

COONHOUNDS AT THE AKC *by Steve Fielder*

Sportmix Showdown Series - We are very happy to welcome Sportmix Pet Foods as a major sponsor for AKC coonhound events. Sportmix is widely distributed across the United States and can be found in Tractor Supply stores as well as many other retail outlets and feed stores and should be easily accessible to coon hunters everywhere. Sportmix is produced by Midwestern Pet Foods, headquartered in Evansville, Indiana.



Front: Sportmix's John Headley, Steve Fielder, Jimmy Phillips. **Standing:** David McKee and Sportmix's Chad Horner at the St Jude Benefit Event in Parsons, Tennessee.

Members of the AKC Coonhound Events Management Team met with Sportmix officials, John Headley, Scott Ring and Chad Horton at the Decatur County World's Largest Coon Hunt in Parsons, Tennessee and came away with a strong impression of these folks. Scott Ring, a longtime coon hunter and Black and Tan man will be working directly with our team to bring the new Sportmix Showdown Series of events to AKC enthusiasts around the country.

The Sportmix Showdown Series replaces the Gold Medal series and will offer sixteen-dog format money events to the clubs with larger payouts to the club and the hunters than comparable programs. Clubs may schedule the Sportmix Showdown Series events through the Coonhound Events office by calling toll free, 1-800-436-4486.

Two plus point cast wins at Sportmix Showdown Series events during the 2011 calendar year qualify your coonhound for the 2012 AKC World Coonhound Nite Hunt Championship to be held in May of 2012 in Crittenden, Kentucky.

Two plus point cast wins at Sportmix Showdown Series events also qualify your coonhound for the Sportmix Showdown Series Championships. The Sportmix Showdown Series Championships will be held in the spring and in the fall of 2012 based on cast wins earned from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011. Tentative locations are Greensburg, Indiana for the spring event and Orangeburg, South Carolina for the fall event. Cast wins earned in 2011 at the discontinued AKC Gold Medal Events will also count toward qualification at the 2012 Sportmix Showdown Series Championships. The Sportmix Showdown Series Championships will each feature cash purses, estimated at this point to be a minimum of \$10 thousand each. Qualified dogs may hunt either of the Championships or both at the owner's choice. Dogs may also qualify for the 2012 Sportmix Showdown Series Championships by placing in the Top Sixteen in the dog's applicable State or Breed race for the 2011 calendar year.

Combining the strength of Sportmix as sponsor with a program that offers multiple opportunities to qualify for three major national events, the AKC World Coonhound Championship, the

AKC Spring Sportmix Showdown Series Championship, and the AKC Fall Sportmix Showdown Series Championship provided a three-point program that promises great competition and equally great awards for the hunter that chooses fun, fair and feasible AKC events of his or her choice in coonhound competition.

AKC Heartland Classic - The sixth annual AKC Heartland Classic mega event happens this month at the Chickasaw Big Four Fairgrounds in Nashua, Iowa. The dates are June 17 and 18. Hosted by the Heartland Federation and the Nashua Coon Hunters, the event features AKC World Qualifying Nite Hunts each night, AKC Youth hunts each night, and AKC World Qualifying Bench Shows on each day of the two-day event.

A regular feature of the AKC Heartland Classic is the awarding of two Polaris Sportsman 500 H.O. four-wheelers. One is awarded to the overall hunt winner and the other to the winner of the raffle. The AKC Heartland Classic Polaris raffle is an excellent opportunity for clubs to win the four-wheeler to be in turn raffled or awarded as a prize at a club-sponsored event. Raffle tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased by contacting Bob Burgart at 641-330-1153 or Brad Messersmith at 319-240-9721. Not one but two Polaris Sportsman 500 H.O. four-wheelers presented at the same hunt! Awesome! And that's not all. There will be a \$750-value award package at the shows and \$500 added to the Nite Hunt on Saturday night. If you live in the upper Midwest you don't want to miss the AKC Heartland Classic, now in its sixth fun-filled year! Come on up to corn country and have a great time with us this month in Nashua! You don't have to be present to win a Polaris 4-wheeler. Call to purchase your tickets today!



Two Polaris 4-wheelers will be awarded at the 6th Annual AKC Heartland Classic

AKC Youth World Championship - We're calling all youth hunters to the big AKC Youth World Championship on July 1 and 2 at the High Oaks Coon Club in Newport, Tennessee. Parents, why not plan a family vacation around the AKC Youth World Championship? The event is located just off Interstate 40 and is about 30 minutes from all the attractions associated with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The High Oaks Coon Club is known for the fantastic events it holds including the AKC Tennessee State Championship. The organization has raised thousands of dollars over the years for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The food, the fun, and the outstanding Bench Show and Nite Hunt competition for young folks aged 17 and younger is outstanding. Just ask a youth hunter that has attended the AKC Youth World Championship and you'll get the full story. Better yet, come to Newport on the first weekend in July and join us. You may just be crowned 2011 AKC Youth World Champion!