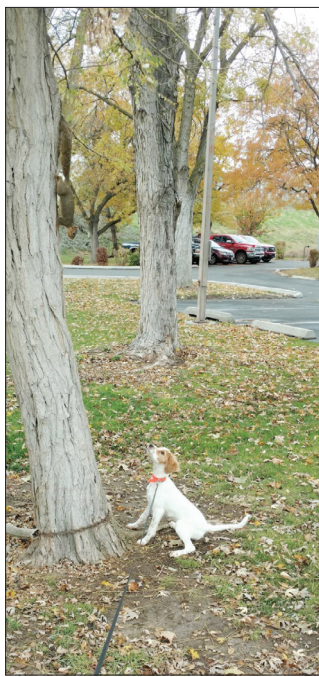


Urban resources for pointing dog development



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo
Beware of distractions, including fox squirrels, when seeking bird exposure in urban green space.

As an adult onset uplander living in the heart of the “big city” flanking Walla Walla’s downtown shopping district, I never really considered owning a pointing dog. A German shepherd and buff tabby marauded throughout our 600-square-foot apartment space as it was.

However, I had also never lived anywhere with legitimate upland hunting opportunity.

When my first rooster pheasant fell to the good fortune of arriving at a pheasant release site behind a hunter with a seasoned Lab, my interest in upland birds piqued instantly. Suddenly, the old Savage Fox double that I loved so dearly took on purpose and was carried in pursuit of the abundant valley quail in the public access beyond the city limits.

I don’t credit my lovely bride with making the best impulse decisions, like springing for a Llewellyn setter pup while we both lived in separate cities and apartments, fresh out of graduate school and living paycheck to paycheck. And that little pup was pure hell on our nerves and furniture. Yet, in hindsight, she changed our lives profoundly, forever — mine in particular, as the hunter of the household, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Similar to a custody arrangement, Ali and I split the duties of caring for young Finn, handing her off on our weekly visits. We both sought urban green space and any wildlands on the outskirts to expose Finn to wildlife. And while I knew nothing of training a pointing dog, I learned quickly how to utilize birds like pigeons that had grown accustomed to humans on the city sidewalks, and found Rooks Park on the edge of town with a resident covey of valley quail.

While a pup needs bird exposure, they also need socialization, basic obedience, and hunting commands, which can be taught indoors and on downtown streets. “Whoa” is a standard pointing dog command to keep the dog steady and on solid point as

you approach to flush a bird. It can also be used to stop a dog in the field in a dangerous situation. Trainers use apparatus like barrels, tables and elevated boards to teach this command, which can be done in the corner of a small space.

Similarly, “place” boards are typically used for retrievers, but can also be used to teach “whoa” as an object that the dog is to remain steady on when given the command.

Once your pup has the basic obedience down, it’s time to practice in public. Start with only a few repetitions, cycled with some time in between. Pups still need time to be pups and it’s a big world in the city. Slowly build up your frequency and number of repetitions as the pup becomes less interested in the ancillary surroundings. Remember to start slow and simple, with high reward for good work. Keeping a pup interested in training is important to ensure the lessons stick.

After a few jaunts downtown, your pup should have seen the flush of local pigeons enough to seek them actively. It will remember where the birds loaf and feed from your prior walks and anticipate the approach. Pointing behavior may still be coupled with the sight and sound of the birds, providing a good “whoa” opportunity. If possible, work with a partner to steady the dog while the other flushes.

The local valley quail were our saving grace when training Finn in her first year. She sought the usual blackberry and brush pile haunts and perked at the sound of their calls. While

her maturation was slow, the regular exposure to covey birds on the edges of natural wetlands instilled early drive and positive reinforcement for seeking.

Additionally, different breeds mature at different rates. My setters are typically not hunting with complete purpose until age 3, but that doesn’t mean they don’t find birds afield at a young age. Maintain optimism throughout the early years, building the trust and teamwork foundation. Even if your pup doesn’t fully grasp the “whoa” command, by their sixth year, they can occasionally be steady to shot without formal training. Remember, no amount of formal training can replace the flush of a bird.

A number of timeless, foundational training resources are available in print and digital media, with recent contributions being geared toward urban training. Project Upland provides a variety of useful articles with free online access. The techniques may not work precisely as presented in every case, but with a little adaptability to your pup’s learning style, and a commitment to gaining experience whenever and wherever possible, a fine pointing dog can be made on the urban landscape, and with minimal resources.

Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington, where he also actively serves the Walla Walla-based Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever chapter. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

Bowl:

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Heppner quarterback Jayden Wilson, who also is playing in the East-West Shrine All-Star Game in August, was named as a quarterback for the South team, along with junior Jakoby Moss of 6A Mountain View.

Davis, who also was an assistant coach in 2019, will be the South’s offensive coordinator.

“I thought this was a once in a lifetime opportunity,” Davis said. “I’m excited to do it again. This is a great opportunity for Tyasin, and it is well deserved. He is going to be a defensive back and play special teams. He is a very good return specialist. He has the tools to do it all. He will be outside of his comfort zone, but he’ll be OK.”

Burns, a 5-foot-10, 175-pound speedster, was a unanimous first-team selection by the Special District 1 coaches as a defensive back. He also earned second-team honors as a running back for the Bucks, who finished the season 4-2.

“I like offense better, but I play both sides of the ball,” Burns said. “I just have to do my part.”

Burns, who attends Nixyaawii Community School, where he also is a standout basketball player, will attend Eastern Washington University and has talked to the Eagles coaches about playing football.

The South and North rosters have changed in the past week, which is when Wilson was extended an offer to play.

“Some colleges don’t want their kids playing in this game,” Davis said. “I’m excited to work with

him (Wilson). I know he is a pretty good player. I’m excited to see what he can do. A good 2A kid can translate to a high level. I don’t think the lights will be too bright.”

The 6-5, 200-pound Wilson, who will play college football at Linfield University, helped the Mustangs to a 5-0 record this spring. He threw for 562 yards and ran for 337.

As a junior, he led the Mustangs to the 2019 2A state title, throwing for 1,282 yards and 23 touchdowns, and running for 797 yards and 14 touchdowns.

He also earned first-team Blue Mountain Conference and all-state honors at quarterback and defensive back as a junior.

The 6-1, 185-pound Moss threw for 942 yards and 14 touchdowns this season for the Cougars, who

finished with a 6-0 record.

Steeped in history

The Oregon Shrine Game was first played in 1948 at Multnomah Stadium. Now the Les Schwab Bowl, the event is playing its 73rd game.

Through 72 games, the series is even at 34-34 with four ties. The South beat the North 33-28 in 2019 to even the series.

With the 2020 game lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, teams are anxious to get on the field and take control of the series.

Each team this year will have 40 players, and will spend a week at Linfield working with their teammates before the game.

Proceeds from the game will benefit the Oregon Athletic Coaches Association general scholarship fund, and all of Oregon’s 5A and 6A schools.

Baseball:

Continued from Page B1

that person does to make sure everything is in place as well,” McClaughry said.

He said volunteers are crucial for putting on the tournament, with parents and community members contributing in many ways.

“Without the community, it doesn’t happen,” McClaughry said. “That’s even in the local season without the tournament, without all the volunteers that we have spending many hours, the local season doesn’t happen. When we have a week-long tournament, where we are going to have that variety of

teams with multiple games happening at two venues, it’s going to take a lot of people.”

With more than 400 ballplayers and more than 100 coaches in town for the next several days, McClaughry said he can’t help but feel excited.

“Everybody is really looking forward to it, the season was a fantastic success of having all the kids back out playing baseball for a month and a half,” he said. “Until you go out to the practices and games, and you see all the excitement the kids brought to it just to be back on the field and playing baseball. It’s just been an amazing thing to have those types of experiences back and you realize how much is lost

after putting it to the side for a year.”

Although teams will be competing for the chance to compete at state tournaments, McClaughry said his main goal is to make sure everyone involved has fun and creates lasting memories.

“People come out to the park to enjoy this event,” he said. “This is Little League, for this age group 8-14. It’s a great event for them and their coaches. Everyone that is out to help at this event is a volunteer, some of them traveled several hundreds miles to get to this. This is all about fun, it is competition, but keep that perspective. Be very respectful to everyone conducting the event, and have a good time and enjoy yourselves.”

Although spectators are not required to wear masks, they are encouraged to conduct themselves safely as they see fit in regards to social distancing.

ON THE SLATE

SATURDAY, JUNE 19

Prep girls basketball
MCC playoffs: Hermiston vs. TBA

Prep wrestling

Pendleton at IMC district tournament, Redmond, 10:30 a.m.
Hermiston at Washington state tournament, Centra-

lia, TBD

Prep swimming

IMC district swimming, Hood River, 10 a.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 21

Prep boys basketball

2A state tournament: Heppner vs. Knappa, at Portland Christian, TBD
1A state tournament: Nixy-

aawii vs. North Clackamas Christian, 8:45 p.m., Baker High School

1A state tournament: Ione/Arlington vs. TBD

IMC playoffs: Pendleton at Hood River, 6 p.m. (loser out)

Prep girls basketball

2A state tournament: Hepp-

ner vs. Vernonia, at Portland Christian, TBD

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii vs. Rogue Valley Adventist, 3:30 p.m., Baker High School

1A state tournament: Ione/Arlington vs. Livingstone Adventist, noon, Powder Valley High School

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