lame; but, I decided that was enough.”

“Barbara had kept asking to breed her. I said, ‘No, she’s too valuable to be a brood bitch. I think I was the first person to breed to Super Powder. I competed against him in the Derby. He was a large dog. Not a monster. A big, strong dog. He could literally take a plate off a six foot six man’s head. He had this bounce that I admired. Everybody loved to watch him. Legend had it that he had a shallow hip. Nobody would touch him as a sire. I thought, he has ninety-nine other attributes. I want to breed to him. Barbara helped me. He was a virgin and mine was a virgin. That was up in Redding. We had this fantastic litter. He’s in the Hall of Fame. He didn’t achieve much, except excitement. There was an avalanche, a stampede of breeding afterward.”

“What about the rumored shallow hip?” I asked Tom.

“Bill Bryant, his owner, was very secretive. He wouldn’t tell anybody what the x-rays looked like. Auggie Belmont offered Bill a blank check and said ‘fill it in, I want that dog.’ There was a pleasant shroud of mystery. It may have been true. You’d have to dig him up and look. “Ruby” (Risky Business Ruby, the most prominent of Nakai’s

offspring) had a shallow hip. I explained it to the guy who bought her. We all knew that she had one suspect wheel. She had won the National; but, she eventually started to get lame. The dentist of Alaska sold a National Champion, which was the first in field trial history. He sold her to some extremely wealthy people. By the way, she sold for \$50,000, which was off the charts. It’s not now. Her third owners bought her two new hips.”

“I said to Barbara, ‘Hasn’t she done enough?’ “Honcho” (San Joaquin Honcho) was bred to Ruby and produced a wonderful dog. She had one or two new hips. It was pioneer work at the time. I don’t like the idea of the new hips. It was like an old race horse that should be retired. Almost like a Sea Biscuit story.”

Tom’s attitude toward Ruby’s owners eventually would soften considerably. “She was out here running a trial with the owner, and they turned out to be nice people. I was in the gallery and Ruby’s number came up.” When Tom had last seen her, “I saw a dull-coated skinny little dog that didn’t look sound.” After her hip surgery, “She was glossy, bouncing around like her father. I had to take my thoughts back. They’d done a good thing. She probably got a 10 on whatever the test was.”

The story gets even better from there, well, sort of. It depends on your perspective! “The guy calls her over.” Tom continues. “She sits, and delivers the bird. He was about to put the leash on her to leave the line. She trotted into the gallery. She greeted me, she smelled my hand, as if to say ‘good to see you!’

Unfortunately, I can’t retell the tale as well as Tom told it; but, you get the picture. When I was done cracking up, I asked what the handler was doing while this ‘disobedience’ was occurring? “The dog had left him. He just stood there and then she returned. He put a leash on her. And off they went. That’s kind of ‘Rin-tin-tin;’ but, it was real!”

Trainers gather with famous litter mates – all offspring of FC-AFC Nakai Anny – for the 1977 Derby in Portland, Oregon. From left, Carole Lane with Pistol Packin’ Mama, Joe Beitler with Poker Face, Barbara Ornbaun with AFC Rip Snortin’ Good Times and FC-AFC Ornbaun’s Amazing Grace, Ed Minoggi with Black and Blue, and Tom Quinn with Dr. Davey, Ph.D (left) and NFC-AFC Risky Business Ruby. Photo by Hal Lauritzen.



Career Summary ...

Nakai's brief career spanned 1973 through 1977. She earned 27 Open and 15 Amateur points, for a total of 42. She had one Amateur and two Open wins. She qualified for one National Open and two National Amateurs.

"Only once did she run more than ten trials in a year," points out retriever statistician Sue Reynolds.

Nakai Anny was inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 1995. ■

Tenacular Dogs – Joule Charney

Joule resides in Paradise, California. She has been a contributing writer for Retriever News for eight years. The *Retrievers of the Past...* feature series is published four times a year: May, July, September and October. Visit Joule online at www.tenacular.com



'74 NAFC-FC Ray's Rascal and his owner-handler-trainer Ray Goodrich. Rascal's daughter, FC-AFC Nakai Anny, with her owner-handler-trainer, Tom Quinn. Photo courtesy of the Labrador Retriever Club.

AFTER NAKAI WAS RETIRED FROM COMPETITION, she continued to serve as Tom's gun dog and hunting companion. "Nakai hunted brilliantly, intuitively and courageously in the freezing duck marshes and the upland quail cover," Tom told retriever historian Richard Halstead.

"All of my field trial dogs were hunting dogs," he adds.

Tom's choice of a stud dog for Anny was based on a lot of faith. Super Powder did not have an exceptional trial record. He earned only 35 points during his career. He was fifth on the 1973 Derby list and was Qualified All-Age. He was unproven as a stud dog and he had a questionable hip. But, Tom's faith in him to sire Nakai's litters had outstanding results – a National Field Champion, a High Point Derby Dog and a total of ten titled dogs.

After the successful breedings to Nakai, the demand for Super Powder as a stud dog increased exponentially. His record as a sire totaled 36 FC'S, 2 NFC'S and a NAFC.

Super Powder was out of NFC-2xNAFC Super Chief and FC Marten's Black Powder Kate. Nakai was out of NAFC-FC Ray's Rascal and an untitled dam named Kara. She was born October 23, 1970.

Nakai and Super Powder had four litters. The first produced 1980 NFC-AFC-CFC Risky Business Ruby and Dr. Davey PHD, the 1978 High Point Derby Dog.

"In one season, the puppies from this litter collectively amassed more Derby points than any other litter in retriever field trial history. I don't know if that still is true," says Tom.

"She was special and I knew it. Then, she made all these fabulous pups. Everyone thought they got the pick of the litter, which is rare. Everybody thought I made a mistake shipping this pup to them. There was so much quality. Carole Lane with "Pistol." Joe Beitler. Barbara. Ed Minoggie."

"I sold Risky Business Ruby. I thought I had a better dog at the time. I couldn't afford two dogs. Dr. Davey PHD was the National Derby Champion. But, I kept the wrong dog," Tom admits. "I eventually sold "Davey" and bought his brother who became an FC-AFC."

"When that litter was running against each other, one always won. We finally said, 'We're killing each other.' Peter Lane (owner of NAFC-FC Kannonball Kate) was always coming in *not* 1st. The Lanes were very wealthy and aggressive. He had an airplane. We made a plan and he went somewhere else."

NAKAI'S TITLED PROGENY (in alphabetical order)

FC-AFC Amazing Grace Of Ornbaun

FC-AFC Dick The Duck

FC Nakai's Stemwinder

FC Ornbaun's Wet Willie

FC-AFC Play The Red

FC-AFC Rip Snortin' Good Times

'80 NFC-AFC-CFC Risky Business Ruby

AFC Salty Margarita

FC-AFC Sunday Hawkeye (1979 High Point Derby Dog)

FC Texas Star III