

HANDLER OF THE MONTH – JUNE 2008
DARRELL COOK

Darrell Cook, Sundowner Stockdog Association charter member, SSA director all but the first 3 months of the Association's existence. Darrell was born in Borger, TX and his family moved to Hopewell Ok., a small community by Coleman, when he was only a few months old. When he had a family of his own, he moved to Wapanucka, OK Husband of Karen, father of Laura, Amber, and Lane, Pawpaw of Walt, Christian, self-employed, hard-worker, trial planner, all around good guy, these are just some of the words that describe Darrell.

Darrell got started with "dogs" working cattle for himself and others. He also was at one time an avid coon hunter. Hounds taught him a lot about handling dogs and he believes that is why he transitioned to Border Collies so easily. He enjoyed teaching his hounds some "tricks". Jenny would open her own kennel door, come to the field where he was working, stay awhile, and when told go put herself back in the pen. He got his first Border Collie from Paul Gilbert (also a charter member of SSA). According to Darrell, he and Paul went to several dog trials just to watch and thought they would like to try it. This is how they became involved with the Sundowner group.

Darrell wants to win! He enjoys the people and fellowship, he likes working with the dogs, but the competition is what keeps him coming back. "I just like to win. If I'm playing my Mama in checkers, I want to beat her 2 out of 3 times." This competitive personality is what compels Darrell to keep challenging himself and SSA members by engineering tough courses and obstacles. According to him you either keep improving and handling better dogs, or you get left in the dust. "When Sundowner first started any pretty good dog and handler could win, now you've got to be on your game or you won't win. The handlers and dogs have got SO much better than when I started in this thing. The dogs have a lot more handle and control."

Darrell is currently using three dogs in the trials, Elmer, Lucy, and Hooch. Elmer is the only dog still competing in SSA that was there in the beginning. Elmer competed in the first trial and is still competing and teaching the youngsters a thing or two. He may be small but he is mighty.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

The list is long but here are the hightlights.

SSA "RANCH" SERIES SEVERAL TIMES

TOP OF TEXAS CHAMPION

ELMER-RANCH 2ND-2003

ELMER-OPEN 3RD-THREE TIMES

LUCY-NOVICE 2ND-2005

LUCY-OPEN DOG OF YEAR-2006

HOOCH-SSA FUTURITY 2ND-SPRING 2008

HOOCH-KA.COTTONWOOD FUT.-TOP 10

ADVICE: Never tell your dog to "load up" when your head is hanging out the window. (Ask Darrell for details, but let's just say Hooch's nose is tougher than Darrell's.)