Why Shoot Skeet?

My name is Jaiden Grinnell and I'm a skeet shooter on the Women's National Shotgun Team. My job here is to tell you why you should shoot skeet too. In order to tell you that, let me tell you why I shoot.

I have been shooting skeet on either a USA Shooting Development Team or USAS National Team for about six years now, so my career is fairly young in comparison to some of the other shooters on the world stage. By the time I made my first team I was just starting high school and not quite 14 years old. I had tried several school sports in the past and found that shooting was my true calling. I will be the first to tell you that there were many sacrifices along my journey. Every day after school, I went to the shooting range to practice. Although I was on my school dive team during the winter season, too much time was taken from shooting practice and I eventually gave up school sports to focus on shooting. In order to go to matches, I missed school functions and time with friends. That doesn't make shooting sound like too much fun but don't give up on me yet! Yes, sacrifice is a requirement of being a successful shooter, but sacrifice is a requirement of being successful in anything you set your sights on. Before you say that you're not willing to give up prom or that football game, let's delve into what has kept me going.

The hard work and sacrifice that I put into shooting has helped me develop strength of character and life experience than cannot be measured. Traveling overseas with my teammates taught me responsibility, time management and self-discipline. It was up to me to be awake and ready on time because...
sometimes you and the National Coach have to be on the range at different times while overseas. There was a lot of growth even after my first trip overseas, where all of these life skills came into play.

Talking to people from different states and countries is another aspect of shooting that I would never trade. Some of my close friends come from the shooting world, and even before I moved out of my parents’ house, I kept in better touch with shooters than I did with friends at home. The people I have had the amazing opportunity to meet have turned out to be my best friends and the best part is that we all have a common love for the best sport on earth.

Now, I don’t know about you, but I’m all for instant gratification. What could be better than seeing that puff of smoke as the target shatters? How about the pride of hearing your national anthem play and your flag raised as you win the gold? Or the joy of walking onto the field with USA on your back? That’s the real kicker. You represent the talent of your country. Seeing as we happen to live in the best country ever, I must say, that’s a pretty cool feeling.

So why do I shoot skeet? Seems pretty boring that the targets fly in about the same place every time, right? Wrong. Yes, the targets fly in about the same place everywhere in the world you go, with the exception of a stiff wind. However, this makes the game quite a challenge because high and consistent scores are the scores that win. A strong mind and quick eyes are necessary to shoot those kinds of scores. A strong mind is a disciplined mind, and a disciplined mind comes with practice, coaching, and the conscious decision to make it that way. The intensity of the game drew me to skeet because of the scores necessary to win. I like a challenge and, for me, skeet was the way to go.

This is not to say trap or double trap will not gain you the strength of character and life experience discussed above. My journey has been in skeet and so that is simply what I know best. Specialists in your favorite event can tell you what they gained from it and why they chose the event they did. As for me, I chose skeet. The life skills and experience I have gained from shooting sports completely and totally vanquish any regret for the hard work and sacrifice I have put in to my career. It can be summed up like this: Shooting is what I do, it’s who I am, and it’s what I love. My job was to tell you why you should shoot skeet. All I can say is as long as you’re still pulling the trigger I’ll be happy, but I’d love to see more people be as happy as I am in the sport I love.

Grinnell on the podium at the 2010 World Shooting Championships where she won the bronze medal for Junior Women’s Skeet.

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