Silver in the Snow
World Class shooters shoot World Class ammunition

**RIFLE**

Matt Emmons
Double Olympic medalist,
ISSF World Cup 2009 Silver Medal Prone - WC3,
Bronze Medal 3P - WC3

**PISTOL**

Keith Sanderson
Multiple 2009 ISSF World Cup Rapid Fire Pistol medalist,
Silver Medal - WC1, Gold Medal - WC2, Bronze Medal - WC3

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USA Shooting Recognizes 2009 Athletes of the Year: Keith Sanderson and Kim Rhode

By Mary Beth Vorwerk, Media and Public Relations Manager

Photos courtesy of the ISSF

Pistol shooter Keith Sanderson (San Antonio, Texas) and shotgun shooter Kim Rhode (El Monte, Calif.) added one more accomplishment to their already outstanding list of successes in 2009 by being selected as the 2009 USA Shooting Athletes of the Year.

USA Shooting would like to recognize Keith and Kim, as well as the Discipline Athletes of the Year, and thank them for their excellent achievements and dedication to the sport of shooting.

Sanderson, a 2008 Olympian, earned the Male Athlete of the Year honor after an unprecedented three medals on the ISSF World Cup circuit. Sanderson captured the gold at the Beijing World Cup, silver in Changwon, Korea and bronze at the World Cup Munich in the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event. Sanderson also grabbed fifth place at the Milan World Cup. In addition, Sanderson finished in third place at the 2009 Rifle/Pistol Fall Selection Match at Fort Benning, Ga.

For the third consecutive year, four-time Olympian Rhode was chosen as the USA Shooting Female Athlete of the Year. A four-time Olympic medalist, Rhode shot her way to two World Cup medals this year, claiming the silver in San Marino and the bronze in Munich in the Women's Skeet event. Rhode was also the 2009 National Champion and finished in first place at the 2009 Shotgun Fall Selection Match, earning a spot on the 2010 World Shooting Championship team. Rhode also finished seventh at the 2009 Shotgun World Championships.

Sanderson and Rhode were selected as the overall USAS Athletes of the Year, but USAS also recognizes the Discipline Athletes of the Year, who are the athletes that earned the highest number of points in each discipline.

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) member Michael McPhail (Darlington, Wis.) was the top male athlete for rifle, while Jamie Beyerle (Lebanon, Pa.) won the honor for women’s rifle for the fourth year in a row, and USAMU member Josh Richmond (Hillsgrove, Pa.) had the highest number of points for men’s shotgun. Sanderson is also the Male Athlete of the Year for pistol and Rhode is the Female Athlete of the Year for the shotgun discipline. A female pistol shooter was not chosen this year as there were no female pistol shooters who met the minimum point requirement.

McPhail had an excellent year in the Men’s 50m Prone Rifle event, capturing two bronze medals on the World Cup circuit, as well as the
silver medal at the World Cup Final. McPhail also finished in fifth place at the World Cup Changwon and was the 2009 National Champion in Men’s Prone.

Beyerle, a 2008 Olympian, won the 2009 World Cup Final bronze medal in Women’s 50m 3 Position Rifle. She finished fourth at the World Cup in Milan and was the 2009 National Champion. She also claimed second place at the Rifle/Pistol Fall Selection Match.

Richmond captured the gold medal in the Men’s Double Trap event at the 2009 World Cup in Munich, Germany. He took home the bronze at the San Marino World Cup and finished fifth at the World Cup in Minsk. Richmond was also the 2009 National Champion and finished fourth at the Shotgun World Championships. Most recently, Richmond won the 2009 Shotgun Fall Selection Match, claiming a spot on the 2010 World Shooting Championship team.

These athletes were chosen based on the USAS Athlete of the Year Nomination and Selection Procedure, which is a points system that rewards performance in major competitions.

The overall athletes of the year were submitted to the U.S. Olympic Committee for consideration for the 2009 USOC SportsMan and SportsWoman of the Year awards, which have been presented annually since 1974 to the top overall male and female athletes within the U.S. Olympic Family.

For more information on these athletes, please visit www.usashooting.org.

Physio Theme

In addition to our great features stories, you will notice in this issue that we have three physio-related articles written by SFC Theresa DeWitt from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit as well as USA Shooting Team Physiotherapists Dr. Cathy Arnot and Dr. Nicholas Potter. We are sure that these topics will appeal to you whether you are a rifle, pistol or shotgun shooter and we certainly hope that you will enjoy these articles from a different perspective, other than looking directly through the sights!
Shooting IS a Physical Sport
By SFC Theresa DeWitt, 1996 Olympian

What do these individuals have in common: Peyton Manning, Vincent Hancock, Michael Phelps, Glenn Eller, Tiger Woods, Kim Rhode, Lance Armstrong and Lance Bade? They are all athletes. By definition, an athlete is “a person trained to compete in contests involving physical agility, stamina or strength; a trained competitor in a sport, exercise or game requiring physical skill.”

Though shooting may be considered an unconventional sport, most competitors would agree that consistent winning performances definitely require a certain amount of physical skill. But it is not a physical skill that relates to running, jumping or throwing. According to Dr. Robert DuVall, director of SportsMedicine of Atlanta (SMA), the “shooting sports represent the essence of fine motor control in sports….few other sports require the refined motor skill and precision of shooting. Likewise, few other sports necessitate the combined physical and emotional aptitudes that are required for sport shooting success.”

So while the shooting sports do not engage large muscle groups like swimming would, the “fine motor control” and “precision” necessary for hitting our targets does demand a certain level of fitness from smaller muscle groups. For example, the core stabilizers and the rotator cuff muscles may become sore after a lengthy break from lifting and swinging a shotgun during the competition season. In essence, our bodies become part of our competitive equipment. If we consciously choose to purchase the best shotguns we can afford to shoot, take pains to keep them functioning and tweak them mercilessly in an attempt to fine-tune just a little bit more, why then don’t we put the same training focus and effort on our physical bodies?

That’s not to say that you have to be on Lance Armstrong’s training plan or that you have to spend six hours a day in the gym or be doing “two-a-days.” Daily exercise is “medicine” though. A simple, sport-specific strength training or flexibility regimen can enhance overall health and reduce the occurrence of illness and injury in addition to improving performance.

Stretching is an important component of any athlete’s training program. It reduces muscle tension, prevents injuries and prepares the body for activity. However, there is a right way and a wrong way to stretch muscles. SMA advises that the right way is a “relaxed, sustained stretch with your attention focused on the muscles being stretched.” The wrong way is a “bouncing motion” or stretching to the point of pain. Remember that stretching, when done correctly, is not painful. Pain is an indicator that something is wrong! SMA offers these stretching fundamentals:

1. Slowly move to a position of gentle pulling in the muscle.
2. Hold this position – DO NOT BOUNCE - until the gentle pulling decreases.
3. Progress further into this position until a gentle pull is felt again.
4. Repeat the sequence, also contracting the opposing muscle group for greater relaxation.
5. Proper form (and feeling the pull in the muscle rather than in the joint) assures stretching and minimal overstretching.
6. Stretching in order from “top-down” (neck, shoulders, back, arms, torso, legs) ensures all muscle groups get targeted. Remember to breathe throughout.

Do not stretch a cold muscle: warm up first with 3-5 minutes of jogging in place, jumping jacks or walking. This raises your core body temperature enough to get your muscles ready for activity. Examples of good stretches for shooters:

1. Neck stretch – Lean your head sideways toward your left shoulder as your left hand pulls your right arm down and behind your back. Hold 30 seconds, repeat on right side.
2. Pectoralis stretch – Place your shoulder against a door frame or stationary object. Turn your body away from your shoulder, feeling a stretch between your shoulder and chest. Do this slowly and under control. Hold 30-60 seconds, repeat on opposite side.
3. Lower back stretch – From a long leg sitting position, lean forward from the waist and lock arms around the back of legs just above the knees. Pull upward without locking arms and hold for a count of 5.

Other sport-specific stretches can be found at www.SportsMedicineofAtlanta.com along with sport-specific exercises designed to strengthen those muscle groups used for shooting. It’s just as important, too, to strengthen the opposing muscle groups. In other words, raising and swinging a shotgun on a regular basis develops the pectoral muscles in the chest, but tends to neglect the latissimus dorsi in the upper back. This causes an imbalance and lack of symmetry between these synergistic muscle groups. Evidence of this can be seen in a lot of shotgun shooters: when standing in a natural posture, the shoulders tend to curl forward because the pectoral muscles are stronger than the muscles in the upper back.

An effective exercise to counteract this imbalance is the Seated Row:

1. From the Editor
2. AIM with AMU
3. Physio Philosophy
4. On the Firing Line
5. Coaches’ Corner

USA SHOOTING NEWS
1. Begin seated with upright posture, back flat – DO NOT lean forward.
2. Pull handle back toward lower chest, your back should remain straight – DO NOT lean backward.
3. Focus on squeezing your shoulder blades together first and then pulling with your arms.
4. Return to start position.
5. Repeat with 10-12 repetitions for 3 sets.

The Bent Over Row is also an excellent back exercise:

1. Begin supported on a bench as in the first picture, with a flat back.
2. Pull weight up to chest, keeping your elbow in, without rotating your shoulders.
3. Focus on squeezing your shoulder blade in first, then pulling with your arm
4. Return to start position.
5. Repeat with 10-12 repetitions for 3 sets.

Complementing the benefits of daily exercise is maintaining adequate hydration. Water is an important nutrient for athletes. It comprises 60 percent of our total body weight and 70 percent of our muscle fiber. Consider the fact that your vision depends on the tiny muscles of the eye contracting and relaxing as necessary for visual acuity (not to mention the aqueous nature of the eyeball itself). If these muscles become dehydrated, their function degrades and therefore the precise vision you rely on in competition deteriorates. The rule of thumb is not to wait until you are thirsty to drink water. Drink plenty of water before, during and after training or competition, even in cold weather. Pay attention to the color of your urine: if it looks like iced tea, guess what…?! Bottom line, shooters should think of themselves as athletes (“fine-tuned and on the verge of greatness”) and approach their training with that mindset. There are many dimensions to the success equation and physical training is often a neglected component of that equation. You don’t need to be Arnold Schwarzenegger, but then again, you don’t want to be the consummate couch potato either! Stay Army Strong!
Postural Considerations for Rifle and Pistol Shooters

By Dr. Cathy Arnot, Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina; USA Shooting Team Physical Therapist

Physical therapy interventions can be very beneficial for the shooting athlete. Physical therapy evaluation includes assessment of postural alignment, flexibility, strength, postural stability, biomechanics and the evaluation and treatment of acute and chronic musculoskeletal impairments.

Postural alignment is very important. Certain body type variations can predispose you to injury. For example, misalignment of your foot and ankle can lead to disorders of the ankle, shin, knee, hip and lower back. The most common misalignment is “flat foot” or pes planus. Typical treatment for flat feet includes assessment of muscle length, flexibility exercises and the fabrication of orthotics to correct the flattened arch.

Flexibility assessment is critical for the standing shooter. For instance, a right handed rifle shooter must have enough extensibility of the hip flexors, the left iliotibial band, right hip adductors, spinal musculature and left wrist flexibility to assume a position that is relaxed and requires the minimal amount of muscle activation. Ideally, shooters should be able to completely relax in their standing position. Tightness in any of these areas can result in unnecessary and unwanted activation of trunk or lower extremity muscles to maintain a balanced standing position. As an overall assessment tool, I routinely check the flexibility of the hamstrings, deep hip flexors (iliopsoas), quadriceps, hip extensors (gluteus maximus), hip internal and external rotators, iliotibial band, calf muscles (gastrocnemius/soleus), the chest muscles (pectoralis), shoulder rotators (rotator cuff), biceps, triceps, wrist and finger muscles. Very little research has been conducted on rifle shooters and injury prevention. One study performed in the 1980’s found a positive correlation between having a tight iliotibial band and lower back pain. Therefore, I give ITB stretches to all rifle shooters.

Rifle shooter and 2008 Olympian, Jamie Beyerle believes strongly in the importance of flexibility and shooting. “Many people believe shooting is all about just standing still, and being tight is a good way to do that. This statement is not completely true,” commented Beyerle. “Flexibility and relaxation go hand in hand. Stretching before shooting is just as important as stretching for a physical sport. If you are not stretched out before shooting, your body loosens up and your position changes the longer you shoot. If you stretch, this change is much smaller if any there is any change at all.”

Strength is another important consideration. For rifle and pistol shooters, endurance and isometric strength are more important than “bulking up.” Strength training that involves high repetition with low weights is preferable than low repetition and higher weights. I assess the strength of each shooter’s core muscles (deep abdominal and lower back muscles), arm muscles (deltoid, rotator cuff, biceps, triceps, wrist and hand muscles), trunk muscles (serratus anterior, latissimus dorsi, rhomboids, upper, middle and lower trapezius) and lower body muscles (gluteus medius and gluteus maximus). For pistol shooters it is important to have strength in all of these areas to maintain position for longer periods of time, to maximize stability so that postural sway is minimized and for injury prevention. For rifle shooters strength and endurance are primarily useful for injury prevention.

Sandra Uptagrafft, the 2007 Pan American Games gold medalist in Women’s Sport Pistol, can attest to the importance of having a strong core in order to maximize stability in her shooting. “A strong core is critical for stability, so under ideal training conditions I would work on core strengthening exercises at least three times a week,” said Uptagrafft. “I combine low weight and high repetition core strength and balance exercises for general stability and endurance, with pistol holding exercises to work more specific muscles.”

Uptagrafft added that being a right-handed pistol shooter, she tends to overwork the right side of her body, so she makes sure to work her left side for symmetry. She also stresses that stretching is key to keeping good balance and should be done after each workout and/or range session. “For me in particular, my cervical spine can get pulled out of alignment from heavy training, so stretching all neck muscles has been very important for me to avoid pain and injury. All this gives me a solid foundation on which to build each shot. The stronger my core, the better my hold will be, and the steadier my hold, the smaller my holding area will be. The smaller my holding area, the less movement I see, and this makes it easier for me to squeeze the trigger.”

Balance and coordination are also addressed in physical therapy evaluation. Typically the shooters single-leg balance is assessed with the eyes open and closed. A normal score would be at least 60 seconds. Many of the elite shooters are able to hold a
steady position for over three minutes. If it appears that a shooter has balance deficits, I recommend a series of exercises that include practicing single leg stance and using the Wii Fit. When using the Wii, I calculate their Wii age and then have them progress using the Yoga, Balance and Strength modules. One advantage of using the Wii is that individual progress is easily monitored. As shooters tend to be a competitive group, the Wii is useful in that the shooters can compete against each other. Other ways to enhance stability include training under special conditions: standing on a foam pad instead of the concrete floor, using a narrower stance to increase difficulty and prolonging your hold.

Shooters are prone to a variety of injuries due to the prolonged postural stresses and repetitive nature of the sport. Many rifle shooters have knee, hip, neck, mid and lower back pain from prolonged standing, kneeling and prone positions while supporting the weight of the gun. Pistol shooters are more prone to shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand and neck injuries. Treatment of these injuries can include joint manipulation, soft tissue release, and the identification of any flexibility, core strength or stability deficits. Many times we will fabricate orthotics to assist with standing stability.

“I’ve suffered chronic back pain for years,” said 1996 Olympian Eric Uptagrafft. “I attribute this to the stress from shooting standing. Through the use of custom shoe orthotics and more recently core stability exercises, I’ve extended my three position shooting career by seven years so far.”

To find a physical therapist in your area, please visit:
http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Find_a_PT&Template=/APTA-APPS/FindAPT/findaptsearch.cfm and type in your zip code.

Cathy Arnot graduated from Baylor University in 1990 with Masters of Physical Therapy and graduated from the University of St. Augustine with a Doctor of Physical Therapy in 2003. Arnot began working with USA Shooting in 2003 as part of a group of physical therapist therapists who had completed fellowship training under Dr. Bob DuVall at SportsMedicine of Atlanta. The physiotherapist therapists travel with the team to World Cups, World Cup Finals, World Championships, Spring/Fall Selection matches, National Championships and the Olympic Games. Arnot is currently teaching teach mobilization, manipulation, orthopedic lab, ethics and foundations of physical therapy in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of South Carolina.
More Conflicts

By JP O'Connor

“Are you not being paranoid if they really are out to get you!”

Continuing on the topic of the conflicted athlete, the following email provides an opportunity to amplify the topic of clearing conflicts, and to discuss a couple of common themes. The email is edited ever so slightly so that the identities remain confidential—in order to protect the innocent…and the guilty! If you think you know who wrote the email, you are incorrect. If you think this email is about you (feeling guilty?) and you want to confront the writer, save your energy, look in the mirror, and do some serious thinking about your priorities and then reflect on the ideas presented here. Everyone else may enjoy a peek inside the mind and life of another athlete in order to gain valuable perspective for one’s own journey.

An Athlete Writes:

“Subject: Hi JP!!”

“Long time no talk! First off, I wanted to thank you. My first year in college I had a lot of ups and downs with my shooting and I was ready to give up. I took a long break over the summer and came back to school this year willing to make a fresh start. I went through all my notes that I had taken at your clinics and somehow everything has just clicked! I’ve been shooting better than I ever have in my life, even reaching a new personal best. :-) Every single day when I’m shooting I think of things that you have said and things I have read in your articles. So I just wanted to thank you for helping me so much!”

“I did run into a problem though that I wanted to ask you about. I have been much stronger mentally this year than I ever have been. I have been enjoying the process of shooting and not caring about the outcome at all. But one girl on my team wasn’t happy with my improvement because that meant she was no longer the top on the team. She started playing with my head, and long story short, I really let her get to me, and had a terrible match this past weekend. I thought I was mentally stronger than this but I am stuck on what to do next… I shot a practice match today and was able to bounce back a little, but it is still all in my head.”

“A second question is about another guy on my team. He is an amazing shooter—in practice…but when it comes match time he lets the pressure get to him. He demands perfection and when he doesn’t get it he gets so mad at himself. He demands to be the best on the team. I keep telling him that he is going about it all wrong and focusing on the wrong things. So far I cannot get through to him and he is ready to give up. I don’t know how to convince him that he is going about it wrong. He says he cannot do it any other way. You are the only person I can think of that would have some good thoughts about this.”

“I am so sorry to bombard you with such a long email, but I have been meaning to reconnect and thank you and then these last two situations I described were new and I don’t know how to address them.”

Situation 1 – “Should I stay or should I go?”

It is apparent that the writer of this email faced many similar issues and conflicts as the athlete that wanted to quit, who is mentioned in the previous article.

It is easy to set up a negative thought pattern when one is frustrated: “Yes, I did love to shoot before, but I don’t now because I don’t do well in competition. I hate it. Coach tells me to train, but why should I? After all, I just do worse in each competition. I don’t like to shoot anymore so why should I even bother? I should just give up.” Note the circular argument?… and circular downward spiral? Athlete can get worse because they have reduced their training inappropriately and especially because they have already decided they are not going to do better.

This is a classic “dark moment” and the athletes must make up their mind to overcome the current emotions and do what is needed. Most often, this turns out well. Is it difficult? Is it sometimes a long process? Is it frustrating? Most certainly.

The athlete who “toughs it out” usually breaks out into good times again, as with this athlete. The athlete who says “I cannot” does not. Instead, they lock themselves into a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. Notice that the first sentence says “usually” the athlete breaks out. There is no certainty. Some athletes will point to that and use it to justify their inaction. There are no assurances in sport or in life. We can give up and “prove” that we were right or we can stay the course—and quite likely surprise ourselves.

Several years ago at a “High Performance Shooters” camp, the camp shirts included one of my slogans: “What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?” One must continue to attempt—without any assurance!

Situation 2 – Jealousy

This is a touchy topic—and sadly, it is more common than many people realize. The jealous athlete mentioned in the email is hurting her teammate, her team and most of all herself. The energy that she puts into hurting everyone could be used in a positive manner to improve her own game. Then everyone benefits.

Ultimately, shooting is an individual sport. We may put together club, high school, college and even national teams, though at the end of the day, there are still individual scores posted. Many people cannot see past this. They tear each other down, or just fail to help each other at best, and everyone on the outside beats them in competition. Others realize that by helping each other, all benefit, and everyone in the group performs better against outside competitors. The best teams consist of individuals who put the common goals first. Then, individual goals come along for free.

In extreme cases, the harassment goes past the verbal and takes different forms altogether. Spinning sights just before a match begins is not unknown! Sadly, serious gun damage is not unknown either. These things are done in very sneaky and sometimes subtle ways so the perpetrators are rarely caught. In fact, many of these cases are done...
by people who are otherwise not critical in order to reduce suspicion. When odd things happen, one must not believe that it cannot happen here. Luckily, the vast majority of folks in our sport are positive and supportive. The tiny minority does exist, however.

One of the many challenges we face as we strive to become a better athlete is that what other people think, or more correctly, how much we care about what other people think, has a profound effect on us. We want to get along and be happy and some people then use that caring quality as an opening to manipulate the one who cares. It is hard for one to “harden their heart” to that manipulation. One must stop caring about what unhelpful people think. Consider the source and ignore them. Besides, nothing “burns” them more than seeing their rival ignore them, smile, and thrive!

When confronted with this situation, the athlete must “consider the source” and the motives, and realize the other person really is out to hurt their enjoyment, learning and performance in the sport. That is no different than stealing money or other possessions. We defend ourselves against the latter, and should do the same for the former.

Sometimes the very people and institutions that, in theory, should be the most helpful provide the largest obstacles. The jealous teammate is an example. Regardless of the obstacle, we need to understand the situation, get past the fact that they “should” not be part of the problem and work around them.

**Situation 3 – Outcome Focus**

The perfectionist athlete is forcing himself down a very common path, one that is full of frustration and that is common with the conflicted athlete. He has a teammate who is attempting to show him a different way, a fruitful and fulfilling way, yet he cannot bring himself to change anything about his mindset.

In the email we are told, “He says he cannot do it any other way.” As long as he believes this, he will remain in the downward spiral. As a number of coaches like to say, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting a different outcome.” This poor guy is “Two Shots Away From Being Crazy,” as discussed in article 20.

Only when he “hits bottom” and opens his mind and heart to a different way, will he be able to break the current situation. His “Interfering Self” is so dominant that his “Performing Self” is thwarted. Article 39, “Breaking Out of the Matrix” discusses these two selves. The bulk of the articles in this series address the outcome (result) vs. performance (doing) theme either directly or in related ways.

One day a text message arrived from a long distance athlete I work with. “Hey JP, call (athlete name) right away. He just hit bottom and is now ready to listen to how we approach this game. I think he could use a good boost of encouragement too.” We had previously discussed this athlete’s situation and realized that he, like the subject of the email, was unable to “change his mind” despite our ongoing work with him, and that we would have to wait for the opportune time—while hoping he didn’t leave the sport before that time arrived. Luckily the athlete is now very happy with the sport, himself, his progress and his performance.

In another situation, after two and a half days of an intense high performance shooting camp where a comprehensive shot process program was presented and implemented, a couple of the “Type A” guys were shooting so well that they “couldn’t shoot a bad shot” as they described it. They were transformed and amazed. They were in total “Zone” mode and often forgot to spot their shots since they knew they were deep tens. You could even see the change on their face and in their performance. Sadly, their “Interfering Self” took over and within days they had rejected the lessons learned and their shooting returned to mediocrity. After all, they “knew” better.

The situation faced by the young man who is profoundly outcome-based is quite common. If he likes to read, time spent studying “Body, Mind Mastery” by Dan Millman would be well spent. Alternatively, watch the “Peaceful Warrior” movie. It is worth the effort to track down and watch. Another athlete commented just a couple of months ago that she asked for the movie for Christmas after it was shown at an advanced shooting performance clinic and she watches it whenever she needs a reminder about how to go about her journey. She is really enjoying her shooting, even with the stress of her college schedule.

By far the largest obstacle we face in our journey is staring back at us from the mirror. We can train the Physical and Technical to any extreme we want, and yet barely take the first step to learning to compete when it counts. We must also learn and train the Mental (Thought) and Emotional (Heart) aspects every bit as much. The author of the email thought long and hard about her shooting, realized this and drew upon resources available to her to redirect her mindset and shooting. Give this some thought!

Based in the Atlanta, Ga., area, JP O’Connor (jpoc@acm.org and http://www.america.net/~jpoc/) is involved in shooting as a competitor, is a former Assistant National Coach – USA Paralympics Shooting Team, serves on the National Coach Development Staff in both rifle & pistol, coaches the rifle and pistol teams at North Georgia College & State University, and coaches a junior club. He enjoys working with a number of pistol and rifle athletes from around the country, ranging from beginners to the highly advanced, in clinics and one-on-one private coaching. Previous installments of this series may be found at www.pilkguns.com.

“By far the largest **obstacle** we face in our journey is staring back at us from the **mirror.**”
Achieving high results in any sport requires an athlete to develop and master many skills. The foundation for success starts with building proper technique for the chosen sport. Technique in shooting consists of the set of skills necessary to execute a shot, or series of shots, with a high degree of consistency and accuracy. The process of developing technique is time-consuming and requires large amounts of patience and commitment, and if approached correctly, that process can minimize frustration. Of course, realizing that you won’t become technically advanced overnight is essential. I hope the expectation of overnight success wasn’t on your Christmas list—that’s one thing even Santa Claus couldn’t deliver! The growth process is something you control, a critical element left to no one else. I will discuss here some critical factors in developing the talent that lies within you.

First, an athlete must have a great desire to become one of the best in the sport. When you have a goal and vision for what you can become, you will quickly gain the motivation for the hard work that’s required to reach your goals. An example of the necessary work is persistently seeking more knowledge by actively pursuing everything you can learn about all aspects of shooting. Reading, listening, and observing others is vitally important, especially in regards to shooting techniques. The knowledge you will gain is key to developing the technical skills required for high-level competition.

Translating that knowledge to technique can be a straightforward process. Research, learning and application are components of the simple formula for establishing your technique. Of course, you will find most success if you make a concerted effort with your coach; between the two of you, work hard to explore the techniques and skills best suited to your approach to shooting. The synergy you can develop with your coach—and other shooters—can make your technique-building efforts less stressful and more productive. But again, the key is work. Your efforts will have much better results and lead to long-term success with lots and lots of hard work.

Next, an athlete must spend a significant amount of time on the range in order to convert knowledge into skill. A well-known concept in neuroscience is that knowledge must be enacted in practice to become technique. A large number of correctly executed repetitions of the desired task will speed and solidify your progress in developing any skill. How many repetitions does it take? Many experienced coaches will say it takes 100,000 rounds downrange to develop the muscle memory sufficient enough for well-established technique, but that number really suggests an underlying concept: It takes a tremendous amount of work on the range, and there is no substitute for that. Undoubtedly, your strong determination to complete the task correctly in every attempt will also accelerate progress—more frequent quality shots result in faster progress, a stronger skill and better consistency of technique.

Admittedly, it’s often difficult to dedicate yourself to working for hours, sometimes on the same repetitive element, but this is the surest way for your mind and body to assimilate the new skill. The patient and committed hours applied to training are what really reveals your character, and that is how you develop tenacity and perseverance in the face of challenge. This is where self-discipline comes into play; sometimes it is not only “I want,” but also “I must.” If we ask legendary athletes in any sport about their development, I am sure all of them will mention the tough times in their training, perhaps when it was a great challenge even to get through just one day. Yet they will recognize that it was precisely those challenging times that forged their character and made them the competitors we admire. This is the greatest reward of the journey: to see yourself at your best in the sport you love rather than dabble in it as a passing interest.

What do these things have in common?

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Paralympic Shooting Update

By Bob Foth, National Paralympic Coach

U.S. Paralympic-style rifle shooter Josh Olson of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) wrapped up his competitive season at the end of November by winning a silver medal for the U.S. with another great Prone match at the Oceania Championships in Sydney, Australia. Josh had an extremely successful year in 2009 claiming two gold and two silver medals in his four international appearances. Continuing his “ironman” tradition, Josh shot his match only 50 hours after landing in Sydney.

Jonas Jacobsson of Sweden captured the gold medal at the Oceania Championships. Jonas has won numerous international and Paralympic medals over many years of competitive shooting. The bronze went to another experienced shooter, Ashley Adams from Australia. Josh’s medal gives U.S. Paralympic shooters a total of eight international medals and 12 “finals” in only 15 starts for 2009.

In November, U.S. Paralympics hosted a “Train the Trainer” event at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. At this event, people involved in therapeutic and rehabilitative military programs learned about several Paralympic sports. A few dozen attended the shooting portion and hope to start programs in their communities in the future. Next up was the second annual Honored American Veterans Afield (HAV A) family day in San Antonio. About 90 injured service men and women attended along with family members and nearly 100 volunteers. They had a great time shooting all sorts of guns and enjoying great BBQ, hospitality, music, gifts, raffle, etc. Several expressed significant interest in becoming involved in our programs in the future. Keep an eye open for them at matches in your area.

Long range plans are coming together to host an international Para Minimum Qualifying Score (MQS) event in the U.S. during 2010. The USAMU also has plans to grow their Paralympic program. Josh Olson currently trains there and has been part of the Army World Class Athlete Program (WCAP). Eric Hollen hopes to start a program at Eastern Tennessee State University (ETSU) and coaches at Michigan State also are interested in developing a Para shooting program. Remember that all USAS and NRA sanctioned events are open to shooters with physical disabilities. Don’t assume you can’t afford shooting as you may be pleasantly surprised by the grants and other resources available with numerous programs for both civilian and military athletes.

The 2009 Winter Airgun Championships (formerly known as 3 x Air) is getting started as I write this article and it is great to see several shooters with disabilities here to compete. We certainly need to continue to grow the athlete base and provide great training and matches for all of our shooters.

Information about Paralympic Shooting is available on the International Shooting Committee for the Disabled (ISCD) website at: http://shootonline.org/
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One of the most misunderstood and incorrectly performed elements of pistol shooting is the lift. This action applies mostly to 25 meter pistol, but it also has relevance to other types of pistol shooting. We will focus primarily on the two Olympic pistol events requiring lifts: Women’s Sport Pistol and Men’s Rapid Fire Pistol.

Why is lift important? It is a critical element of your shot process during Rapid Fire. Shot process is the ordered application of the fundamentals (position, grip, trigger and sights; see USA Shooting News, May/June 2009) to deliver a shot or series of shots. Training for a more perfect lift encompasses all your fundamentals. Since Rapid Fire requires performance on demand (when the targets/lights turn), your lift must be precise and purposeful, and fundamentally correct every time.

The lift is simply moving your arm and the pistol from a 45 degree angle (the ready position) to a position where your sights are on the target. In the Sport Pistol rapid fire stage, an athlete has three seconds to perform the lift and then fire. Rapid Fire Pistol may require less time, depending on the stage of fire. Early in my shooting career, I neglected the lift. But once I began to study and train hard to improve my lift, my scores improved and I performed consistently at a much higher level. Perhaps you’re like me; some reasons my lift held me back was that I didn’t really know how to do it correctly, or even why I should concern myself with it.

During the lift it is important that you only move your arm; your head should not move at all during any part of the lift. Of course, you need to breathe during this whole process. Your eyes need plenty of oxygen in order to function with clarity when you are aligning your sights. When and how you should breathe depends on your physical fitness, the air quality and the habit pattern you establish. Try to coordinate the timing of your breathing with the range commands. Ideally, the lift should be one fluid motion, but let’s divide it into three separate actions: the Start, the Glide and Follow-through.

The Start: Settle on your target like you would in slow fire. Then lower your arm and pistol to the ready position (45 degrees) while maintaining muscle tension in your arm. Do not relax your arm; instead, keep your arm tight and wrist locked. In essence, you are pulling your arm down against the muscle tension used to hold it on target when aiming. Your wrist stays locked by keeping your grip intense and consistent. When at the ready, your sights should not be aligned because your arm pivots at the shoulder, not the eye. Look at the target; wait for the targets/lights to turn. Your position and grip need consistent intensity throughout the entire series to achieve consistent good scores.

The Glide: Smoothly raise the pistol as soon as the targets/lights turn. Basically, you are releasing the muscles that were holding your arm down. The muscle tension required to move the pistol into your aiming area should still exist. This needs to be a very smooth, soft action but quick with no hesitation. About half way up three things should happen nearly simultaneously:

1. The upward movement of the pistol slows, and smoothly glides to a stop in the middle of your aiming area.
2. Your eye drops from looking at the target to looking at the rising sights.
3. You begin to exert positive pressure on the trigger.

Your eye must drop from looking at the target to looking at the sights while the pistol is still moving up into your aiming area. If you don’t do this your eye cannot focus on your sights, and of course, you must be focused on your sights to shoot center shots. Your eye is attracted to movement so focusing on the sights will be natural if you start looking for sight alignment while the pistol is moving upward into your aiming area. Your sights should come into alignment just as you glide to a stop in your aiming area.

Pressure must start building on the trigger before your sights are aligned. Remember, trigger is independent of the sights. Dry-fire training will develop a trigger control that will release the trigger just a fraction of a second after your pistol is level and sights are in your aiming area. The goal is to have your trigger start moving when you start looking for sight alignment, but before they are aligned and/or in your aiming area. Your goal for every lift is trigger control that is independent of what you see while separately working very hard to align your sights before the shot breaks.

Follow-through is . . . nothing. Nothing changes after the shot. It’s as if the shot didn’t happen. You are still working to align your sights, keep an intense consistent grip and hold your pistol in the middle of your aiming area. After the shot breaks do not relax. If dry firing, keep your sights aligned for a period of time after the trigger is released. If live firing, recover back to the middle of your aiming area and align your sights. Proper follow-through takes you back to where you started: aligning your sights, intense and consistent grip, settled in your aiming area. If in the rapid fire stage of Sport Pistol, return your arm to ready and wait for the targets/lights to turn again. There are seven seconds between the target exposures so there is plenty of time to follow-through for three or four seconds and then lower your arm and prepare for the next lift. Of course, for Rapid Fire Pistol you recover over to the next target and continue the series. That first shot in Rapid Fire Pistol can define the series, so don’t neglect follow-through even on the first shot. Follow-through is incredibly important during dry fire as well. Dry fire with an exaggerated follow-through is an important element of a great lift and great shooting.

Smart, disciplined training will develop a consistent lift that can produce the high scores we all want. Certainly, there is more to pistol shooting than just the lift, and a great lift alone won’t make you win matches. You must train and apply the fundamentals of pistol marksmanship to raise your skills to the level of greatness you are capable of achieving.
Shooting is a unique sport because it doesn't require exceptional strength, size, athletic or natural ability to become a champion. The learned attributes are much more important than the God-given ones. Champion shooters consist of both sexes, come in all sizes and from all walks of life. There are, however, certain elements which contribute to the development of a shooting champion. Although these qualities may vary from individual to individual, the most important factors include: above average intelligence; learning to shoot at an early age; complete dedication to the sport with definite goals and plans; an environment which provides the opportunity for an individual to train, learn, progress and achieve goals; the development and training of the mental aspects; and the most important attribute for competitiveness—a desire and determination to become the best.

Intelligence is a key factor in developing a champion shooter. It is important during both the mechanical and mental phases of development. Shooters must be able to think for themselves, analyze fully the techniques involved, weigh all courses of action and make the right decisions concerning development and training during the mechanical learning phase. In the mental learning phase they must train to exercise complete control over mind and body to cope with match pressure in order to produce the results necessary to become the best.

Environment also plays a key role in the development of a shooting champion. Intelligence, background in shooting and dedication are of little use to an aspiring young champion without the availability of time, equipment, facilities, atmosphere and monetary and family support. Simply stated, it takes several years of full-time, intense training to achieve the performance and scores necessary to compete on a world level. It then takes several more years to learn to shoot those scores when they count, and learn how to win. To gain the time and support necessary to accomplish winning goals, an aspiring champion should be either a Resident Athlete at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, a member of the USAMU in Fort Benning or the ship Unit (USAMU) where I learned the Army could help me reach my goals in international shooting. From that point on, more than anything else, I wanted to be a part of that unit and ultimately represent the United States and the U.S. Army in international shooting competition. This decision became an all-consuming goal and played an important role in my life and in my success as a competitive shooter. My determination to become a champion may differ from yours, but total dedication certainly contributes to and enhances the odds of achieving success.

Most shooters recognize their problems and know how to solve them, but an annual, individual written training plan is mandatory because it provides direction and the specific path to accomplish goals. A universal or generic training schedule is not very beneficial because individuals need a personal training plan to address the specific needs and focus areas unique to that shooter. The shooter and coach should work together to develop an individual training plan to include physical, mental and mechanical training, as well as a logical competition or match schedule. This plan will provide direction and commitment to improve and accomplish intermediate and long-term goals.

Organized athletics and team sports practiced in moderation are great means of physical training because they inspire competition, aid reflexes and coordination, encourage teamwork and do not build unnecessary muscles. Shooters need muscle tone, not strength. Of course, the best exercise is live fire practice on the range—nothing else can develop the muscle memory and fine motor skills necessary for shooting. To achieve your goal to be among the best shooters in the world, matches or competition against other great shooters in the world must be part of the training plan.

To excel in any sport, the athlete needs complete dedication to the endeavor. Shooting is no exception. During my collegiate years I attended a shooting clinic hosted by the United States Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) where I learned the Army could help me reach my goals in international shooting. From that point on, more than anything else, I wanted to be a part of that unit and ultimately represent the United States and the U.S. Army in international shooting competition. This decision became an all-consuming goal and played an important role in my life and in my success as a competitive shooter. My determination to become a champion may differ from yours, but total dedication certainly contributes to and enhances the odds of achieving success.

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The mental learning phase is more important than the mechanical phase. Many shooters are unbeatable in practice but come unglued in a match under pressure. Learning to control emotions and react-

By Lones Wigger; Five-time Olympian, two-time Olympic gold medalist & Olympic silver medalist
Disciplines is the key to combating match pressure. Learning to concentrate and focus, as well as having confidence in ability and equipment, are necessary and developed through hard work during training and by competing in as many matches as possible. Distractions or problems with finances, family or work should be avoided since they will affect the ability to concentrate and thereby hurt performance.

Desire or will to win, which includes determination and dedication, are the most important attributes a shooting champion must possess. These are the reasons you see the same athletes on the medal stand time after time, and are the most important difference between merely good shooters and champions. The true champions are fierce competitors and their desire and determination to win is stronger than the other competitors. They want the victory more than the other competitors and are willing to make any sacrifice to prepare to win. They thrive on competition and the only feeling of satisfaction comes in winning. They hate to lose more than anything and being a good loser is not in their psyche. They are not necessarily bad losers but neither are they good losers, because “good losers usually do.”

A champion must possess all these attributes, but the secrets to success are preparation and hard work and there is no substitute. I once heard an interview with Bobby Knight, a very successful former college basketball coach at Indiana University. He was asked if his team had the will to win. He replied, “Hell yes, everyone has the will to win, but only a few have the will to prepare to win.”

A shooting champion gains little notoriety and receives very little in material value or compensation. Usually, competitive shooting costs much more than any possible gain. For the true champion shooters, the compensation is the personal satisfaction of winning, knowing they have bested the best and perhaps the most important aspect of all, being true masters of the mind.

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The sport of shotgun shooting requires a unique balance of skill, endurance, strength, fine motor control and mental focus. As mentioned by SFC Theresa DeWitt, in the Aim with AMU section of this magazine, sport shooting does not require the physical attributes needed by an Olympic swimmer or professional football player. However, shotgun shooting does demand its own unique balance of physical and mental skill for optimal performance at the elite level. While SFC DeWitt talked about the importance of upper body strength and flexibility, this article will compliment her article with information on core stability for shotgun shooters.

When working with athletes I look at their body as a biomechanical machine. Meaning all parts (muscles, joints, etc…) should operate in a particular way. There is an ideal posture. Certain muscles should activate first to provide stability, while others activate later to provide dynamic movement off of this stable base. There are even specific structures that are highly populated with proprioceptive receptors, which provide feedback about where one’s body is in space and provides the basis for hand-eye coordination. While the scientific information is not necessary for you to memorize, it is often helpful to understand the basic medical rationale behind a particular program.

Core Muscle Activation in Shotgun Shooting

While shotgun shooting is often referred to as a unique event, the basis of a good performance enhancement program is actually the same for sport shooting as it is for football, soccer or any other sport. The basis of a good program begins with the core! First of all, what is the core? The core refers to your trunk region (area between your hips and shoulders). This includes your abdominals and back muscles. Here is where it gets tricky, but I will try to keep it simple…. There are two kinds of core muscles: I will refer to them as Local and Global Core muscles. Here is the difference.

Local Core muscles include the transverse abdominis, multifidus, and half of the internal oblique. These local muscles connect one spinal segment to the adjacent segment in the back, which provides good structural stability. In the front, the transverse abdominis travels in a horizontal manner across the abdomen providing a corset brace like stabilizing effect. Functionally, the local muscles provide a stable base, in the correct position and maintain the optimal stability and position throughout our movement while providing the feedback necessary to react should our target not travel as we expected.

Global Core muscles include the larger back extensor muscles, rectus abdominis (six-pack muscle), the external oblique and half of the internal oblique. While these are the more commonly trained muscles, they are actually less important when it comes to sport shooting. Structurally, these muscles will cross several vertebral levels in the back and are oriented in a vertical/diagonal manner over the abdomen. Thus their primary function is to create forceful movement in forward bending, back bending and trunk rotation. None of these motions are desired movements by elite shotgun shooters while shooting, so why would we focus on training them? Rather, the ideal movement displays is a stable spine (as far as flexion and extension) with rotation actually occurring below the trunk, allowing the hips and shoulder to rotate together to create a smooth tracing to the target.

So how do we train the Local Core muscles? Well it is a very specific, slight and a bit tricky exercise to perform since many of us have never consciously activated these muscles. I will describe how to initially activate these muscles (1) a progression of the muscle activation, and (2) how to incorporate the muscle activation into your normal daily posture and shooting.

1) Transverse Abdominis Draw-In Maneuver:

- Lay on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Notice how when you lay relaxed you have a little curve in your low back (your low back is not completely flattened to the table). We call this your neutral spine. We want to maintain this neutral spine throughout the exercise, meaning don’t flatten out or raise up your low back at any time.
- Place your index and middle fingers just to the inside of your hip bones on the front of your hips
- Take an easy breath in and as you breathe out try to put on a tight pair of pants or trying to
“Certain muscles should activate first to provide stability, while others activate later to provide dynamic movement off of this stable base.”

squeeze between a fence.

- When performed correctly you will feel a slight tensing under your fingers just inside those hip bones.
  - Make sure not to just flex or tighten all of your abdominals (i.e., don't brace your abdomen)
  - Also make sure not to draw-in from up high by your rib cage

Once you are able to activate the Transverse Abdominal muscle correctly via the Draw-In Maneuver, the next step is to work on the muscle endurance. This is done by performing the exercise for five minutes. At first you will not be able to hold the activation for five minutes. Rather you might be able to hold it for 10-20 seconds before activating the wrong muscles, holding the breath or losing the proper activation. When any of these things occur just let everything relax, take a five second rest, then re-activate the draw-in. Then by the end of the five minutes you might be able to hold the Draw-in for 40-50 seconds. Eventually you should be able to hold it for the entire five minutes. Once you can maintain the Draw-in for five minutes, you are ready for the second level.

2.) Single Leg March:

The Second Level is called the Single Leg March.

- This is performed by activating the same Draw-in Maneuver previously mentioned while lying on your back with the knees bent and feet flat on the ground.
- First activate the Draw-In Maneuver, then march one leg at a time bringing the knee toward your chest to the point where your hip is at a 90 degree angle, then lower it back down.
- Then do the same with the other leg.
- Continue marching one leg at a time (alternating legs) at about a walking pace. The marching should be controlled and smooth without any hesitation in the movement.
- While marching the legs, your goal should be to maintain the Draw-in and don't let your Rectus Abdominal Muscle (six pack muscle in front of abdomen) kick on.
  i. Start with 3 sets of 10 Marches with each leg.
  ii. Progress the number of marches to 15-20 reps if you can maintain the Draw-in and keep the rectus turned off

3.) Transverse Abdominis into Posture and Shooting

The final step is to incorporate this draw-in maneuver into your daily posture and eventually shooting. While performing the previous exercises you should be activating your Transverse Abdominis muscle close to as much as you can. We will call this a 100 percent maximal contraction of that muscle. While this is effective for training a muscle, it is not practical for daily activity or shooting. Thus we want to train the functional aspect of that muscle at about 15 percent of the maximal contraction. Thus instead of Drawing-in as much as you can, Draw-in just a little bit but try to maintain it as much as you can throughout the day. This includes sitting, walking and eventually during shooting practice. The drawing-in just a little bit all the time helps your body automatically activate the muscle as part of your normal daily posture. The idea is if the draw-in contraction becomes part of your normal posture, when it comes to competition you won't have to think about it at all. Your body will naturally activate this muscle just a little bit, producing a stabilizing effect on the spine, connecting your hips with your shoulders and heightening your body's hand-eye coordination, helping produce a smooth, controlled and accurate move toward your target even if it isn't where it is suppose to be!

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“...the basis of a good performance enhancement program is actually the same for sport shooting as it is for football, soccer or any other sport. The basis of a good program begins with the core.”
U.S. team brings home five medals from China

By Mary Beth Vorwerk

Photos by Marco Della Dea
2009 ISSF WORLD CUP FINALS
For the third year in a row, two-time Olympic medalist Matt Emmons (Browns Mills, N.J.), claimed the gold medal in the Men's 50m 3-Position Rifle event at the ISSF Rifle/Pistol World Cup Final.

Emmons not only won the Men's 3P match on the final day of competition, but was also a fan favorite among the Chinese spectators, as he took home the gold with a total score of 1277.3 points (1177+100.3), climbing from third place by shooting the second highest final score and securing the win with an excellent 10.8 on his last shot.

While he was moving up the scoreboard to win the match, the Chinese fans rallied their support for Emmons and cheered for him as he climbed into first place. “I realized they were cheering for me. That’s awesome. It’s an emotion I cannot describe,” said Emmons after the match. “USA and China are often rivals in these Olympic competitions, but this audience made me feel like I was at home.”

Emmons came back to win the gold after a disappointing tenth place finish in the Men’s 50m Prone Rifle event the day before. “I am thrilled about this victory,” he added. “I changed my sightings after the Prone event, and I was quite confident as I walked into the finals hall today. It has been a great day.”

This is the fifth World Cup Final win for Emmons since 2002.

The leader going into the final, Han Jinseop of Korea, finished in second place behind Emmons, grabbing the silver with 1274.6 points (1180+94.6). Norwegian shooter Ole Magnus Bakken grabbed the bronze with a total score of 1270.0 (1180+90.0).

“...this audience made me feel like I was at home.”

Rifle/Pistol: Wuxi, China – October 26-28

Matt Emmons Captures Gold for Third Consecutive Year in Men’s 3P

USA SHOOTING NEWS
McPhail Claims Silver, Beyerle Takes Home Bronze

Michael McPhail (Darlington, Wis.) captured the silver medal in the Men’s 50m Prone Rifle event on the second day of competition, while Jamie Beyerle (Lebanon, Pa) earned the bronze in Women’s 50m 3-Position Rifle.

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) member McPhail started the final tied with Norway’s Vebjoern Berg and Warren Potent of Australia, but eventually fell to Berg by 0.4 after an intense head to head battle. McPhail qualified for this year’s World Cup Final by winning two bronze medals at the 2009 World Cup stages in Beijing and Munich.

McPhail grabbed the silver, which is his first ever World Cup Final medal, after shooting a qualifying score of 596 points, a final of 104.9 for a total of 700.9 points.

“This was an unnerving final, we were all tied and it was a neck and neck fight,” McPhail commented about the match. He finished just four tenths of a point behind Berg, and two tenths ahead of Potent.

Berg claimed gold with a total score of 701.3 points (596+105.3). Potent, the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, duelled against McPhail for a spot on the podium, ending up in third place with 700.1 points (596+104.1). The Australian shooter won the bronze after a shoot-off with Italy’s Marco De Nicolo, winning with 10.3 points to De Nicolo’s 9.4.

Beyerle, a 2008 Olympian, entered the Women’s 3-Position Rifle final tied for first place at 587 points with 2008 Olympic gold medalist, Du Li of China. In the final, Du Li and Beyerle battled back and forth right to the last shot. The Chinese shooter moved into the lead after the first two shots, then slid down into second place as Beyerle fired an outstanding 10.9 on her third competition shot. Beyerle lost the lead after she fired 8.7 on her fourth final shot, but Du Li answered with 9.0.

The last final shot decided the medal standings as Du Li shot a 10.1, securing the silver with a total score of 687.0 points (587+100.0), while Beyerle finished in third place, taking home the bronze, with 684.4 points (587+97.4) after firing a 7.7 on her last shot.

Serbia’s Lidija Mihajlovic started the final round in third place with a qualification score of 586 points and then climbed into the lead after firing 103.0 points in the final, capturing the gold with a total of 689.0 points.

Representing the U.S. in pistol, Keith Sanderson (San Antonio, Texas), a 2008 Olympian and 2009 World Cup gold, silver and bronze medalist, finished in seventh place in the Men’s 25m Raid Fire event with 577 points. Russia’s Alexei Klimov secured his second consecutive ISSF World Cup Final title finishing in first place with a total score of 783.6 points (582+201.6). German shooter Christian Reitz took home the silver with 780.9 points (583+197.9) and Japan’s Akiyama Teruyoshi claimed the bronze medal with a total score of 779.1 points (580+199.1).

Eighty-five athletes from around the world gathered in Wuxi to compete for a Rifle/Pistol World Cup Final title. These athletes qualified for the 2009 World Cup Final based on individual performances in the ISSF World Cup circuit throughout the year.

For complete Rifle/Pistol World Cup Final results, please visit ISSF’s website at www.issf-sports.org.
Vincent Hancock (Eatonton, Ga.) claimed the highest finish for the U.S. at the ISSF World Cup Final for Shotgun, taking home the silver medal in Men's Skeet for the second consecutive year.

Hancock, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist and 2009 World Champion, was tied for first place with Georgios Achilleos of Cyprus at 122 out of 125 targets going into the final. Hancock hit 21 targets in the final and landed in second place, taking home the silver with a total of 143 hits.

The 2008 Olympic Bronze medalist, Anthony Terras of France, stepped back on the podium in Beijing, winning the Men's Skeet final, which was held on the same range as the 2008 Olympic Games. Terras, who started the final in third place with 121 hits, came back to claim the gold after shooting 24 targets in the final to finish with an overall score of 145 hits.

Achilleos ended the final with 20 hits, and a total score of 142 targets, tying 2008 Olympic silver medallist, Tore Brovold of Norway. The two athletes went into a shoot-off, which was won by Achilleos, who secured the bronze by eight hits to Brovold's seven.

Jeff Holguin Wins Double Trap Bronze

Shooting on the same range in Beijing where he finished in fourth place at the 2008 Olympic Games, Jeff Holguin (Yorba Linda, Calif.), the 2009 World Championship silver medalist, earned the World Cup Final bronze medal in Men's Double Trap.

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) member Holguin was tied for first place at 144 targets with Chinese shooters Mo Jiunjie and Hu Binyuan, the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, going into the final. Holguin and Binyuan each shot 42 out of 50 targets in the final and ended the match tied at 186 hits. In the shoot-off for the silver medal, Holguin, who shot first, missed a target on his second pair, winning bronze with a total score of 186+3 targets and leaving Hu Binyuan the silver medal with 186+4 hits.

"If I had made it to the second spot in the shoot-off, I would probably have had a better chance," commented Holguin after the match. "It's great to be back on the Olympic Range of Beijing, and this time walking out with something in my hands."

Jiunjie, who at 21-years-old was the youngest Double Trap finalist, won event, claiming his first ISSF World Cup Final gold medal with a total score of 189 targets (144+45).
Caitlin Connor Finishes Fourth in Women’s Skeet, Hadden Takes Fifth in Men’s Trap

Caitlin Connor (Winnfield, La.) shot her way to the highest finish for the U.S. in the Women’s Skeet event after competing in difficult weather conditions. Shooting in intense snowfall, Connor, the 2009 World Cup Minsk silver medalist, entered the final tied for third place at 69 out of 75 targets with two other shooters. In the final, Connor hit 20 out of 25 targets and ended the match tied for third place at 89 targets with Russian shooter Svetlana Demina. In the shoot-off for the bronze, Demina hit her target to secure the bronze, while Connor missed and finished just off the podium in fourth place.

Christine Wenzel of Germany, the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist and reigning World Champion, won the match after a shoot-off with Italy’s Katiuscia Spada. Wenzel finished the match with 90+2 hits after shooting 21 targets in the final, which was the highest final score of the day. Spada placed second winning the silver with 90+0 hits.

Kim Rhode (El Monte, Calif.), a four-time Olympic medalist and 2009 World Cup Munich bronze and World Cup San Marino silver medalist, finished in eighth place with a match score of 66 targets.

In the Men's Trap event, USAMU member Ryan Hadden (Pendleton, Ore.), a double gold medalist on the 2009 World Cup circuit, entered the final in sixth place after firing 109 out of 125 targets. Hadden hit 15 out of 25 targets in the final to finish in fifth place with a total of 125 hits.

Two-time Olympic champion Michael Diamond of Australia won the Men’s Trap competition, securing the third World Cup Final title of his career with a total score of 134 hits (117+17). Massimo Fabbrizi of Italy claimed the silver with 133 hits (117+16), while his teammate, Giovanni Pellielo, the 2008 Olympic silver medalist and winner of last year’s ISSF World Cup Final in Minsk, hit 12 targets out of 25 in the final, missing nine in a row, and landed in third place with a total score of 130 hits (118+12).

Sixty of the top shooters from 22 different countries qualified to take part in this year’s ISSF World Cup Final for Shotgun. Like the rifle and pistol athletes, these shooters also qualified based on individual performances in the ISSF World Cup circuit throughout the year.

For complete Shotgun World Cup Final results, please visit ISSF’s website at www.issf-sports.org.

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We are proud to announce the introduction of a new model gun for 2009, the TM9. There will be two versions available of this new, single-barrel gun. One version, the TM9, will have a fixed, ramped rib and a fixed comb stock. The second version, the TM9X, will have an adjustable rib and an adjustable comb stock.

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Developing Life Skills Through Shooting

By Robert Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer

Participating in organized sports provides many valuable benefits to people of all ages. Sports have been a mainstay of elementary and high school programs for as long as we can remember, and even with today’s financial shortfalls and budget deficits, school sporting activities continue to thrive.

The most obvious benefit of participating in sports is learning the fundamentals of teamwork. We may not recognize teamwork being associated with an individual sport such as shooting, but shooters, similar to athletes in other sports, are dependent upon coaches and teammates to provide a learning environment as well as success at the club level.

Like all sports, shooting develops self-discipline. Discipline is necessary to fire one shot after another with consistent and proper technique. While many shooters develop a shot plan or routine, it takes self-discipline to execute that routine consistently on every shot, and particularly in the presence of distractions or the pressure of high-level competition.

While all sports require concentration, I believe that shooting requires the utmost focus each time pressure is applied to the trigger or the shooter steps onto the station. It is well known that as young shooters’ skills improve, their performance in the classroom improves as well. I attribute the increased ability to stay on track and focus with intense concentration as a reason for this correlation.

Sport participation also develops confidence. The process of improving skills, shooting more tens and hitting more targets puts a smile on the shooter’s face and adds another block to the foundation of confidence, which carries over to our daily lives developing the “I can do this” attitude.

While many non-sport extracurricular activities offer benefits, it is through sports that young athletes learn the importance of commitment as a key ingredient to success. Those who reach a pinnacle in an avocation or occupation have an undying commitment to their effort. We have all heard the phrase that “Quitters never win and winners never quit.” Success in sport, as in the classroom, workplace or family requires a dedicated commitment to that effort. Commitment may start by showing up at the range for every available practice session, and even foregoing “fun” or social opportunities to practice and/or compete, and later to life decisions regarding college as well as career and relationship decisions. Those who earn their place on the awards podium make a full commitment to their sport.

One of the best rifle shooters of all time, Lones Wigger, is known for telling his wife when he was an aspiring shooter after having his first child that, “If it comes to putting food on the table or going to a rifle match, I am going to the competition.” I have known Lones for almost 40 years and I can state without question that he was totally serious. And yet, commitment to sport and family do not have to be exclusive as evidenced by the fact that Lones and Mary Kay Wigger celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year.

Hand-in-hand with commitment is the attribute of perseverance. Some may argue that commitment and perseverance are one in the same. Perseverance compliments but goes a step farther. Shooting is an excellent example of a sport involving learned skills. It is not necessarily those who are successful at an early stage who go on to win Olympic medals, rather it is those that dedicate themselves, commit and persevere through years of hard work who achieve success. It is perseverance that carries the committed athlete through from month to month and year to year as well as through the most challenging times of disappointments and setbacks. Through an athlete’s career there are many difficult challenges where it is much easier to accept lesser objectives or even leave the sport. The true champion perseverers through those tough times, staying focused and finding a way to the awards podium.

Some life skills are better learned through individual rather than team sports. Personally responsibility is one of those positive traits. When shooters quit making excuses and take accountability for their actions including failures, they open the door to a higher level of performance. We have all experienced the shooter who upon leaving the range immediately offers justification for his or her poor performance. On the other end of the spectrum, we have witnessed the successful shooter who upon having either a good or poor performance identifies where and how improvements can be made and focuses on implementing the proper technique, assuming full responsibility for every shot fired.

Another personal attribute more oriented to sports such as shooting is the ability to analyze and solve problems. From the start of a competition to the last shot, shooters are constantly faced with challenges and decisions. Whether it is dealing with the effects of wind and weather, an unexplained shot or loss of confidence, the shooter must quickly make an analysis and take corrective action. Proper application of this mental exercise is vital to winning performances. Elite shooters can often recognize when their mental or technical execution is deteriorating and take action to get back on track before bad shots or missed targets occur.

I hope you can relate your own personal experiences to these topics and recognize as well as promote to others the positive personal attributes that shooting develops. The shooting sport is truly one where we “Make Champions in Sport and in Life!”
Rewards Program Launch

By Nichole Rae, Membership Manager

The official launch of the USA Shooting Rewards Program is here! This past July we announced USA Shooting’s intention to develop a program that supported both its mission and its dedicated clubs and athletes. Following our announcement, a small volunteer test market group was formed, which was dedicated to molding the program to bring you, the members, the best possible package. We believe that our program will inspire our clubs to host more USA Shooting sanctioned matches, which will provide more opportunity for shooter participation.

The program consists of several achievable levels for both the clubs and the individual shooters. The first level of achievement is Bronze, the second is Silver, the third is Gold with a top level of achievement of Elite Athlete (Elite is for shooters only. The highest level of achievement for clubs is Gold). Each level of achievement will be rewarded with increasing benefits such as gun stock stick- ers, certificates, discounted event registrations and much more.

The Rewards Program offers new opportunities for USAS clubs and shooters, and participation is simple! Packets, including program details, will be mailed to those clubs requesting more information. Club directors can call the USAS Membership office at 719-866-4743 or send an email to membership@usashooting.org with their club’s contact and mailing information. Please note that individual members of USAS will need to contact their local club directly for program details.

Our intention for the Rewards Program is to offer the best support to both the clubs and the shooters and to reward those dedicated to growing the sport of shooting and striving towards individual achievement on any level.

Helpful Suggestions from a Successful Club Director

Match directors may be thinking, “This program is great in theory but just how do we implement it into our club and keep our shooters motivated?” The next section lists some suggestions from Mr. Julian Beale (Mr. Beale runs one of the most successful junior rifle programs in our country out of Capital City Junior Rifle Club in Augusta, Maine):

- Schedule an open house and advertise it in your local newspaper. Get your returning shooters to help with the open house by talking about their personal experiences, showing off the range and the equipment. New participants are able to sign up for the season during the open house.
- Have a bulletin board for notices and progress charts. Remind the shooters that they are to check the bulletin board weekly when they attend practice.
- Outline a match schedule for the year and post it to your bulletin board. Discuss this schedule with your members, post your match results on the bulletin board and highlight the winners’ names.
- Use the charts provided through the Rewards Program to chart your shooters’ successes. Educate your members on how they can advance in the program and earn rewards.
- Know your shooters by name! Building rapport shows you care.
- Connect with your shooters at every practice and match. Look for corrections that need to be made in their shooting technique and make suggestions that will help them improve.
- Request feedback from them on the Rewards Program. Ask them what is going well and how it can be improved.
- Provide equipment for the shooters to try. Have the shooters keep track of their assigned equipment in a journal. This makes it easy to change to larger rifles, jackets and gloves as they grow and progress. This also makes it possible for the shooters to try different equipment and styles.
- Celebrate their successes! Hold an annual awards celebration banquet. Make sure each shooter gets to walk up front to accept an award at least twice. This recognizes the work they have done during the shooting season.
- Run postal matches, just for fun matches, family matches and club matches to create opportunities for different annual awards.

Mr. Beale stated that he has done all of these things consistently so the shooters in his club are familiar with the expectations and routines. Many of his shooters stay in the program for multiple years.

These are just some suggestions that we hope will help each of you have a successful launch within your clubs. We are open to new ideas and ways in which we can improve the program and ensure your success.
The Razor’s Edge . . . or the Bullet’s Crown

By Bill Roy, Director of Operations

Three-hundred-sixty-five squares on the wall.

As the National Coaches and I stared at the outsized 2010 calendar threatening to envelop us, our wan expressions bespoke two thoughts: 1) How are we ever gonna tackle this year, and 2) How could we possibly make 2010 better than last year?

Excellent questions. With seven World Cups, the World Shooting Championships, Championships of the Americas, Olympic Selection Matches, National Championships and a host of other shows, clinics and local competitions, most of those 365 little squares are jam-packed. And the near-startling success of 2009—with over 30 international medals won by our amazing athletes—is a pretty high bar to clear.

But National Rifle Coach Dave Johnson gave us some clarity when he said, “It’s like a big shooting match. Take it one shot at a time . . . one day at a time.” Indeed, we chip away in the smallest ways, and before we know it we’ve made a big difference. I think of the incredible feats of 2009, and realize that the razor's edge of difference can cut a wide swath of success.

Cases in point:

Consider, for example, the dichotomy of minutia and the grandest stage of all: The 2008 Olympiad in Beijing, China. As I watched our athletes stand tall—or in the case of Matt Emmons, who specialized in the 50 meter Prone Rifle event on his belly, lay low—I was reminded that shooting exists in a world of millimeters or even microns.

After 50 shots, Jamie Beyerle missed the Women’s Air Rifle bronze medal by .9 points, or about two millimeters. That’s close to the diameter of the “o” in the word “two” in this sentence. By the way, I bet she gets back those two millimeters and more the next time around. After all, it’s only two millimeters.

Only 24 millimeters separate a perfect 10 and a zero on an air rifle target. That’s approximately the total span of the words “rifle target.” Try putting the pellet on the dot (the bull's eye is indeed a dot the size of the period at the end of this sentence) about 59 times out of 60 shots . . . from the offhand, unsupported position with iron sights. With skill like that, our shooters give new meaning to the word “statuesque” (just under 24 millimeters long, by the way).

I can go smaller—less than one millimeter is the distance by which Jason Turner beat his countryman Brian Beaman to claim the bronze medal in the Air Pistol event in their sudden death shoot-off; Jason scored a 10.5 to Brian's 10.3. Just ask Jason if little things can make a big difference.

You want to go big? Well, everything is relative. Matt Emmons won his silver medal in the Prone event by 15 millimeters—or 1.4 points—after 70 shots. You guessed it . . . 15 millimeters is about the span of the word “millimeters.” Again, that’s the cumulative distance between the silver medal and the bronze medal after 70 shots! But to emphasize the micro-mini world the shooters operate in, consider that the distance of the combined misses between the gold medalist and the 14th place finisher in this event was a mere 1.5 inches after 60 shots. That’s tighter than a fresh leather Anschutz sling!

If you’ve watched football, you’ve no doubt heard that frenetic, expansive activity referred to as “a game of inches.” Heck, I’ll give you inches. How about four inches, the approximate width of a clay target (24 millimeters in height, by the way) as it sails away from a skeet shooter at nearly 70 miles per hour. No prob—gold medalist Vinny Hancock smokes a pair of them on station four in the span of about .4 seconds (approximately the time it takes you to say the word “seconds”). Boom, boom . . . gold medal. And how about this for a scary thought: In that boom-boom time frame, Vinny can think a sentence that goes something like this: “Looks good, kill it, now find the second target there it is I’m on it see it clearly now you die you fat slow little pill, now, YES!” Scary—especially for the fat slow little pills.

You get the point (or fraction of a point, as the case may be). Little things can indeed make a big difference, and it might not take that much to make 2010 a really memorable year for you.

The Chinese proverb rings true: The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Likewise, the satisfying score you seek begins with a single shot. And whether your target is a dot, a clay, or a happy life, the principles are the same: Breathe deep, hold steady, and put ‘em in the middle. After all, the only way we can ever be right on target is if we always give it our best shot. Boom boom—have a happy New Year!
Junior Olympic Updates

Rifle and Pistol Program
A reminder to all competitors, make sure you have registered for the Junior Olympic qualifier match in your state! Individuals born in 1990 or later are eligible for the 2010 Junior Olympic season. All state qualifier matches will be completed by January 31, 2010. Match directors are to have results to USA Shooting by February 5th. So competitors, keep an eye on the mail for invitations to the National Junior Olympic Championships later that month. For more Junior Olympic updates, please visit our blog at http://usasbatcave.blogspot.com/ or email Nicole Levine at nicole.levine@usashooting.org. For a complete list of sanctioned state qualifier matches, please visit www.usashooting.org.

Shotgun Program
The host application for the 2010 Shotgun State Junior Olympic qualifiers is currently available on the USA Shooting website. Please look under the Competitions-Match Information tab on www.usashooting.com to download a host program. All applications are to be submitted to USA Shooting by February 5, 2010. The time period to hold your state qualifier match is February 27, 2010 through May 30, 2010. Individuals born in 1990 or later are eligible for the 2010 Junior Olympic season. A few changes have been made to this season’s program, so please read your entire host packet carefully. If you have any questions regarding the 2010 Shotgun Junior Olympic season, please contact Nicole Levine at nicole.levine@usashooting.org.

Charles Goss Annuity Gift
USA Shooting is grateful for the annuity estate gift provided by Charles Goss of Bloomfield, Conn. As a sportsman and target rifle shooter at the Bell City Shooting Club, Charles was also a long-time supporter of USA Shooting. At the time of his passing on December 18, 2008, Charles was 95 years of age. In his estate planning, Charles named USA Shooting as the beneficiary of a life insurance annuity. Charles stated to a long-time friend and family legal counsel that he desired his gift be considered a lasting gift. In the November/December online issue of USA Shooting News, it was reported inaccurately that the gift proceeds would be committed to the USA Shooting Endowment Fund. Rather the Executive Committee has placed the funds in a restricted account to be used at the discretion of the Board of Directors for a project(s) that appropriately honor Mr. Goss. Charles is survived by a sister Elizabeth Young, niece Nancy Luke and nephew George Young.

When either making or reviewing estate plans, please consider a gift to USA Shooting. A gift of an annuity such as that given by Charles Goss is one of many ways to include favorite organizations in estate planning or when making planned gifts.

Although we are early in the year, it is a good time to plan for tax liabilities and make gifts to charities. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, gifts to USAS are tax deductible. Please contact Buddy DuVall at 719-866-4880 with any questions.

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In Memoriam - Colonel Tom Johnson  
*Courtesy of CMP Shooters’ News*

Colonel Tom Johnson (72), a pioneer in the development of three-position air rifle shooting in the U.S., passed away on 9 October in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He coached a very successful Cherokee High School (North Carolina) Army JROTC rifle team during the 1990s when he also developed a very popular sporter air rifle service. Colonel Johnson later became the superintendent at Cherokee High School. He was the CMP State Junior Director for North Carolina for many years where he helped to develop rifle team programs in many other high schools. He is also the author of the popular Colonel Tom Johnson’s Sporter Tips. Colonel Johnson retired from the U.S. Army after 32 years of service that included assignments in Vietnam where he received the Silver Star for gallantry in action. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery on 11 January 2010.

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**Avedisian Wins Third Senior Open for International Trap**  
*Submitted by Maxey Brantley*

Senior International Trap shooters from around the U.S. met October 23-25 for the third annual Senior Open for International Trap. Eighteen shooters competed in sunshine, 75 degree weather and perfectly functioning NASTA trap equipment at Gator Skeet and Trap to contest the 2009 title. The Senior Open for International Trap is a 125 target match conducted over two days. Competitors are divided into three classes based on their performance over the first 75 targets from day one. Each class (A, B, C) complete the course of fire on day two and round out the match with a “final” by class.

This year’s championship went down to the wire. John Dsuban (Cincinnati, Ohio) and Guy Avedisian (Ocala, Fla.) exchanged the lead several times during the 125 target qualification, with Dsuban leading by one target going into the final. When the smoke cleared, Avedisian emerged victorious, winning his third consecutive Senior Open title, firing a 100+20 to Dsuban’s 101+15. Dsuban was crowned High S3/Veteran and Maxey Brantley (New Braunfels, Texas) bested the S2 shooters with a score of 107. Shari Legate (Peyton, Colo.) took home the High Woman title with a 73.

Planning for next year’s event is underway and the dates and location will be listed on the USAS website early in 2010 for the 4th Annual Senior Open for International Trap.

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Progressive Position Air Pistol Changes for 2010

By Bob Foth

Following-up on the article published in the November/December online issue of USA Shooting News, we want to make sure everyone is familiar with the Progressive Position Pistol (PPP) program changes. We also want to make the appeal for existing rifle and pistol programs to start PPP programs. It is a great way to teach safe gun handling and introduce young people to the shooting sports. It is most rewarding to see new shooters progress and enjoy the excitement and rewards of competition.

There will be a number of exciting changes in 2010 that will make PPP even more enjoyable. The new counterbalanced T-Stand will allow athletes a much smoother and quicker transition to the fine control necessary to become great shooters without risking injury by overtaxing the shoulder joint too early. (Note that we still recommend physical training for all shooters). These rules also incorporate the flexibility for coaches and athletes to use the shooting positions most effectively for their stage of development. We recommend that athletes switch to a one-handed grip when their hand is large enough to comfortably grip and control their pistol. There are no restrictions on counterbalance weights, which will allow the greatest latitude for the athlete's comfort and stability.

NRA and USAS are working jointly to build and promote PPP programs and competition events. USAS will continue to import junior pistols to be sold near cost through the USAS Merchandise Department.

Here is a summary of the Progressive Position Pistol rule changes:

The number of shooting positions have been reduced to three:

- **Basic Supported** – Athlete is seated or standing, one or two hands on the grip. The grip (and hands) may be rested on a firm support or a counterbalanced “sling” stand (T-Stand). If the T-stand is used, the support point may be anywhere between elbow(s) and grip. Maximum age is ten years old.
- **Standing Supported** – Athlete is standing, one hand on the grip. T-Stand provides counterbalance support between elbow and grip. Maximum age is 14 years old.
- **International Standing** – ISSF/USAS rules. Unsupported standing with one hand on grip. Minimum age is 13 years old.

**T Stands:**

Plans for the T Stand will be available from USA Shooting. It can be easily built for less than $15.00 from widely available materials.

- “T” shape is suggested, with pulleys and counterbalance weight (no limit).
- Support may not be a closed loop around arm or pistol.
- Support contact must be between the elbow and pistol grip (inclusive).
- Maximum width of contact point is 1.5 inches.
- Stand may be on table or floor.
- Time Limits:
  - 75 minutes for 40 shots with unlimited sighters on four sighter bulls.

If using paper targets requiring change over (with cease-fire):

- 15 minutes for sighters
- 1.5 minutes per shot for targets hung at one time.

**Sanctioning & Membership:**

USA Shooting will sanction competitions with no sanctioning fee. In addition, USAS will track results, maintain national records, rank athletes and develop an introductory PPP membership package with includes six issues of USA Shooting News. Athletes must be junior USAS members ($20 annually) or a regular member ($40 annually).

**PPP Junior Olympic Championships:**

- Award “Supported,” “Mixed,” and “One Hand (ISSF)” teams at PPP Junior Olympics (JOs)
- Continue Open and Women’s awards in the International Standing position at PPP JOs.
- USAS will continue to offer medals for State JO Championships through the Competitions Division.
- USAS and NRA will conduct the Progressive Position Pistol Junior Olympic National Championships (with match help from the Civilian Marksmanship Program). This championship will be held at Camp Perry July 9–11. Competitors will have the opportunity to attend the NRA youth summer pistol camp which follows immediately where athletes can further develop their air pistol skills as well as be introduced to the small-bore events.
- Top scoring athletes from PPP JOs will still be invited to a Fall JO Pistol Development Camp at the held at the Olympic Training Center.
- Top scoring athletes from PPP JOs will still be invited to a Fall JO Pistol Development Camp at the held at the Olympic Training Center.

**Other Rule Changes:**

- Combine “A” and “B” equipment divisions.
- Use USAS/ISSF rules for tiebreakers and other match requirements.
- USA Shooting will subsidize part of the expenses if you host a PPP focused Pistol Coach School (for six or more coaches) in your area. Please contact Bob Foth at bob.foth@usashooting.org or (719) 866-4881 for details.
In 2008, The USA Shooting Shotgun Team recorded the most medals won by any country—four—taking on the toughest competitors in the world with Winchester AA ammunition.

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Left to Right: Kim Rhode, Vincent Hancock, Corey Cogdell & Glenn Eller
Five pistol shooters from the U.S. participated in the 2009 World Masters Games in Sydney, Australia, October 10-18. Steve Locatelli captured three gold medals in the 60-69 year-old age category in Free Pistol, Air Pistol and Sport Pistol. Dmitriy Shteyman won the silver medal in Sport Pistol and the bronze in Free Pistol in the 40-49 year-old age category. Pictured from left to right are Jeffrey Bromberger, Tom Fletcher, Steve Locatelli, Paul Messina and Dmitriy Shteyman.  

Photo submitted by Dmitriy Shteyman